

ORGANIZATIONAL LEGITIMACY OF
NONPROFIT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN HIV
PREVENTION AMONG WOMEN

by

Jennifer Alexander-Terry

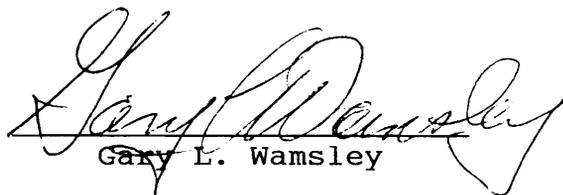
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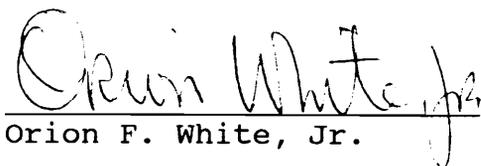
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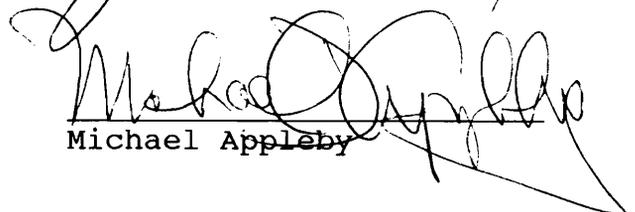
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(ABSTRACT)

All organizations are concerned with survival and effectiveness, but for third sector and public organizations these issues are acute; they hinge on the organization's ability to establish and sustain its legitimacy. Legitimacy has been defined as a manifestation of value congruence between an organization's activities and the social system within which it functions (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). This study examines the multi-dimensionality of organizational legitimacy in a comparative case study of nonprofit service organizations (NSO's) which provide HIV education and support services for women. Processes of seeking organizational legitimacy are identified and organizational relationships analyzed within the environmental networks of clientele and the interorganizational network. The study also seeks to identify the focus and progression of legitimating efforts over the course of the organization's existence.

Two community based organizations are included; one in

the United States and one in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The organizations studied are directed to women in a variety of circumstances: sex workers, drug users, and women who self-identify as being at risk. The majority of clients were Hispanic, although a few were Caucasian and African-American.

The study is intended to generate theory as to how organizations address legitimacy in a multidimensional environment, and how this challenge has been confronted in the case of NSO's serving women at risk for HIV. The study identifies strategies for preserving the organization's internally defined objectives and processes and its active relationship with the client community.

Many NGO's depend on right-of-center money while acknowledging the need to apply the funds to left of center objectives; there is hardly a major development agency that in one form or another does not face the starkness of this contradiction.

Kobia, 1985

Acknowledgments

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In and amongst the pages of this document are some remarkable people who gave of their time: program personnel, clients and volunteers who worked in the organizations. Their names are not listed in the interest of maintaining program confidentiality. I thank the former sex workers in the Dominican Republic for bringing me into their circle and sharing their stories. They are inspirational.

In the Dominican Republic, the Rosado's provided me with a temporary home. Lucila and Milagros acted as cultural touchstones and helped me "take the paw" out of my mouth on a few occasions. The education I received living with the Rosado's was one of the more rewarding and enjoyable experiences of my dissertation.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Over the past decade the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has migrated throughout the world, flooding across the bounds of sexual preference, race, class and culture. The resulting AIDS pandemic has eclipsed standard health care issues and emerged in recent years as a global priority in public health. The first organizations to launch HIV prevention programs were community-based AIDS service organizations (ASO's), spawned in communities devastated by the virus. These nonprofit service agencies, alternately referred to in the literature as voluntary service or third sector organizations, have been at the forefront of the struggle against HIV (Arno, 1986; Porter, 1988; Wolfred, 1990; Perrow, 1990). Like most nonprofit service organizations (NSO's), AIDS service organizations characteristically lack a profit motive, pursue goals of public service, often direct their services to a specified group of people, and rely heavily on donations and volunteers (Estes, 1989; Salamon, 1987; Bolduc, 1980).

In the United States AIDS service organizations, initially founded by gay men, have been notable for their success in developing effective educational materials and mobilizing community members at risk. In fact, ASO's were the

only available response as traditional government agencies and health and social service organizations stumbled in their tracks, immobilized by the stigma of the disease, the populations most affected, and intraorganizational squabbles (Shilts, 1987; Perrow and Guillen, 1990). As late as 1987, the United States remained the only western nation without a national education program (Perrow and Guillen, 1990:25).

