Nonprofit Mission: Constancy, Responsiveness, or Deflection?

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INTRODUCTION: WHY MISSION LOOMS LARGE

In a simple, elemental fashion, a mission is a clarion call for nonprofit organizations. The goals or agendas attached to a mission serve to rally, engage, and enroll workers, volunteers, and donors. They also serve as guidelines for how to go about the business of contributing to the public good. Arguably the primary principle that motivates the nonprofit enterprise. In this sense, nonprofit mission operates as an inducement and, as a long tradition of organization theory stresses, inducements are essential for motivating participants to contribute to organizations (Barlow 1958; Simon 1947).

Nonprofit organizations have both instrumental and expressive dimensions (Prunkin 2002). Thus a core feature of nonprofit activity is affording individuals the opportunity to express their beliefs through work and donations. As Prunkin (2002:23) observes, "the very act of attempting to address a need or fight for a cause can be a satisfying end in itself, regardless of the outcome." Nonprofit mission looms large in the context of such expressive activity because an organization's goals provide workers and donors with the satisfaction that their values are being put into action. Organizational mission also drives founders to start an organization, and it provides a sense of purpose that energizes and justifies organizational existence. In an important sense, mission serves to signal what a nonprofit organization regards as good and important, and through that signal induces supporters to invest their time, energy, and resources.

Onor (1995) contends that mission plays a much larger role in nonprofits than in proprietary enterprises. She argues that in contrast, a distinctive advantage of nonprofits is their ability to motivate staff on the basis of an organization's fidelity to a cause. That engagement hinges on issues of trust, commitment, and reputation. Many nonprofits, whether religious or secular, are ideological organizations, and their passion or faith is their rationale for existence. A clear mandate or calling creates allegiance and trust among employees, clients, and donors. For ideologically oriented nonprofits, mission both attracts and compels staff and supporters.

The mechanisms of trust and assurance underlie the major theoretical accounts of nonprofit activity, including contract failure (Hanneman 1980), median voter or government failure (Weibord 1988), and worker control (Pauly and Redisch 1973; Glasser 2003). These literatures are discussed extensively elsewhere in this volume, so we need not review them at length here. We simply want to note how mission functions in each approach. Contract failure arguments rest on the idea that in circumstances where there are strong informational asymmetries between the provider of a service and a good, and thus abundant opportunities for the former to exploit the latter, nonprofit status is an assurance that such incentives are mitigated. Devotion to a mission wraps the consumer in a blanket of trust, so to speak.

Government provision of goods and services is typically targeted to the mainstream, to a stylized median voter. Nonprofits, in response, cater to more specialized, distinctive, or passionate niches. Onor (1995) argues that nonprofits specialize in the more controversial ends of the public goods spectrum. And it is in precisely these areas where participants have a strong allegiance to an activity or a constant need for a service, hence the signal of a nonprofit's adherence or commitment to a mission is critical.

A third view of nonprofit activity stresses that the form is well suited for the realization of professional goals. Nonprofit mission dovetails nicely with a professional calling or purpose and helps foster professional sovereignty as well. Pauly and Redisch (1973) suggested that hospitals may, at one time, have functioned as doctors' cooperatives. Glasser (2005) extends this idea to art museums, private universi-
EXPLAINING CHANGES IN NONPROFIT MISSION

In the first edition of this handbook, this chapter was entitled "Organizational Mission: The Student-Orientation Contingency Model." As we revised the chapter, our goal was in revising and expanding the chapter is not merely to update the research, which has grown considerably, but also to tackle the interesting question about the salience of nonprofit missions and the environmental contingencies that are likely to influence them. We have, furthermore, included a discussion on the challenges faced by nonprofits in defining and implementing their missions. Critical Influences

Organizational Life Cycle
The size and age of a nonprofit organization may strongly influence the extent to which it maintains its fidelity to a mission. Several factors, however, are at play in considerations of the influence of organizational demography. Small organizations, which DiMaggio (2001) characterizes as minimalists, are highly fluid and flexible. In contrast, larger, established organizations are more formal and procedural. The attachment to organizational policies may inhibit the mindset of new staff members, while the participatory nature of small organizations may promote zeal for a mission. Similarly, Glaesser (2003) argues that donor control over established, well-established nonprofits is weak, and thus donors who want their funds spent in a specific way may opt to start their own foundations or engage in a limited number of smaller nonprofits whose behavior they can strongly influence. Such a calculus seems to motivate many of the practices of the so-called new venture philanthropy.

