

The Role of Faith Based Organizations in Creating Nonprofit Social Change in Orange County California

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The purpose of this paper is to identify the link between faith-based organizations, community based nonprofits and community outcomes. Data for analysis is collected from the Cal State Fullerton Center for Nonprofit Sector Research report (Costello & Kleinhenz, 2000) measuring the presence of nonprofit organizations in thirty Orange County, California cities, and a count of the number of faith based organizations in these same thirty Orange County cities derived from the Yellow Pages.

The results of analysis of data substantially confirm (but not unambiguously) the hypothesis of a high correlation between faith based organizations and community based nonprofits, and confirm the hypothesis that particular kinds of community-based nonprofits are created by the significant presence of faith based organizations.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify the link between faith-based organizations, community based nonprofits and community outcomes. Because of "Charitable Choice" legislation enacted in 1996 through Welfare Reform and the emerging political openness to faith based organizations, further research is necessary to determine the specific connection between faith based organizations, community action and social improvement. In this paper it is hypothesized that faith-based organizations inspire participants to initiate community-based nonprofits as a part of carrying out religious commitment. Furthermore, particular kinds of community based nonprofits-specifically human service, religious propagation, education, arts, and health organizations-will be formed as a result of a particular effort to carry out local community transformation by faith based organization participants. Data for analysis is collected from the Cal State Fullerton Center for Nonprofit Sector Research report (Costello & Kleinhenz, 2000) measuring the presence of nonprofit organizations in thirty Orange County, California cities, and a count of the number of faith based organizations in these same thirty Orange County cities derived from the Yellow Pages.

The results of analysis of data substantially confirm (but not unambiguously) the hypothesis of a high correlation between faith based organizations and community based nonprofits, and confirm the hypothesis that particular kinds of community-based nonprofits are created by the significant presence of faith based organizations. Further research is proposed for examination of these hypotheses utilizing different methods, examining other geographic locations and to further examine the relationship of these organizations and community improvement.

Introduction

Over the last several years "Faith based organizations" (FBOs) have made a major impression in the popular media and culture as a new means to help solve social problems. A barrage of articles in the press has highlighted the role of faith-based organizations in addressing longstanding social problems. In June 1997 the New Yorker asked, "Should Washington let the churches take over the inner cities?" The September 9, 1996 issue of US News & World Report asked, "Can churches save America?" The December 11, 1997 Chronicle of Philanthropy wondered, "Faith based charities to the rescue?"

Furthermore, this sector has grown both in the numbers as well as the political attention given to it. Employment in the religious organizations sector of the economy grew 14% between 1993 and 1997 to

over 1.4 million employees making it as large a field as computer data processing services, college & university employees and general building contractors (County Business Patterns, 1997). As these impressions indicate, with "the era of big government over", with questions arising about who will step into the gap to shoulder the burden of America's social problems frequently the answers include community non-profits and faith based organizations. George W. Bush stated that a central plank of "compassionate conservatism" is giving a strong role for faith-based organizations in implementing government services. Also Al Gore promised "a seat at the national table when decisions are made," for faith-based organizations and stated that, "If you elect me president the voices of faith based organizations will be integral in the policies of my administration." (Wallis, 1999)

Furthermore, with welfare reform legislation taking its effect across the country, policy makers cross their fingers hoping for the economy to remain strong so former recipients can continue to find jobs. However, when the boom ends, policy makers realize that they will need to expand their partnership with community organizations, including faith based organizations, to address social issues on some level, whether they like it or not. In fact, one component of the welfare reform legislation directly speaks to this issue.

"Charitable Choice" is the name of a section of Section 504 of the 1996 "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act" welfare reform law which specifically encourages government agencies to subcontract out to faith based organizations to implement job training programs to enable welfare recipients to get off of public assistance. This provision sponsored by former Senator John Ashcroft of Missouri specifically directed the government to look at faith based organizations no longer as potential violations of the "establishment clause" of the First Amendment but as partners in addressing social ills. Instead of wary adversaries, government and faith based organizations are encouraged to be complements to each other where the personal relationships of inspired believers cultivated by faith based organizations are harnessed to reach people where government dollars for standardized bureaucratic government prescriptions implemented by expert university trained social workers do not. In fact, the law is written to be so supportive of the unique prerogatives of faith based organizations that it states that faith based organizations can discriminate in their hiring of employees according to religion to ensure that the organization can hire people who believe as the organization does work for the program.

The ideology behind this belief is that faith based organizations have historically and can again play a significant role in helping

communities if given the chance without the constitutional restrictions placed on faith based organizations over the last fifty years. With the emergence of a new view of the Constitutional boundaries of church and state known as "substantive neutrality" whereby government equally endorses and supports all religious practice, an opportunity is emerging for change. Because of this, the potential of experimentation with the idea of government supported social service provision through faith-based organizations is becoming a reality (Moloney, 1999).

These revolutionary changes in how government views and interacts with faith based organizations promise a whole new field of examination for how policy makers, including urban planners, implement legislation such as welfare reform at the local level to work with faith based organizations in addressing social problems. As faith based organizations are often the last and strongest institutions remaining in inner city areas where the poor live, local officials inevitably find faith-based organizations on their list of stakeholders in the community. Furthermore, renowned social commentators have observed declining measures of social capital across the American public (Putnam, 1995). This has occurred even as community based organizations are needed more than ever to fill the gap made by the withdrawal of the state from areas of social involvement. The increase in faith-based organizations therefore makes the significance of religiously inspired social activity all the more important. Since planners have to interact with, understand, and partner with faith based organizations to a greater degree than is typically accepted in the modern secular state, a greater understanding is necessary of how faith based organizations can play a positive role not just in service delivery but perhaps a new role in community development as well.

The purpose of this paper is to:

- 1) Examine the literature describing the issues that come into play when understanding how government, faith based, and community based organizations interact;
- 2) Present a conceptual model of how faith based organizations impact the community; and
- 3) Evaluate the conceptual model in describing two expectations predicted from the model.

To begin this study of whether faith based organizations, community based nonprofits and government interact to promote social improvement, an examination of the historical record of how these relationships were negotiated is necessary. First the celebration and resistance to faith based organizations by government officials will be discussed to understand how certain issues exist regarding government

sponsored social work by faith based organizations. Then an examination of the positive rapport between government and community based nonprofits will be presented showing how, rather than directly funding nonprofits, government can get a better outcome through understanding how faith based organizations inspire community based nonprofits in particular ways. Then through seeking to harness this dynamic, a mutually beneficial common good for faith based organizations and government can occur even though the historical record demonstrates that neither side truly expects it. Finally, a conceptual framework of how faith based organizations inspire community based nonprofits will be presented which addresses the historical reality while also highlighting how opportunities due to recent changes in the legal situation and the Charitable Choice legislation in Welfare Reform can be nourished.