The role of AIDS service organizations in the wake of the AIDS epidemic is not unusual. Nor is it specific to the United States. Nonprofit service organizations have an established history of innovative responses to community needs when government and the private sector have failed to meet demand. In fact, Drucker (1991) recently credited small, local organizations with achieving virtually every successful solution to social problems scored in recent years. He noted that the United States alone contains more than 900,000 nonprofits, most of which have found their niche in serving local community problems, "tutoring minority children, furnishing ombudsmen for patients in the local hospital, helping immigrants through government red tape" and the like (Drucker, 1991).

The Unique Political Contributions of NSO's

In the United States, nonprofits have been recognized for a variety political contributions, most specifically their role of supporting representative government and strengthening

democracy. They represent an esteemed cultural tradition of "broad-based citizen involvement in the associations, institutions, or interest groups that represent the concern of the individual citizens to the state" (Bolduc, 1980:165). Americans have traditionally expressed a high regard for citizen involvement and its role in sustaining democracy. In fact, it was this participation in the public sphere that de Tocqueville (1969) and Mary Parker Follett (1918), regarded as a counterbalance to the individualism of Americans. Involvement in the public sphere was seen as critical to the development of citizens who sustain a connection to the larger community and ultimately support the maintenance of free institutions (Bellah, 1985: vii).

Second, NSO's strengthen democracy because they advance a more comprehensive form of pluralism. NSO's routinely arise as a decentralized, community response to the collective needs of a group which have been peripheral or ignored by the public sector. When these organizations function in relationship with their service community, they form a rare intersect between particular disenfranchised groups and the state. By bringing the concerns of these communities to the fore, they foster a more representative process of governance. As advocates, NSO's perform a vital role of integrating the concerns of a service population with the public sector institutions of governance, thereby advancing democratic

principles. In short, NSO's have reinforced the very legitimacy of the democratic state which requires that governance be grounded in the values of the people (Stivers, 1990).

The very governance of NSO's has often been democratic. Barber noted, "practically all voluntary associations are democratic associations, that is to say, formal authority resides in the whole membership" (1950:487). The role that democratic voluntary institutions play in mobilizing and enabling people is the most important contribution of NSO's to the process of governance. NSO's have a role "enabling those who are variously poor, powerless and remote to control more of their lives" (Chambers, 1990:214). There are NSO's that provide services to a specified community, but there also NSO's whose contributions extend beyond service delivery to the development of an active community engaged in the promotion of their particular issues.

In spite of the various contributions of the nonprofit service sector, there is much that remains unexplored about these organizations. Since the Reagan administration, we have been reconstructing our theory of nonprofits as an independent sector, as well as our concept of the third sector's relationship with government (Salamon, 1987; Hall, 1987). One of the intriguing questions that we have yet to address adequately is how nonprofit organizations reconcile the

dilemma of achieving often avant garde objectives with their concomitant need to gain funding and support from right-of-center sources (Kobia, 1985).

Nonprofit service organizations navigate a highly divergent organizational environment which imposes conflicting value structures, expectations, and asymmetric influence over the organization. Those which serve a disenfranchised clientele often evolve as fragile and dependent organizations that survive by attracting contributors and clients. Resources at their disposal are a reflection of the client community; many NSO's within the spectrum of this research operate with highly constrained budgets. Therefore, organizational survival is closely tied to linkages which are cultivated and established in the organizational environment. A requisite for establishing such interorganizational ties is **legitimacy**. That is, the activities of the NSO must be valued in the larger environmental arena where funding is attained and organizational survival is insured.

Purpose

The following dissertation presents a study of AIDS service organizations in an effort to generate theory as to how nonprofit service organizations confront the problems of organizational legitimacy. Given the extraordinary contributions of NSO's, the following study seeks to extend our knowledge of how NSO's manage their highly divergent

environment. In recognition of the fact that NSO's are an intersecting point of disparate worlds, and that they must act in relationship with them in order to be effective, the following study addresses the extreme cases of ASO's which provide services and counseling to women who are at risk for HIV. Using case studies of two NSO's, one in the Caribbean and one in a northeastern city of the United States, the questions of how NSO's establish their legitimacy and reconcile the tension between divergent value structures in the organizational environment is analyzed in the context of organizational legitimacy.