In contrast, however, smaller, younger nonprofits are often in vulnerable financial positions, while larger, established nonprofits have a more secure and diversified funding base. Thus, cash-strapped small nonprofits typically have to chase after funds, and such money is frequently tied more closely to a donor's interests than to a nonprofit's mission. Rangan (2004) argues that this kind of struggle for support can become "addictive," as the funds obtained usually cover only direct costs and do not contribute to overhead or infrastructure. Hence, the organization must search again for other funds, and in so doing the mission becomes ever more diluted.

One further life-cycle factor that may influence adherence to or defection from a mission is the departure of the founder or early charismatic leader. To the extent that a group's original mission is not widely institutionalized in organizational practices or that participation and external support is mainly a function of a single individual's standing both inside and outside of the group, the loss of a key leader is likely to make mission continuity much more difficult to achieve. In such general terms, generational, generational or demographic turnover in leadership and members has the potential to introduce new ideas and challenges regarding an organization's structure and objectives. Turnover seems to be particularly disruptive for social movement groups that gain visibility and new members who then are accommodated (or ignored). Gitlin (1980), for example, documents such a life-cycle effect for the Students for a Democratic Society, as does Polletta's (2002) research on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, although we expect that this dilemma confronts all nonprofits that operate along less (or non-)bureaucratic lines.

Voluntarism versus Professionalism
Nonprofits that are volunteer-based are built from the grassroots on the basis of strong commitment. Such organizations are often highly purposeful, with specific goals as the abiding passion of the participants. Fidelity to mission is critical in order to sustain participation. Nonprofits with more professionalized staff may also be motivated by a sense of purpose, but that calling is tempered by concerns with public accountability, the dictates of professional responsibility, and an awareness of the requirements that professional service providers must meet. Increased professionalism may inevitably lead such nonprofits to "need" or "want" to "control" their "missions" because professionals are more cognizant of external contingencies that influence work practices and organizational goals.

Mission versus Mandate
A mission is concerned with creating social value or contributing to the public good, although opinions certainly differ on the meaning of what is "good." Engberg (1996) and Marsi (1997), for example, promote a more equitable or open society; reversing traditional value judgments, eradicating disease, preventing the remaining pristine places on the planet, or working to reduce the scope of government and utilities, foundations, and hospitals that load higher on the dimension of instrumental inducements. When mission shift occurs—and often does—over all types of nonprofits, our interest here is in these organizations that we expect to experience the most acute disruption when the group's original mission no longer aligns with the expectations of members, outside supporters, or political decision makers. This set of organizations is presumed to be more subject to internal and external scrutiny and to the need for acceptance by powerful participants. Mission-based organizations are also tightly articulating ideological or political agendas that are difficult to achieve, and this struggle exacerbates the problem of providing inducements and raising the government over the long haul (W. R. Scott 2003:376-77).

We begin with a general discussion of key forces that might trigger or compel mission definition or adherence. We then provide detailed case summaries of a set of rich organizational case studies that focus on nonprofit mission or goals. These cases, which cover a wide terrain that includes voluntary social service agencies, local and national feminist groups, community-based AIDS organizations, cultural and religious organizations, and public-interest science organizations, span the empirical core of our chapter. We conclude with reflections on the challenges of responsiveness in the nonprofit sector.
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Protest activities are costly. Political and legal resources clearly raise the stakes of increased advocacy. All organizations, not just nonprofit service agencies, are now subject to the need to confirm their legitimacy as a new script of organizing. This kind of organization is disruptive and exposes organizations to new risks of failure. Especially when the result changes from an increased advocacy campaign to a more conventional mission to a more challenging role despite pressures to conform, the resistance to change, that is, holding that the group’s mission even when it involves new challenges and goals, not simply new ways of doing business. And any kind of organizational change is disruptive and exposes organizations to new risks of failure, especially when the result changes from an increased advocacy campaign to a more conventional mission to a more challenging role despite pressures to conform, the resistance to change, that is, holding that the group’s mission even when it involves new challenges and goals, not simply new ways of doing business.