As the line is crossed whereby faith based organizations are being considered on equal footing as secular community organizations by government, changes in this relationship will extend well beyond the service delivery field but cause greater awareness of how faith based organizations impact overall community development. By better understanding the role and potential of faith based organizations in articulating community needs and delivering services, local policy makers can be better informed about how to interact with them for a mutually supportive common good.

Definitions

There are many different definitions that could be used to describe faith-based organizations. In response to the growing interest in this topic, the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) published a special supplemental issue in 1997 dedicated to "small religious nonprofits." In this special issue Cnaan and Milofsky (1997) counted "small religious nonprofits" as including:

- a. The internal efforts at social action located literally in church basements;
- b. The nonprofits started out of religious conviction of a charismatic leader or committed few;
- c. Nonprofits sponsored by outside inspiration; and
- d. Coalition efforts created by multiple faith based organization to address a particular need.

Organizations could be both visible as IRS registered 501 (c) 3 nonprofits or be invisible as small departments within a larger

organizational body. However, for the purposes of this paper, such a definition is too fuzzy with overlapping categories that intrude on the distinctions this paper is seeking to articulate in conceptualizing the emergence of community based nonprofits from faith based efforts.

Therefore because of the inappropriateness of utilizing this definition, for the purposes of this paper, the working terminology will be "faith based organization" and "community based nonprofit" rather than "small religious nonprofit." "Faith based organization" describes recognized churches, synagogues and/or mosques that have an address at property where they carry out religious functions. "Community based nonprofit" are registered 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organizations which have filed with the Internal Revenue Service and have reported more than \$25,000 in any given year. In this study, faith based organizations are presumed to be of established religious traditions, organized, and possessing of property where regular religious activities are performed. Although not all faith-based organizations fulfill these conditions, organizations that do not have these elements are outside the ability to have quantitative data gathered about them that is useful for the analyses performed in this study. Furthermore, not all community-based nonprofits have \$25,000 in revenue each year, are registered officially with the IRS, or file regularly. But again, without fulfilling these elements, the ability to gather data about them for the quantitative comparisons envisioned in this study are limited.

In addition, community based nonprofits are organized according to the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) which was developed by the National Center for Charitable Statistics to organize the various types of nonprofit organizations. Table 1 contains the categories and examples of organizations contained within each category.

Table 1

<u>Type</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Religious	Religion Related, Spiritual Development, Ministry, Mission, Religious Publishers and Broadcasters
Public Societal Benefit	Civil Rights, Social Action, Advocacy, Community Improvement, Neighborhood Associations, Business Promotion, Nonprofit Management, Men's/Women's Service Clubs, Philanthropy, Tourism, Science & Technology Research, Veteran's Associations, Leadership Development
Health	Hospitals, Clinics, Disease Prevention, Medical Research
Environment and Animals	Environmental Quality, Beautification, Protection, Animal Related
Education	Education related, schools
Mutual/Membership Benefit	Fraternal Beneficiary Societies, Retirement/Pension funds, Homeowners Associations
Arts, Culture and Humanities	Arts, Culture, Humanities Promotion
Human Services	Child Abuse Prevention, Delinquency Prevention, Vocational Rehabilitation, Food Banks, Housing/Shelter, Disaster Preparedness, Social Clubs, Youth Development, Scouts, Camping, Youth Clubs
International/Foreign Affairs	National Security, Relief Efforts

Celebration and Resistance to Faith Based Organizations

Throughout American history, faith based organizations have been both celebrated and resisted by the government for the influence they have on the community. They are celebrated for how they serve to

establish community norms, promote and sift leadership in the community, and serve as a catalyst for community based social organizing. However they are resisted for fear of violation of the First Amendment sanction against the establishment of religion by the government, for how they serve as a harbor for exclusive superstitions and resistance to community change, and by their very nature representing particular points of view about transcendent issues that are outside of the scope of examination by the state (McClay, 2000).

In addition, Carter (1993) argues that by their very nature, faith based organizations represent a particular opinion about public life that puts them fundamentally at odds with the state, thus inviting them to be repeatedly marginalized and disregarded. His theory is that because faith based organizations represent the opinion that supporting the common public good is not the highest fundamental goal of all people, they are in conflict with the state which in a democratic society does attempt to support the common public good for the most people possible. Faith based organizations encourage the opinion that there are certain minority principles that are worth standing by and dying for, even if they seem to conflict with the accepted common public good. In Carter's view, this potentially seditious view leads to faith based organizations and the opinions they stand for to be marginalized and disregarded by government.

The primary way this has been done is through legal restrictions. According to Moloney (1997), there are three modern viewpoints about the jurisprudence about the constitutional separation of church and state. The "No Aid" view was established in the 1947 "Everson vs. Board of Education" decision where the US Supreme Court stated that government cannot provide funding for any organization that is religious in nature and "pervasively sectarian." This viewpoint laid the foundation for similar kinds of decisions regarding prayer in schools and the placement of religious symbols in public places. By 1988, a more conservative US Supreme Court modified this viewpoint in "Bowen vs. Kendrick" which stated that government funds can be used by faith based organizations for secular purposes (Orr et al., 2000). Then the "Formal Neutrality" viewpoint emerged. This view was established through the 1990 "Employment Division vs. Smith" decision, which stated that although government cannot specifically prevent government employees from following their religion in the workplace, it could impede religion if it does so without it being on purpose. In terms of the state's relationship with faith-based organizations, "accidental" impediments like not funding a religious organization are acceptable. Although this was a modification of the strict "No Aid" viewpoint, "Formal Neutrality" created a political backlash against the Court by supporters of religious

practice where even President Bill Clinton enthusiastically supported and signed into law the “Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993” which explicitly supported religious practice by government officials in government capacity. Although the Supreme Court 1997 struck down this law, it set the stage politically for the consolidation of a new dogma on this issue to emerge--“Substantive Neutrality.” In this view extending the 1988 “Bowen vs. Kendrick” decision, government neither favors nor disfavors religion but can equally support all religious viewpoints.