The remainder of this introductory chapter presents in greater detail the quandary of legitimacy in a divergent organizational environment and elaborates the relevant networks for the purpose of this study. The probable scenarios of how organizations might confront the challenge of a divergent environment are then introduced. The balance of the chapter concerns the nonprofit social service sector: its characteristics and the nature of its relationships within the organizational environment. The examination of the organizational environment focuses on the role of nonprofits in the United States as well as in the context of a developing nation. The interaction between NSO's and formal governments is emphasized because these relationships profoundly influence the NSO's survival and development of organizational

legitimacy.

The Quandary of Organizational Legitimacy in a Highly Differentiated Environment:

Legitimacy was defined earlier as a manifestation of value congruence between an organization's activities and the social system within which it functions (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). It is understood to be a requisite for establishing organizational ties and insuring survival (Selznick, 1949; 1957). As a manifestation of value congruence between organizational activities and the environment with which the NSO interacts, it is contextual. Moreover, an organization's environment may encompass divergent entities; in the case of NSO's these include donor agencies and interest groups, as well as the state. Hence, the organization may confront conflicting external pressures, requiring that it establish legitimacy serially, or multi-dimensionally.

While it is increasingly evident that a variety of organizations confront differentiated environments, the definitions of environment to date are residual and inclusive. Dill first used the term "task environment" to refer to "parts of the total environment of management which [are] relevant or potentially relevant to goal setting and goal attainment" (1958:410). Thompson (1967) differentiated somewhat by using the terms task environment and organizational domain. The "task environment" referred to the immediate set of relevant

others in the environment that are important for accomplishing organizational goals. Beyond the task environment lay the organizational domain, "all the points at which the organization is dependent on inputs from the environment." Organizational domain extended beyond the task environment in that it comprised all of the environment relevant to the organization's hopes, ambitions, and claims. Similarly, Evans (1972) defined an organizational set as "all other organizations with which a focal organization interacts when procuring inputs or disposing of outputs."

In an effort to identify distinct segments of a task environment, I have referred to them as networks. The following study has identified and included three salient environmental networks which are relevant to goal setting and goal attainment: the interorganizational network; the focal population; and a subset of the focal population, the client community which participates in the organization's activities.

The interorganizational network is defined as "all stakeholders or actors that share an interest in a given policy area, which means that a change in the value of one has an effect on others" (Milward, 1984). It comprises the milieu of public and private donors, including foundations, government agencies, and related social service and health agencies from which the organization seeks funding, and other forms of interorganizational support. The interorganizational

network is assumed to be a loosely circumscribed network of stakeholders who may function in a supportive, neutral or competitive manner with respect to the NSO. In turn, the NSO interacts in the interest of organizational legitimacy and survival. It is also within this setting that the NSO will seek to advance the perspective of its client community and affect decisions. The interorganizational network is understood to impose norms, or values, which order the methods and manner by which an NSO operates.

The second network is the focal population to which the organization directs its services. Often referred to in the literature as "the service community," the focal population usually consists of the population that shares a neighborhood, ethnicity, gender, or life experience, among other identifiers. The term community, however infers that a population shares a common sense of traditions and commitments, who are bound by beliefs, values, and life experiences (Cochran, 1977). In the case of NSO's, the focal population is defined by the organization and, as such, may not embody a cohesive set of values, or even the values of the NSO. Moreover, the populations which are at risk for contracting HIV are readily characterized by their isolation and a lack of belonging to community. Accordingly this study employs the term focal population instead of service community. In order to engage the focal population in HIV

prevention activities, organizations must create a bridge by demonstrating a set of shared values, through their definition of the problem and their delivery of services. Organizations will also seek to shape the focal population's perceptions through their local activities.

The client community encompasses a subgroup of the focal population in that they are women who self-selected to participate in the programs of the NSO, who may have worked within the organization. Clients are referred to as a community because they are people who have come together because they share a common perspective and work toward the same goals. Clients may also comprise a community on the basis of other bonds, such as culture group, occupation, ethnicity, religion, or neighborhood. The client community's values probably reflect, to a large extent, the focal population. However, due to life experiences distinct to them by gender or habit, the values operating within this group may constitute a subset of the focal population. Given the nature of organization-client interaction for NSO's, where clients are often organizational actors as well, it is probable that clients have an opportunity to shape organizational values.

To date, most research on the environment has defined it in terms of other organizational actors (Parsons, 1956; Thompson 1967; Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975), although the term

social system or community is often used. But institutions which serve a public need or public interest are ostensibly obliged to establish legitimacy within a client population in order to be effective (Wamsley and Zald, 1976; Rainey, 1991). Unfortunately, seldom do organizations seek value congruence with a focal population, particularly if they are a disenfranchised group. For example, Weed's work on welfare agencies indicated that the "relevant public" with which an organization works to establish value congruence is generally a community elite or professionals related to their field "because clients are seldom able to exert serious political pressure" (1986:432). Weed concluded that community board members with social prestige and community influence were more important than any other variables as predictors of stable funding. In short, organizational survival and legitimacy require close linkages with community authority figures and may be only tangentially connected to client relationships.