Critical Challenges

Viewed broadly, nonprofit organization activities are influenced by a number of internal and external circumstances that often present themselves as pursuing more conservative activities and adopting more common organizational forms. As postulated by institutional theory, the need for external legitimacy and survival tends to provide incentives for groups to compromise the missions that they have adopted. The more recent study of community-based organizations, for example, may reflect from their distinctive commitment to the public goods, opting for a more limited role of political activity, possibly jeopardizing their survival chances. Such a change may signal an objection to or questioning of public policy, with the potential consequence that the group will sacrifice some degree of institutional support and face a greater risk of failure. Clearly, then, one of the most fundamental challenges that nonprofit organizations face is to be responsive to external environmental shifts—the availability of funding from private and public sources, in support and resistance from key stakeholders and political allies, and in issue salience—while remaining true to their original role in providing community-oriented activities and accountable to their internal bases of support. In this sense, nonprofits are constrained by their commitment to a mission that defines appropriate social, political, cultural, and economic interests and accountable to their internal bases of support. As the cases we review demonstrate, organizations as varied as mass-based social movements, neighborhood groups, feminist service agencies, and community-based AIDS organizations have a tendency to succeed in external pressures for accommodation—although not always in a formal sense, nonprofits or organizations need to redefine the mission in a way that enables an interpretation of organizational change as continuous with the group’s avowed goals and identity. This is not a new feature of social movements if they can’t be mobilized at a base in which mission, ideology, and collective identities—establish an outer boundary for what models of organization and types of activities are feasible.

PATHWAYS TO ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Our characterization of nonprofit organizations suggests both a heightened vulnerability and a need to be flexible in the face of changes in the political and social context. There are no simple answers to this question. But if it is not obvious that legitimacy can be compromised if an organization strays from the presumption that nonprofits should be motivated solely by service or charitable goals, then the explanations that we propose are not necessarily the only or the best. By focusing on the organizational and cultural organizations are likely to take offense at the character of their membership and be unable to retain their original commitments in the face of increasing competition for resources and legitimacy, or they may balk at the suggestion that altering their mix of activities is tantamount to compromising or co-optation.

In order to analyze these criticisms are certainly justified. Political and legal resources clearly raise the stakes of increased advocacy. All organizations, not just nonprofit service agencies, are now subject to the need to confirm their legitimacy as a new script of organizing. This kind of organization is disruptive and exposes organizations to new risks of failure. Especially when the result changes from an increased advocacy campaign to a more conventional mission to a more challenging role despite pressures to conform, the resistance to change, that is, holding that the group’s mission even when it involves new challenges and goals, not simply new ways of doing business.

Accommodation

There is a long tradition of research on organizational change in voluntary associations and nonprofit agencies that, building on Michels’ (1911/1962) discussion of the “iron law of oligarchy,” posits that nonprofit agencies tend over time to become more conservative and to shy away from controversy for the sake of organizational survival. Although Michels’ thesis has been critiqued (e.g., Zalci and Ash 1966; Clemens and Minkoff 2004), it has become almost a truism that, to the extent to which nonprofit endeavors change, it is to accommodate external pressures for accommodation. As the cases we review demonstrate, organizations as varied as mass-based social movements, neighborhood groups, feminist service agencies, and community-based AIDS organizations have a tendency to succeed in external pressures for accommodation—although not always in a formal sense, nonprofits or organizations need to redefine the mission in a way that enables an interpretation of organizational change as continuous with the group’s avowed goals and identity. This is not a new feature of social movements if they can’t be mobilized at a base in which mission, ideology, and collective identities—establish an outer boundary for what models of organization and types of activities are feasible.

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Although the development of community-based AIDS organizations appears to mirror the trajectory of feminist groups toward formalization and professionalization, most studies of social movements have provided little or no discussion
of internal organizational conflict or serious risk to organizational sur-
vival. In fact, it appears that the impetus for professional-
ization reflected self-conscious "impression management" and the
desire to humans, the residential
accommodation, by the state, they harbored radical femi-

defiants. We discuss this case in some depth, since it vividly il-
nulates a second principle of subordinated accommodation and

taken between the state, where LACAAW members

in the state, barracks of radical femi-

LACAAW's resolution was to continue to operate with

the help of the state. Such "apparent accommodation" (Matthews

1995) was carried out with reluctance by the founding mem-

bres, who described it as equating ideals; none of

they moved toward greater formalization.