According to Monsma (2000), "Substantive Neutrality" is the thinking behind Charitable Choice in the 1996 Welfare Reform law. "Formal Neutrality" was so heavily criticized in legal circles and the public because it established the idea that government should exclude religion from government recognition. However, in seeking to be "neutral" about "all religion", government instead became supportive of "no religion", which is taken as support of atheism. Because of this perceived prejudice against all religious practice, the supporters of “Substantive Neutrality” state that the First Amendment should be interpreted to mean that government should be neutral on what substance or content it supports. Therefore, all religion is viewed equal before the law in terms of its potential to be supported. In short, government should then be supportive of any and all content including atheism to the extent that government needs take a position at all about religion. The implication of this is that government should be allowed to form partnerships with religious organizations to do socially redeemable purposes. For example, government can support organizations that use the Christian Gospel, positive reinforcement, midnight basketball, or Zen Buddhism to reform drug addicts. The issue for the government funding agency is whether the drug addict is reformed, not the substance of how the reforming occurs.

This new legal openness to religion has not yet substantially changed how government and faith-based organizations relate to each other. Despite the new thinking, many wonder if faith based organizations and government would be able to adjust their mindsets to reflect the "Substantive Neutrality" philosophy demonstrated by Charitable Choice. The years of prior mutual suspicion are not easily undone. In California, welfare agencies have been slow to implement Charitable Choice and most of the activity from agencies has been in response to certain leaders of faith-based organizations seeking policy direction (Orr et al., 2000).

Furthermore, whether this philosophy will pass muster with US Supreme Court remains to be seen. One indication of the Court’s thinking is the 1997 “Agostino vs. Feldman” case which stated that

public grants to faith based organizations must be allocated “on the bases of neutral secular criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion and is made available to both religious and secular beneficiaries on a nondiscriminatory basis.” (Orr et al., 2000). Despite this narrow vote of confidence, the future of Charitable Choice is unsure.

Thus far, with welfare reform remaining politically popular, as the booming economy has allowed shrinking welfare rolls to bolster politicians' confidence about the wisdom of the 1996 law, Charitable Choice appears solid. However if welfare reform comes under attack if the economy collapses, one of the first areas to certainly be scrutinized will be Charitable Choice. Without evidence that faith based organizations do more than encapsulate the latest political fad, legal arguments far away from the front lines where planners must implement policy will determine the choices they have to choose from.

It also remains to be seen whether faith based organizations themselves are all that eager to have the government take an interest in the efforts of faith-based organizations to do public good. Many faith based organizations in impoverished areas have enough trouble affording full time services and maintaining facilities so the time and effort necessary to implement government funded social programs are not something they can realistically commit to. Because of this, Charitable Choice is not really on their “radar screens” (Orr et al., 2000). Chaves' (1999) examination of the 1998 National Congregations Study shows that only a third of congregations surveyed would apply for funding under Charitable Choice or any other program of government funding of social services. Furthermore, many liberal Protestant activists are resistant to Charitable Choice seeing it as merely “payback time” to conservative Christians for their support of the Republican Party (Orr et al., 2000). In addition, the Jewish Anti-Defamation League is partnering with the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State to resist Charitable Choice. Many opponents of Charitable Choice argue that the freedoms it claims to create are actually nothing new, given the fact that agencies such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services and Jewish Family Services have long received government funding to provide social services without any of the political fanfare surrounding Charitable Choice (Orr et al., 2000).

Beyond this, a major consideration regarding this policy is whether faith based organizations actually can implement social services in a way demanded by modern standards of professional social service practice. Jeavons & Cnaan (1997) argue that perhaps a key reason why small religious nonprofits and other faith based organizations are what they are and do what they do is because they are far more "process" oriented

and interested in "making a witness" of their religious beliefs than keeping to the stringent accountability requirements and outcome measures that government funders expect of grant recipients. Although a concern about "making a witness" or having "process" orientation may be fine for clergy or non-professional volunteers in counseling people about their souls or providing non-specialized service on a small-scale, the size and scope of professional ability needed to implement services that make a long term impact on individuals and communities may need a higher standard than most faith based organizations are prepared to implement. In fact Benjamin (1997) found that faith based organizations are startlingly disconnected from the world and expectations of even philanthropic funding of the private foundation community. It was found that as many as 15% of the faith-based organizations surveyed stated that they only "rarely" or "sometimes" submit budgets for grant proposals even when they are trying to be informed enough about outside funders to actively seek funding from outside sources.

Furthermore, questions arise about whether a religious organization loses its commitment to its religious calling when the resources that keep the organization alive are dedicated to a secular calling with outside accountability from secular sources. Stone and Wood (1997) describe how small religious nonprofits frequently undergo crises of legitimacy at the point where they begin to seek outside help to expand their ministry and taking the necessary steps to secure the professional management standards expected by non-religious funders can cause conflict and discord in the organization. Utilizing organizational theory, Jeavons and Cnaan (1997) describe how the pressures that accompany increased organizational complexity when funds and expertise for growth are obtained can cause the social service program to become more secular and all but indistinguishable from non-faith based peers in the same service field. Yet if these organizations do not conform to the expectations of their secular funders as they perform secular social service work, could they be said to be honest in their relationship with their funders if they do anything less than provide as much secular social service work as the secular funder demands from the funding contract? With Charitable Choice offering a seemingly bottomless source of government funding for potentially cash-strapped faith based organizations in poverty-stricken inner-city areas, integrity would demand that when the government is paying most of the bills, the organization should be doing mostly secular social service work.

Finally, there is the question that arises that drove the creation of the separation of church and state in the First Amendment. Religion is a powerful force in personal and social life that has frequently had a negative affect on society. Providing government support for

organizations dealing with the weakest and most vulnerable people in disadvantaged areas may be a recipe inviting abuse.

In short, a diverse literature questions whether vibrant support of faith based organizations through legislation such as Charitable Choice is what faith based organizations want or should want. Perhaps the years of government contradictory admiration but hostility to faith-based organizations was best for faith-based organizations. Perhaps more recent courtship and endorsement of faith-based organizations is a poison pill that could undermine their efforts if not the First Amendment as well. Yet, when the needs are so great and funding so frugally parsed out for social services, can cash-strapped faith based ministries or downsized government afford to criticize the reversal of government which now needs to take faith based interventions seriously?

Celebration of Secular Community Based Organizations

In contrast to this precarious situation with faith-based organizations, the rhetoric and support for other community-based organizations is rock solid. From the White House to City Hall, from private foundations to national advocacy organizations, "community organizing," "neighborhood empowerment", "civic virtue", "community action" and many other terms describing an overall phenomenon of average citizens taking control of their community destiny is lauded and celebrated.