The most dramatic change in organizational structure and

and operations took place in 1979, when a new

magnet was opened on June 10 in New York City. In 1981, the first

LACAAW's resolution and organized

as a model for community-based AIDS response (Chambler


for characterizing the complex relationship between AIDS and

as community-based response organizations.

in the context of homec-

veloping a 'client-centered' notion of the social

elites and representatives, of the

involving the members of the community and giving their clients a

the group to change the system. In this spirit, the group

led to the assumption that the appropriate form of action: housing,

P. Lawson 1980). In addition, the group enjoyed some

conflicts. The group's character as an alternative to accoun-

and other "public goods," the group was also re-

The Pico-Union Neighborhood Council (PUNC) was

PUNC's initial housing success was a detailed plan for community

However, the council required considerable technical assistance on this

and that relates to the development of low-income housing. PUNC's

involvement, which became increasingly involved in projects requiring high lev-

involvement, the council expressed an interest in keeping the project in-

involvement. The clear winners and losers in this process are the evicted

the movement. Yet the movement's endpoint is not yet clear.

the movement's endpoint is not yet clear.
As these activist programs became publicly visible, the NCC came under attack from its conservative lobbies. As a re- sult, automatic contributions to NCC agencies were discon- tinued and in an attempt to select those groups of civil di- vities to which they would contribute. Lay opposition did not result in polling back from the activist mission, however, and most expansion was curbed and some programs were continued. Indeed, they were therefore unwilling to commit their resources and the NCC's reputation to providing service to the communities. The NCC's reputation was that of a service agency that was directly committed to member involvement and less formalized structures. The extended discussion of LACAAM shows an important aspect of the NCC's new direction to meet the needs of the Religious and political leaders who would keep the council together. The general radicalization of the NCC continued despite its criticism. In fact, the withdrawal of automatic contributions to the NCG Mission seemed to weaken its criticism by lessening the ministry's dependence on "hostile" funding sources and thus increasing its autonomy. Although budgetary reductions were required, the Migrant Ministry invested all its effort in the Farm Workers' Union; as a result, the Migrant Ministry and the farm workers' movement soon became inseparable.

Several factors help explain the NCC's transformation. The growth of Protestant churches in the 1950s was important in several respects. Increasing membership meant more funds available for the NCC and its agencies. A surge in professional training for the clergy and the development of liberation theology contributed to the growth of a radical definition of the clergy's mission. A combination of self- selection and a sense of mission among the leaders of the NCC's church encouraged a new openness and an active involvement of the churches in the NCC's work. The NCC's growth and its increasing effectiveness in mobilizing resources led to a greater emphasis on mission and to the establishment of new relationships with other churches and agencies.

The growth of the NCC required a larger administrative staff and increasing reliance on trained professionals, which gave the staff considerable control over decision-making. The NCC's leadership style was essentially consistent with the California farm workers' movement. The NCC was founded as a federation of about thirty Protestant churches, each of which was autonomous in a similar proportion to their congregational membership. The council provided member services, such as educational programs and literature, and sponsored agencies to provide welfare services, including giving aid to migrant farm workers. The initial goal of the Migrant Ministry. The NCC's social involvement has traditionally been limited to charitable work—such as giving financial assistance to social gospel agencies. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the NCC became more explicitly involved in organizing social change initiatives. The NCC's involvement in the social gospel movement gave rise to a new kind of organization, the civil rights movement, which was an outgrowth of the NCC's work.

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popularity and tried to recruit and develop younger members and to support new leaders, the continuing presence of the old guard sagged their efforts.

Moore’s (1993:193) emphasis on public interest science organization provides a more recent example of a movement organization constrained by its founding mission and unable to adapt to changing political conditions. Science for the People (SFP) was established at the annual meeting of the American Physical Society in 1969 to oppose the Vietnam War; SFP defined itself in radical opposition to other science groups and maintained multiple publications and organizational lines. The same animosity that was conveyed in a systemic critique of capitalism and the links between academic science and the military-industrial complex that was so apparent in its companion New Left groups, was based on egalitarian principles, and its various local groups were linked through informal cooperation. The activities of the locals (represented in forty cities by 1972) included providing technical assistance to the Black Panther Party, defusing bombs at bomb factories in Philadelphia, direct protest at Livermore Laboratories in California, and publicity campaigns. Financial needs were insatiable, and the group never received substantial external funding. The most labor- and resource-intensive activity was publication of the magazine Science for the People, which was largely self-sustaining through the efforts of the Boston chapter.

As In 1972, after a period of fairly rapid growth, SFP confronted a situation that took the form of a conflict over the question of what role scientists should play in a radical movement. The egalitarian emphasis of SFP placed a premium on personal self-reflection and it was the same kind of process that came with the (apparently never-ending) process of deciding "how to get along". The question was not "who they were", rather than focusing their discussions on who they were" (Moore 1993:193, emphasis in original). This inward-looking project came at the expense of developing strategies for responding to a changing political environment. Particularly the emphasis on internal growth and with the growth of a more professionalized organization, there was the danger of creating organizations in the same way as the national executive committee for the foundation that SFP had established. Because of the national leadership, the foundation was unable to work on the issues that were of concern to the local chapters, which were primarily concerned with the health of their members and staff. The result was a decline in the foundation's ability to respond effectively to the changing circumstances. Although the organization tried a variety of strategies to revitalize itself during the 1970s and 1980s, each of these efforts was met with resistance from within the organization. The conflict between the organizational leaders and the members and staff that made it difficult to redefine these organizations' missions. In the case of the WCTU, this conflict led to severe consequences, including recruiting new members, in the case of SFP, the retreat from the political activist orientation that is limited consideration of new options; and in the case of the Vall-e-Hotline, led to a rejection of critical funding to the detriment of the organization. The net result was that the foundation was unable to respond effectively to the changing circumstances, and the foundation was unable to maintain its mission.

The revival of interest in the late 1980s was perhaps best known for its annual fundraising drive, the March of Dimes. This massive effort is the responsibility of local March of Dimes organizations, which are temporary in nature, rather than of the local foundation chapters, although the chapters participate in the drive. The march is directed by the national headquarters, which appoint campaign directors for each community. The drive is generally spread through the efforts of few people, and new directors are often appointed each year. A large number of volunteers is mobilized and then dispersed upon completion of the drive. The net result is that the directors are primarily concerned with patient care. Half the money raised by the March of Dimes is returned to the chapters for disbursement in their communities, primarily to give financial assistance to victims of polio.

Although the foundation is a large organization, the size of local chapters is kept small, and members are kept active through various activities. In 1998, some members of the original SFP launched a newsletter by the same name in 1983. The three trajectories we have discussed so far—accommodation, profiteering, and adherence to mission at the expense of organizational survival—illustrate the fairly dramatic challenges that nonprofits face as the conditions around them change and they get caught up in conflicting demands from stakeholders both within and outside the organization. The way these changes will be reflected in the future is uncertain. Extreme consequences, namely either a wholesale reconfiguration of mission and structure or organizational demise. In this sec-
(Continued)

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and was broad enough to accommodate the interests of its board and volunteer members. In 1971, after an internal crisis that revolved around the relationship between the national office and local chapters and the resolution of 2002:1207) has been to prioritize donor needs and demands over community or member charity needs. This
fundamental shift, however, was accomplished by a conscious decision to expand from the position of the agency as both a unique and superior to other workplace fund-raising drives. Rather than redefining its original mission, UW/MC (then the new pol- icy of American education) was to generate a broader impact and benefit from its broader outreach.

In its new function, UW/MC was able to generate a broader impact and benefit from its broader outreach.

**Mission Displacement**

One final pathway to change, which we refer to as mission displacement, represents perhaps the most dramatic change of organizational form. One can see the development of a new mission from the idea that an organization is able to redefine itself as a coordinating and shaping force for a broader community, thus diversifying its impact without losing its traditional base of legitimacy and support.