Community organizing is based on the assumption that a community of people organized to efficiently and collectively pursuing a goal is more likely to be successful in achieving that goal than single individuals acting autonomously (Alinsky, 1971). Through informing and galvanizing a small group of citizens in a particular area or behind a particular concern, people can and will make logical, intelligent decisions to pursue and obtain not only the aims of the group itself, but also the good of the larger society as varieties of small groups compete to pursue the common good as each articulately informs the collective society what their section of the society wants to see achieved.

This philosophy of the importance of community-based organizations is frequently taken as the premise on which the American form of representative democracy, enshrined in the Constitution, is based. This pluralistic paradigm is seen from everything from the Federalist Papers with Madison, Hamilton and Jay debating the merits and weaknesses of "factions," to Alexis de Tocqueville observing the predominance of "associations" in his "Democracy in America," to the Progressive "Good Government" movement striving to deal with ethnic

and "machine" politics through "sunshine laws" and public hearings to force government to interact with organized groups. Even as the close of the Frontier and the Great Depression placed serious strains on representative democracy, political structures established on these premises responded well enough to mobilize the country through a World War and the Cold War and manage a society with the greatest standard of living of all of human history. Through all this, a faith in the ability of people to make common decisions to improve their neighborhoods, towns, states and country continued to remain enshrined as even the largest bureaucracies made space for "citizen participation" and "public hearings" to allow even the smallest voices to be heard and impact the direction of the juggernaut.

Even as decreasing voter participation, political corruption, the stresses of a multi-ethnic society without commonly assumed historical heritage, and the Information Age itself threaten to make historical representative democracy a quaint idea of the past, the belief in community remains strong. In fact, this yearning seems to have grown even stronger. Judging from the neighborhood oriented themes that continually appear in the political debate every four years, Americans still want local community activism to define our political ideals. "New Federalism" emerges to return power to the local level, to be followed by "Morning in America" with President Ronald Reagan talking about traditional values. "Contracts with America" emerge promising the dismantling of the Welfare State and the return to local values emerge only to be replaced with calls for flat taxes and "New Covenants." All these efforts strive at a promise of a return to simpler societies where New England Town Meetings set policies for the community. As this most recent wave of this yearning for local power is becoming actualized through the 1994 Republican victory, and 1996 political "triangulation" by President Bill Clinton to find the president-electing political center, various forms of decentralized "block granting" of social programs and government services promises to become even more of a reality.

Despite the goodwill towards secular community based organizations, questions emerge for planners about whether community based organizations are all that they are supposed to be. Community organizing efforts require time, money and skills. The classic work of Verba and Nye (1972) provided convincing data arguing that participants in community based organizations are disproportionately wealthy, elderly, and educated. Follow-up work by Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) indicates much of the same story. Putnam's classic work, "Bowling Alone" (1995) raises many of the same concerns. For planners operating on the local level, these statistics reveal a disappointing picture of the representativeness of community-based organizations.

Furthermore, even as community based nonprofits could be vehicles for the enhancement of democracy through their ability to mobilize public opinion, they can also be strongholds of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) resistance, intolerance and exclusivity (Fisher 1993; Takahashi, 1998). For every homeless shelter, there are homeowners associations seeking to elect city councils to ban homeless people from the city limits. For every tutoring program for inner city youths, there are political action committees mobilizing voters to pass propositions to try juvenile murderers as adults. For every community free clinic, there are exclusive social clubs that discriminate against individuals based on race, class or health status. Basically, as far as planners seeking the public good are concerned, community based nonprofits may not be all created equal. Certain nonprofits enhance what planners would like to pursue as the social good, while others, in planners' professional opinion, are organizations that are better left untouched by the validation that comes from government recognition. Yet how often are there community-based nonprofits that both hold the esteem that we grant to grassroots community action, but also can tackle difficult and unpopular tasks of our complex society?

Conceptual Framework
Faith Based Organizations, Community Based Organizations and
Societal Betterment

It has been long recognized that faith based organizations organize money and organized people in specific geographical areas. Churches, synagogues and mosques are organized networks of families with invested time, energy and resources committed to making a stand for a particular vision in a neighborhood. Precisely because of this investment, faith based organizations are often the last remaining social structures in cities of poor people. Because of their historical traditions and mandates from their philosophical principals, they are loath to abandon the people who need them the most.

Because of this commitment they are prime fertile ground to activate people to move the community because often they have the most authentic relationship to the community because frequently they are the institutions that have been around the longest. Indeed this has already happened as churches often serve as the bedrock for community cohesion in rural towns with few accessible social services to take care of the old and the young. But this is especially true in communities of color where historically Black Churches took the lead in the Civil Rights Movement and the Catholic Church has been the spiritual foundation for communities from Latin America as Liberation Theology teaches that Christianity requires solidarity with the poor for believers. Immigrant

communities of Muslims frequently turn to the mosque as the center of the community as secular Western culture assaults the sensibilities of Muslims experiencing it for the first time or experiencing it as an opponent to their values. Furthermore, Jewish communities turn to the synagogue to provide a foundation for the religious community as a moral fortification and inspiration for action against anti-Semitism and hostility.

Faith based communities thus may play a central role in organizing social interventions in their communities, thus giving them a disproportionate impact on the society around them, relative to their numbers. As Islam teaches that all legitimate authority is derived from the Koran, the synagogue has been the center of the community for the Jewish nation, and an incarnational view of living among the poor is described in the Christian Scriptures, participants of faith based organizations are uniquely positioned to engage in social action, if only because their faith tells them they have to. In fact, Harris (1994) has found that the church in African American communities plays a large role in political organizing. Also, Brady, Verba & Schlozman (1995) found that citizen participation is enhanced through involvement in faith based organizations because faith based organizations provide the settings for the broadest diversity of people to gain the "civic resources" necessary to participate effectively in public life. As this situation has repeated over and over throughout history, evidence emerges that indicates that faith based organizations play a significant role in many forms of community change.

Despite the evidence of a link, a conceptual framework about how spiritual belief translates into social change is lacking. To fill this gap, this study proposes that faith based organizations inspire the creation of particular kinds of community based nonprofits that then act as "mediating structures" that transform personal values into public action. Berger and Neuhaus (1977) postulate that "mediating structures" such as churches, neighborhood associations, and other forms of community organizations are essential structures to translate private concerns into public issues. They take what are personal and transform them into public. As personal values are transformed into public action, neighborhoods are transformed.