Two common themes are discernible across the diverse set of cases discussed in this section. One commonality is that the March of Dimes, the YMCA, the United Way, USC, and CalArts are all examples of successful mission displacement. The second commonality is that each of these cases was a result of the agency's ability to promote flexibility and accountability to the membership base. The federated structure of the YMCA and the United Way allowed them to adapt to the changing needs of their memberships. The flexibility provided by the membership base allowed these organizations to respond to the needs of their communities.

Despite these successes, some authors argue that the growth of mission displacement has come at the expense of organizational health. They argue that mission displacement can lead to a loss of organizational identity and a dilution of the organization's core mission. These concerns are valid, and it is important to recognize the trade-offs involved in pursuing mission displacement. However, the benefits of mission displacement, including increased relevance and influence, can outweigh these concerns in many cases.

**Lessons from the Cases**

Across a range of nonprofit organizations—social movements, community-based organizations, nonprofit service agencies, and traditional voluntary associations—we observe the dual role of mission as both a constraint and a constraint. As mission displacement continues to evolve, it will be important to balance the need for flexibility and adaptability with a commitment to the organization's core mission and values.

The school's already strong dependence on the Disney family and created a perpetual atmosphere of insecurity and crisis. Board members were selected on the basis of personal and financial ties to the Disney family rather than for their ability to raise and maintain a sustainable level of financial support. In fact, Disney's real estate investments, which included the construction of a new campus, were increasingly out of favor. Numerous audit reports of the original investment agreement that the dream had died.

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A second example of mission displacement is the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), founded as an avant- garde, utopian community in which artists of all media could explore and experiment, and intended to be unbound by market pressures to generate revenues. It was to be a place where artists could develop their ideas and create a new, more conventional, and traditional. Within five years, public statements of philosophy espoused a new, more professional directness, and these statements were increasingly out of favor. Numerous audit reports of the original institution agreed that the dream had died.

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A common element across the cases we have presented is that identity and mission are "proven" when nonprofits become involved with various funding sources that have divergent interests. This interaction impinges upon organizational arrangements and, in turn, triggers an array of responses. This provocation is especially salient for social movement organizations that become increasingly involved with the very government agencies and officials they intend to challenge. Adding to the complexity is the need for such organizations to present themselves as both credible advocates and serious players.

Interaction with government is the not the only contested relationship fraught with tension around organizational identity, however. Relations between local and national offices, between volunteer and professional staff, and with key funding sources all trigger considerations of goals and strategies. Indeed, many of the cases illustrate a familiar pattern of internal versus external expectations, and the accommodations that are reached as organizations evolve from volunteer to paid labor, private to public funding, and informal, minimalistic organizations to more formal, hierarchical entities.

In the social movements arena, a dominant trajectory toward greater formalization and professionalism at the expense of local control over political processes has been often identified. The cases we have reviewed, however, stress the need to consider the context of organizational formalization on a case by case basis toward empowering responses. In extreme, movement organizations such as the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults against Women formalized reactively as early activists struggled to remain faithful to feminist ideology and practice. Despite their best (and often creative) efforts to resist the imposition of a conventional social service model, they ultimately ceded to pressures for institutional legitimation. AUDI service organizations on the other hand have apparently attempted to consciously leverage the service agency model in order to preclude the perceived reductiveness of social service roles. Yet even these organizations are caught between the rock of original loyalty to the spirit of the movement and the hard place of the alleged formalization that is, developing procedures and structures that will enable their work to be performed regularly and that will afford continuity even in the face of leadership change (Stiggeborn 1988). Professionalization goes hand in hand with formalization, as paid staff replace volunteers, and these employes not only make a career out of work in the sector (McCar- thy and Zeldin 1987). Audit committees are also committed to maintaining the long-term presence of the organization. For many types of service provision, this commitment is essential for patients, clients, and the newly diversified.

But we also find examples of organizations that have taken on more activist objectives, even in the face of pressures for programmatic accountability. For example, our survey is that nonprofit organizations evolve a good fit of flexibility in response to changes in internal and external circumstances. The cases suggest that nonprofits, far from being hampered by the constraints we are used to, are in a critical position to respond to pressures for change. But the direction and efficacy of change remains open questions. There is good reason to expect that changes in organizational missions are likely to be disruptive indeed.