According to Schneider and Ingram (1997), the social construction of target groups strongly determines the kinds of government policies that are developed and adopted by decision makers. Decision makers recognize particular groups of people as being deserving or undeserving, strong or weak. Deserving and strong target groups are considered "advantaged." Deserving and weak target groups are "dependents."

Undeserving and strong target groups are considered “contenders.” Finally, undeserving and weak target groups are called “deviant.” Degenerative politics is when the allocation of society's resources is determined by policy makers' assessments of the social construction of a target group and whether a particular policy choice is deemed to likely benefit or weaken a particular target group which has the ability to impact the granting of power to a policy maker. Because of degenerative politics, the social construction of target groups divides the community among the strict lines of power and favor that rarely get crossed thus leading to unresponsive government.

While the theory focuses on government policymaking, the impacts of how the world gets organized in such a way by members of society extend far beyond politics. Neighborhoods have reputations, automobiles isolate individuals from the outside road, and professional trajectories define the people that most ever meet every day as they go about their business. When "advantaged", "contenders", "deviants" and "dependents" define the social order, the ability of society to operate with justice, peace and fairness is compromised since the categories are so entrenched and lines are rarely crossed, thus affecting not only government process, but the ability of society to work. When society does not work well, social ills such as crime, violence and poverty emerge.

However, one of the few times this pattern is broken is when people participate in their religion and take steps of faith to perform the highest ideals of their faith with other people. It is this kind of break in the routine that has the promises to weaken the effects of the social isolation, which might allow the opportunity for degenerative politics to be undone. For any expansion of community involvement and true legitimization of the citizen participation that emerges, activated participants become vehicles for community social good because religious ideology demands that people come out of their private concerns and be plugged into the public arena (New American Bible, 1986).

For example, one of the fundamental tenants of the Judeo-Christian tradition is "love your neighbor as yourself". One of the most recognized parables of Jesus, the parable of the Good Samaritan was given in response to the question, "who is my neighbor?" and demands that people need to love even the person most unlike themselves, the "Samaritan" in their lives, let alone the people we have so much more in common (New American Bible, 1986). The famous parable of the Good Samaritan is about how a Samaritan, who was at best a “dependent” and most likely a “deviant” in ancient Palestinian culture took care of a beaten up man of an “advantaged” Jewish cultural group even to the

point of making himself financially obligated to an innkeeper when other members of his same advantaged group failed to do anything. Jesus tells his audience to “love their neighbor” by doing what the Samaritan did for the Jewish person, even if it is difficult. Christians who truly believe what Jesus is saying on such a fundamental and well-known doctrine must do the same. This commitment then makes church members prime fertile ground to activate people to move the community because in order to be faithful to their beliefs as articulated in Scripture, they need to intentionally look beyond the social construction given to particular groups.

Furthermore, faith based organizations offer the potential to undo degenerative politics because they cut across social constructions in a fundamental way through the distribution of their membership. Although particular religious organizations may seem to be comprised of people from similar social-economic classes, the power ascribed to religious conversion in changing people’s lives for the better provides one of the few places in society where social constructions become unmasked. The nature of significant religious commitment is to humble oneself to spiritual authority or to the religious community. For example, a demand of Christianity is that as a condition for salvation one needs to admit they are a sinner, confess and repent of sin and live a new life (New American Bible, 1986). For those who truly believe this conversion, this experience is a transformative situation that they cannot get enough of talking about to other people, especially in religious contexts where people can give their testimony. With this self reinforcing excitement, people are encouraged to talk about what is in their hearts, share what they need and dialogue with each other in building “community” even if ostensibly for enhancing the solidarity of the organization. However, as this experience happens to more and more people in the organization, a real diversity of people emerges as everyone has their story of where they came from, but they are united based on what happened for them in being converted.

Unlike social groups that exist to reinforce a status quo, faith based organizations are organizations of people in various stages of transition who are open, excited and talking about how they are changing. It is this kind of environment that an “ideal speech situation” as described by critical theorists where there is comprehensibility, sincerity, rightness and truth (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Consistent with critical theory, people learn how to participate in true democracy. Because churches have a history of being focusing resources and organizing people seeking to change the world around them, poor areas that are most in need of policy action to improve become the target for transformed people to effect changes. Rather than preserve social

constructions that favor advantaged groups at the expense of dependents or deviants, faith based organizations composed of people like this are individuals who at one time or another were dependents, deviants, contenders or advantaged him or herself.

Communal social action becomes possible because the fundamental nature of communal religious experience is to take what is personal and private and place some sort of collective demand on it through articulating how the personal and private is actually public. The way this happens is that faith based organizations help people actualize personal values into public action through creating dialogue between participants of the faith within a community about the meaning of the faith such that they feel compelled to do something about making their faith "real". In faith based organizations, spiritual leaders and the faith community play the role of directing, teaching and modeling how and why certain personal and private feelings and notions people have can and should be acted out and affect other people, and why certain feelings and notions people have should not be acted out. Furthermore, of the ones that should be acted out and made public, spiritual leaders tell and show people how to do it. Then through "practicing what they preach" believers transcend the social construction of their class, race and gender and help mitigate the negative effects of these factors in the world around them. As members of faith-based organizations authentically practice what they preach, transcending the privileges or pathologies projected onto them by society, they can transform people thus reducing social dysfunctions such as crime, violence, and poverty. Furthermore, as people change their lives because of the articulated methods and application of the values they subscribe to, they affect other people which then causes them to organize around particular issues which are modeled in the religious community and seek to replicate it in the wider world by forming nonprofit organizations that reflect the values and issues of importance of the ideology contained within the religion. As nonprofit organizations are formed repeatedly, new energy and new vibrancy is added to the neighborhoods that the faith-based organizations are in thus resulting in community change such as lowered crime rates, decreases in poverty and greater social cohesion.

Without dynamic vibrancy in community based organizations giving voice to the changing personal and private notions and feelings of people in entire communities, old organizations based on old personal and private notions and feelings defined by old directions, teachings and modeling remain and become entrenched and misrepresent the true nature of a community's reality. When the task of allocating resources is determined (either by political fiat through government, or economic distribution through business responding to supply and demand), it is

those community based organizations that are out of touch and irrelevant that are too often given the presumptions of speaking the mind of the community. They elect, organize and pressure for the allocation of resources to a community in an unjust way because the distribution is not based on the truth of what is really happening. In this way, the "megastructures" of government and business become oppressive and destructive. However, the community may be transformed as faith based organizations dynamically and proactively enable participants to translate private notions to public actions. New community based nonprofits are formed which serve as vital new "mediating structures" which transcend social constructions as their organizers practice religious values. Then this may change the community as a whole.

Research Questions

- A. Is there an association between the presence of faith-based organizations and community based nonprofit organizations?

It is expected that geographical areas that have a high number of faith-based organizations would also have a high number of community based nonprofit organizations. Active faith based organizations would inspire participants to go out and "walk the talk" of their faith in socially beneficial ways through starting organizations dedicated to charitable purposes. Finding a correlation between faith based organizations and community based nonprofit organizations, controlling for factors that could lead to high numbers of both (number of years since incorporation of the city, population of the city, poverty rate, median income of residents, ethnic distribution) would be evidence that members of faith based organizations are actualizing their faith in constructive, long term ways through establishing organizations that fulfill charitable visions. Consistent with the conceptual model, it is expected that there will be a high correlation between faith based organizations and community based nonprofit organizations at a later point in time which are hypothesized to have been formed by and/or supported by people in the faith based organizations.

- B. Which kinds of community nonprofit organizations are inspired by faith-based organizations?

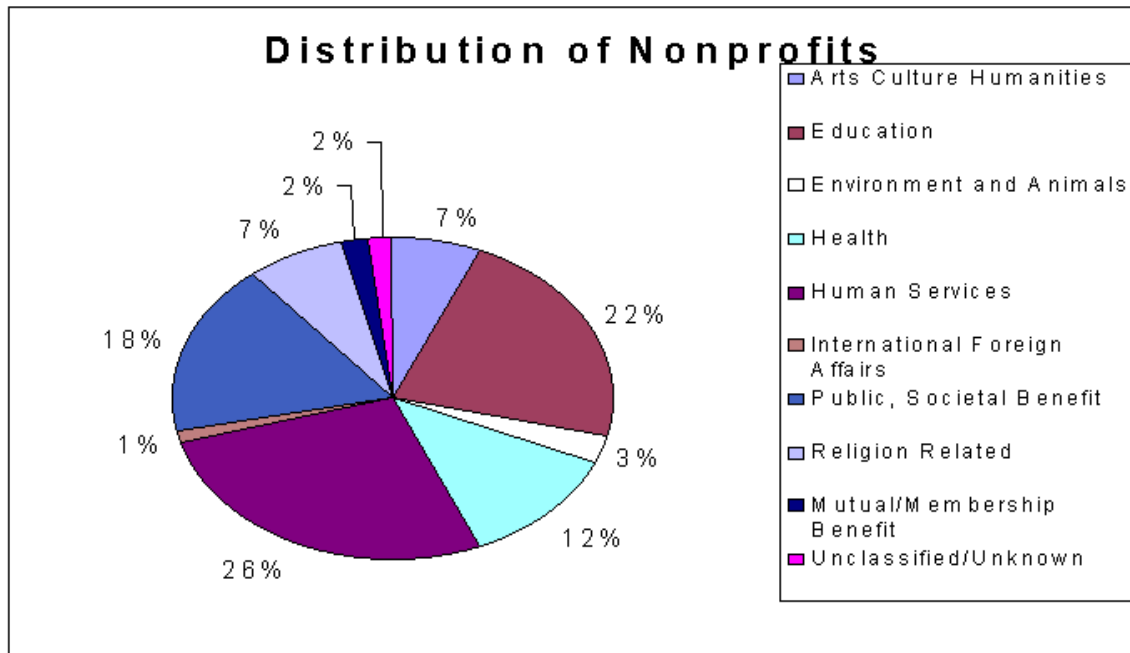
Due to the teachings, modeling of leadership and organizational capacities, certain types of community based nonprofit organizations will be correlated with faith-based organizations while others will not. Due to the historical traditions of many religious traditions, a high correlation between faith based organizations and community-based nonprofits specializing in education, health, religion, arts, and human services are

to be expected. Hospitals associated with particular denominations, the self-evident motivation to support religious propagation, the tradition of religious schools, the history of religiously inspired art, and widespread charitable activities towards the impoverished predict these outcomes. Nonprofits focusing on environmental issues and mutual aid are less expected because the teachings and historical traditions of Christianity are less focused on these issues.

Method

To answer these research questions data was analyzed from Orange County California examining the correlation between the presence of faith based organizations and various types of community based organizations. The Orange County data was taken from the Cal State Fullerton Center for Nonprofit Research 2000 report "The Nonprofit Sector in Orange County California: 1997 Scope and Characteristics". This report contained data on the type of nonprofit organizations in thirty-one Orange County cities grouped according to the "National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities--Core Codes" developed by the National Center for Charitable Statistics and the Foundation Center. The community-based organizations enumerated are tax exempt according to section 501 c (3) of the Internal Revenue Service tax code, active, reporting to the IRS, and having gross receipts of \$25,000 or more. The faith-based organizations are churches, synagogues and mosques listed in an Internet search of these types of organizations on www.msn.com Yellow Pages and archived Yellow Pages from 1985. Faith based organizations are specifically exempt by the IRS code from the requirement to report and most do not.

Following is a pie chart describing the distribution of these organizations in Orange County:



Source: "The Nonprofit Sector in Orange County California: 1997 Scope and Characteristics" [Center for Nonprofit Research](#) Cal State Fullerton. 2000

Because the number of International Foreign Affairs organizations is such a small number and deals with a social benefit outside of the local community, these organizations are not included as part of the study.

The examination of the data involved several steps. First, correlations were performed comparing the number of faith-based organizations in a particular Orange County city in 1985 and the number of community based organizations per city in 1997. The correlations were between the number of faith-based organizations and community based nonprofits at different times to capture the potential causality effect hypothesized in the conceptual model. This was also done controlling for variables such as median family income per city as measured in 1995 by the Census Bureau, number of years since incorporation of the city, total population of the city as measured by the 1995 Census Bureau estimate, the 1990 Census poverty rate, and ethnic percentage of White people per city as measured by the 1990 Census. The number of years since incorporation of the city may produce the same pattern of correlation as predicted by the model because as a city gets older, the number of faith based organizations may increase at a rate comparable to the rate of increase of nonprofit organizations as new organizations form over time at equal rates for both faith based and community organizations for reasons unrelated to the hypothesized

theory. The median family income in cities may also affect the correlation of faith based organizations and nonprofits as wealthier communities may have more disposable income to make more charitable donations to support the infrastructure of these kinds of organizations. The poverty rate may affect the correlation of faith based organizations and nonprofits because increased need in a community may cause the members of the faith based organizations to be more aware of the opportunities for service around them and more compelled to respond to the call of their faith tradition.