For example, research on a population of Toronto-based volunteer social service organizations found that community service if anything the ex- of shifts, such as providing legal services to the people of a racial or ethnic minority. Such studies confirm that recently refined groups face a "liability

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service model appears to decrease the direct advocacy component of community-based organizations. The challenge, then, is how nonprofits can broaden inclusiveness inside their existing organizations. Expanding and consolidating the range of programs and services is clearly a less daunting task than convincing political authorities and "fluent" external supporters to moderate their demands for ideological and structural accommodations. The task of responding to shifting external conditions while retaining the enthusiasm of core constituents depends on the ability to convince members and supporters that changes will remain broadly congruent with the mission. In several of the cases presented here, nonprofits were able both to give existing supporters an important role as new activities were being pursued and to educate new constituents about the organization's original identity.

IMPLICATIONS

The detailed cases we have reviewed suggest several broad patterns of organizational change. Most strikingly, there is a common life cycle for nonprofits as they move from advoca-

tacy to service. This pathway entails not only surrendering political objectives in favor of a less confrontational service role, but also increasing the hard work of formalization—

that is, developing procedures and structures that will enable tasks to be performed regularly and that will afford continuity even in the face of leadership change (Stiggeborn 1988). Professionalization goes hand in hand with formalization, as paid staff replace volunteers, and these employes not only make a career out of work in the sector (McCarathy and Zeldin 1987). Audit committees are also committed to maintaining the long-term presence of the organization. For many types of service provision, this commitment is essential for patients, clients, and the newly diversified.

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service model appears to decrease the direct advocacy component of community-based organizations. The challenge, then, is how nonprofits can broaden inclusiveness inside their existing organizations. Expanding and consolidating the range of programs and services is clearly a less daunting task than convincing political authorities and "fluent" external supporters to moderate their demands for ideological and structural accommodations. The task of responding to shifting external conditions while retaining the enthusiasm of core constituents depends on the ability to convince members and supporters that changes will remain broadly congruent with the mission. In several of the cases presented here, nonprofits were able both to give existing supporters an important role as new activities were being pursued and to educate new constituents about the organization's original identity.

IMPLICATIONS

The detailed cases we have reviewed suggest several broad patterns of organizational change. Most strikingly, there is a common life cycle for nonprofits as they move from advoca-

tacy to service. This pathway entails not only surrendering political objectives in favor of a less confrontational service role, but also increasing the hard work of formalization—

that is, developing procedures and structures that will enable tasks to be performed regularly and that will afford continuity even in the face of leadership change (Stiggeborn 1988). Professionalization goes hand in hand with formalization, as paid staff replace volunteers, and these employes not only make a career out of work in the sector (McCarathy and Zeldin 1987). Audit committees are also committed to maintaining the long-term presence of the organization. For many types of service provision, this commitment is essential for patients, clients, and the newly diversified.

But we also find examples of organizations that have taken on more activist objectives, even in the face of pressures for programmatic accountability. For example, our survey is that nonprofit organizations evolve a good fit of flexibility in response to changes in internal and external circumstances. The cases suggest that nonprofits, far from being hampered by the constraints we are used to, are in a critical position to respond to pressures for change. But the direction and efficacy of change remains open questions. There is good reason to expect that changes in organizational missions are likely to be disruptive indeed.

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years when it added civil rights advocacy to its original mission. Minkoff (1999) demonstrates, in research on national women's and racial minority organizations, that older organizations are more likely to make changes in strategy. Moreover, there is also evidence that older organizations are more likely to make conservative changes, as defined from protest or advocacy to service provision. Although some changes to these organizations are used by the public to explain its continued existence, it is clear that the support of movement activists and leaders is key to this process. Activists and leaders are not to be underestimated in their ability to influence and shape the direction of the organization.

In a study of mental health centers that diversified to provide drug abuse treatment centers, D'Aunno, Sutton, and Price (1991) found that, as health organizations expanded their role, they were more likely to engage in direct service provision. This emphasis on direct service provision is often overlooked, as many organizations continue to operate in a manner that is consistent with their traditional mission. The need to operate in both traditional and new institutional environments is initially met by the creation of new programs and services. Over time, however, the organization's new programs and services begin to grow and become integrated into the organization's overall mission.