After this, correlations were performed examining which types of community-based organizations were correlated with which types of faith based organizations per city. The same time differential was used in the analysis as before to capture the same potential causality effect hypothesized in the model. These were also controlled for variables such as median family income per city, years since incorporation of the city, population of the city, poverty rate, and percentage White in the city.

Results

The results of this analysis reveal the following conclusions:

- 1) The number of faith-based organizations per city is correlated with the number of community-based organizations per city over a decade later. Yet after controlling for population, this statistical relationship weakens considerably. The following table shows the correlation between the number of faith based organizations per city in Orange County in 1985 and the number of community based nonprofit organizations in 1997:

Table 2

	Correlation Between Faith Based Organizations in 1985 and Community Based Nonprofits in 1997	Significance p □
Total Correlation	0.746	0.000
Controlling For Years Since Incorporation	0.640	0.000
Controlling Population (1995 Census Estimation)	0.219	0.253
Controlling For Median Family Income (1990 Census)	0.810	0.000
Controlling For Poverty Rate (1990 Census)	0.711	0.000
Controlling For Percentage White (1990 Census)	0.782	0.000

- 2) Performing a regression on the data in order to better determine potential causality reveals paradoxical data that invites further investigation. A simple Ordinary Least Squares Regression measuring the Total Number of Community Based Organizations in 1997 predicted by the Population, the Median Family Income, Poverty Rate, Years since Incorporation, and Number of Faith Based Organizations reveals the following results:

Table 3

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-140.211	57.188		-2.452	.023
Population 1997	2.439E-04	.000	.411	1.023	.318
Median Family Income 1995	1.340E-03	.001	.341	1.687	.106
Percentage White 1995	.768	.666	.276	1.152	.262
Years Since Incorporation	7.570E-02	.223	.054	.339	.738
Poverty Rate 1990	3.671	2.761	.289	1.330	.198
Number of Faith Based Organizations in 1985	.535	.543	.416	.985	.336

The T-test results point to non-significant results with the T-test result of 0.985 for the Number of Faith Based Organizations in 1985 predicting the Number of Community Based Nonprofits in 1997. This indicates that the number of faith-based organizations is not connected to the number of community-based organizations in a given city.

However, performing the Backward Elimination Regression procedure on the SPSS software points to a different picture in Table 4.

Table 4

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-140.211	57.188		-2.452	.023
	Population 1997	2.439E-04	.000	.411	1.023	.318
	Median Family Income	1.340E-03	.001	.341	1.687	.106
	Percentage White	.768	.666	.276	1.152	.262
	Years Since Incorporation	7.570E-02	.223	.054	.339	.738
	Poverty Rate in 1990	3.671	2.761	.289	1.330	.198
	Number of FBOs in 1985	.535	.543	.416	.985	.336
2	(Constant)	-139.276	55.961		-2.489	.021
	Population 1997	2.263E-04	.000	.381	.993	.332
	Median Family Income	1.306E-03	.001	.333	1.692	.105
	Percentage White	.818	.636	.294	1.286	.212
	Poverty Rate in 1990	3.853	2.653	.304	1.453	.160
	Number of FBOs in 1985	.611	.485	.475	1.261	.221
3	(Constant)	-131.784	55.433		-2.377	.026
	Median Family Income	1.334E-03	.001	.340	1.729	.097
	Percentage White	.746	.632	.268	1.180	.250
	Poverty Rate in 1990	3.983	2.649	.314	1.504	.146
	Number of FBOs in 1985	1.057	.184	.821	5.753	.000
4	(Constant)	-98.350	48.036		-2.047	.052
	Median Family Income	1.811E-03	.001	.461	2.735	.012
	Poverty Rate in 1990	2.652	2.416	.209	1.098	.283
	Number of FBOs in 1985	1.008	.180	.783	5.586	.000
5	(Constant)	-56.018	28.755		-1.948	.063
	Median Family Income	1.315E-03	.000	.335	2.704	.012
	Number of FBOs in 1985	1.102	.159	.856	6.910	.000

Performing the Backward Elimination Regression procedure reveals a T-test result of 6.910 for predicting the number of Community Based Organizations in 1997 from the Number of Faith Based Organizations in 1985. Median Family Income is also significant with a T-test result of 2.704.

The Backward Elimination Regression procedure attempts to isolate the effects of a particular independent variable by measuring the degree that each variable affects the dependent variable separate from the collective impacts that all the variables together have on predicting the dependent variable. This procedure works by having all the variables entered into the equation and then sequentially removed. The variable with the smallest partial correlation with the dependent variable is considered first for removal. If it meets the criterion for elimination, it is removed. After the first variable is removed, the variable remaining in the equation with the smallest partial correlation is considered next. The procedure stops when there are no variables in the equation that satisfy the removal criteria (The default tolerance level is 0.0001). This

procedure allows for the identification of significant predictors whose effects may be masked through being highly correlated with another predictor variable. In this case, as shown in Table 5 the Number of Faith Based Organizations in 1985 is highly correlated with Population, therefore its effect is masked.

Table 5

	Population 1997	Faith Based Organizations 1985
Population 1997	1.000	0.948
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
N	30	30
Faith Based Organizations 1985	0.948	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
N	30	30

According to Table 5 Population and the Number of Faith based Organizations have a 0.948 correlation.

- 3) There is a pattern of correlation between the number of faith-based organizations per city and particular kinds of nonprofit organizations. As predicted by the hypothesis, the highest levels of correlation are with health, human services, religious, arts, and educational nonprofits. The following table reveals the patterns of correlation and the levels of significance:

Table 6

Correlations		Faith Based Organizations
RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.746
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	30.00
PUBLIC SOCIAL BENEFIT 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.428
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018
	N	30.00
MUTUAL MEMBERSHIP 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.375
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.041
	N	30.00
HEALTH 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.705
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	30.00
ENVIRONMENTAL 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.318
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.086
	N	30.00
EDUCATION 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.566
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	30.00
ARTS AND CULTURE	Pearson Correlation	0.617
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	30.00
HUMAN SERVICE 1997	Pearson Correlation	0.830
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	30.00

The highest correlations are between numbers of faith-based organizations and human services, religious propagation, health, education, and arts community based organizations.

In order to rule out confounding variables that might reveal this same pattern of correlation, the tests were performed again controlling for years since incorporation of the city, city population, median family income, percent White, and poverty and racial composition. The following table reveals the correlations controlling for these variables:

Table 7

Correlation between FBOs and different types of CBOs		Total Correlation	Controlling Median Family Income	Controlling Years Since Incorporation	Controlling Population Size	Controlling Poverty Rate	Controlling % White
RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION	Correlation	0.746	0.716	0.665	0.422	0.679	0.680
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.023	0.000	0.000
	N	30.00					
PUBLIC SOCIAL BENEFIT	Correlation	0.428	0.583	0.288	0.061	0.376	0.522
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018	0.001	0.129	0.751	0.043	0.004
	N	30.00					
MUTUAL MEMBERSHIP	Correlation	0.375	0.386	0.017	-0.032	0.375	0.459
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.041	0.047	0.929	0.866	0.045	0.012
	N	30.00					
HEALTH	Correlation	0.705	0.734	0.585	0.465	0.674	0.704
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.011	0.000	0.000
	N	30.00					
ENVIRONMENTAL	Correlation	0.318	0.510	0.138	0.001	0.317	0.5668
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.086	0.007	0.473	0.993	0.094	0.001
	N	30.00					

EDUCATION	Correlation	0.566	0.659	0.524	-0.172	0.642	0.653
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.000	0.004	0.373	0.000	0.000
	N	30.00					
ARTS AND CULTURE	Correlation	0.617	0.647	0.549	-0.025	0.540	0.609
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.896	0.002	0.000
	N	30.00					
HUMAN SERVICE	Correlation	0.830	0.821	0.756	0.345	0.766	0.808
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.000	0.000
	N	30.00					

For all of the control conditions, the correlations remain relatively stable confirming the initial pattern. However, even the emergence anomalous results controlling for population do not disastrously repudiate central predictions contained in the hypothesis. The correlation between faith-based organizations in 1985 and health, religious propagation and human service nonprofits remains at nearly significant conditions ($p \leq 0.05$). With such high correlations continuing, evidence confirming the hypothesis appears to be secured.

Discussion

With these results, new insight is provided on the role faith based organizations can play in solving community problems. This data demonstrates that the opportunities created by Charitable Choice will find their most natural home in the formation of community based nonprofits focused on religious propagation, health, and human services. Given that the vision behind this legislation is targeted towards the capacity building of these kinds of social instruments to accomplish social good, this data provides encouraging support that government funding of faith based endeavors will not be only a backhanded way of supporting unconstitutional establishment of religion. The positive correlations of faith based organizations and community nonprofits, particularly in the formation of crime-impacting human service

nonprofits indicates that faith based organizations have the potential to be solid partners.

At this time, Charitable Choice is mostly being implemented for job training programs for welfare reform. The vision is that similar kinds of partnerships can be established for empowering faith-based organizations to attack a wide variety of social ills. But, given the literature showing how faith based organizations may not desire or be prepared to fulfill this vision, and because the legal position of faith based organizations is still precarious, much further thought is necessary to rethink how this will be carried out. In response, this paper conceptualized a model of faith-based organizations sponsoring or inspiring the creation of community based nonprofits. Such a model fulfills a natural role of both faith-based organizations and community based nonprofits that has deep resonance in American history as a model for public-private partnership for widely accepted public good.

Even though a new vision of implementing faith-based initiatives is no small discovery, more work is necessary in understanding the role of faith-based organizations. In this study, several questions arise about the assumptions presumed in the implementation of this project. One of the central propositions assumed in this study is that counting the number of church congregations and the number of community nonprofits is an enumeration of equal sized units. In other words, the twenty-person congregation is counted as the same weight as a two thousand-person congregation, and an established Boys and Girls Club is the same weight as a newly formed neighborhood association. Since the social impact, complexity and sophistication of organizations are not uniform, the correlations measured may be over represented in some organization categories and under represented in others.

Other questions emerge about the choice of time frames. The 1985-1997 time-span may be either too long or too short to capture the impact of faith-based organizations on the formation of community nonprofits. Also, a tighter analysis could be obtained through comparing the change in number of faith-based organizations from 1985 to 1997 relative to the change in the number of community-based nonprofits from 1985-1997. However, given that this is an exploratory model, the efforts necessary to obtain the data necessary for a higher level of analysis were beyond what is necessary to initiate preliminary discovery of the viability of this model.

Furthermore, other methods might be necessary to accurately capture the information necessary to confirm the hypotheses proposed in this model. Correlations, regressions, or any other quantitative method

might not be adequate to capturing the nuances of the relationship between faith based and community based nonprofits. In addition, the Backward Elimination Regression procedure for processing the data may not be an appropriate or adequate method for analyzing the relationship between the number of Faith Based Organizations in 1985 and the number of Community Based Nonprofits in 1997. Further analysis utilizing qualitative research methods such as interviews and/or surveys are next steps in enhancing the rigor of this analysis.

Also, this small data set may perhaps be affecting the results. The smaller number of environmental and arts & culture nonprofits may not provide enough variability across the cities of Orange County to allow for meaningful comparisons. Additionally, questions emerge about whether the number of community-based nonprofits per city is a true indicator of the zone of impact of the nonprofit organizations. As observed by a commentator of the [Center of Nonprofit Sector Research](#) data set, perhaps certain cities provide office space for lower rent (Costello & Kleinhenz, 2000).

In addition, given the highly mobile car culture of Orange County, measuring faith-based organizations per city may not truly reflect the zone of impact of faith-based organizations. Perhaps an analysis and comparison of faith based organizations and community based nonprofits for entire metropolitan areas may be a better way of capturing this relationship.

Finally, since this is a small study comprised of data from Orange County, California, further examination is necessary of other geographic areas to draw more stable conclusions about the outcomes presented here. A comparison with a large urban metropolis from the East Coast, a comparison across counties in a rural state, or comparisons across each of the fifty United States would provide enough data to extrapolate conclusions. Further research exploring these possibilities is recommended given the importance of this topic.

Faith based organizations promise to become larger players on the local political stage. Thus, greater awareness is necessary by local policymakers about how these kinds of organizations play a larger role than being merely vehicles for service delivery. Given conflicted history with faith based organizations but celebratory partnership with secular community organizations the community development role of faith-based organizations has been under appreciated. Being long term anchors in the community, exacting demands on believers' hearts, faith based organizations can play a powerful role in encouraging the birth of new community organizations and reducing degenerative political patterns at

the local level. As these opportunities are recognized, the potentials and pitfalls of the rhetoric promulgated by politicians can be better evaluated and local planners which must deal with the fallout of the changed political landscape can be better informed about how best to respond.

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