This study asserts the relevance of organizational legitimacy with the focal population and client community in order for the organization to attain its goals. But the compelling question concerns how an organization can establish and maintain an alliance with a marginalized subculture in the face of resource dependence on a bureaucratized, larger, interorganizational network that exhibits different values and agendas.

NSO's are assumed to seek relationships with each of the identified environmental networks in order to accomplish their mission and survive. The establishment of relationships depends, in turn, on the organization's ability to offer something of value to each of these three components of the environment and engage in exchange relationships. But the organization's strong dependence on the interorganizational network allows the latter to place significant constraints and contingencies on the organization relative to the client community.

The argument has been presented that NSO's which promote unpopular causes or represent marginalized clientele will confront highly divergent environmental networks which hold conflicting value structures, expectations, and asymmetric influence over the organization. Clearly, the two institutional settings of the designated community and the interorganizational network comprise the most powerful organizational actors affecting the CBO's legitimacy. But legitimacy within a disenfranchised client community that is largely unrepresented in an organizational sense is an equally critical component to organizational effectiveness. Nonetheless, one would think this argument novel, given the lack of attention to clients as actors in public administration literature.

Scenarios of Organizational Response to Highly Differentiated Environments

A few writers have acknowledged in their work that some organizations must respond to a differentiated environment. For example, Perrow (1961) noted in a study of a community hospital that efforts to gain prestige with particular environmental actors resulted in a redirection of resources and eventually compromised essential organizational activities which were non-prestige producing. Lawrence and Lorsh (1967) found that different subunits of an organization face dissimilar environments resulting in a commensurate need for structural differentiation and internal coordination. But there is little attention to the organizational quandary resulting from a need to develop and maintain legitimacy with segments of the task environment that are so divergent as to place conflicting demands on the organization and thereby compromise its abilities or survival. Nor is there much attention to the thought that the least powerful organizational network might be the most critical to goal attainment.

The literature indicates that there are a number of possible scenarios as to how organizations might confront the problem of divergent environmental expectations. The organization might pursue legitimacy multi-dimensionally, that is, strive for legitimacy with all three networks

simultaneously (the interorganizational network, the focal population, and the client community). This strategy is the least probable as it would demand a high degree of internal differentiation and coordination, uncharacteristic of an immature, grass-roots organization. Moreover, if an organization emits conflicting messages to its environment, it could impede, if not entirely preclude, the development of a cogent organizational identity required for survival.

A more likely scenario documented in the literature is the progressive establishment of legitimacy, as noted by Cameron (1984) and Shaw (1991), wherein organizations emphasize different domains as they progress through their life cycle. As the organization undergoes a process of maturation and professionalization, it ostensibly moves from a value confluence with the client community and focal population to legitimacy with the interorganizational network. According to this argument, organizations do not approach legitimacy multi-dimensionally, but instead transfer legitimating activities from one network to another over time. But does legitimacy established serially become multidimensional, or is it more accurately characterized as an organizational shift from one network to another? For example, does legitimacy established with the client community atrophy as the labor force shifts from volunteer to paid and the agenda is set not by community participants, but larger

interorganizational forces?

It is also conceivable that organizations pursuing socially controversial goals, such as HIV prevention among women, do not readily achieve legitimacy within the larger society, but only at the interorganizational level and among their clientele. NSO's which actively seek to empower women in their prevention strategies may challenge widely established values to such an extent that NSO legitimacy derives only from a select group of donor organizations which support organizational goals and among a small cohort of volunteers and clientele.

Two probable scenarios have been presented: that of an organization shifting its legitimating activities from a client community to an interorganizational network through the process of maturation, extending or, alternately, shifting legitimacy as new networks become a priority. The idea was also presented that the serial establishment of legitimacy may skip the focal population and only be achieved within the interorganizational network and among a client community. In any event, the question of whether an organization is able to achieve a multidimensional legitimacy remains. Is it possible for an NSO to achieve the support and endorsement of relevant actors in the interorganizational network while concomitantly sustaining an isomorphism within the value structure of a disenfranchised clientele?

An equally compelling question is whether an organization which has an established record within the interorganizational network can serially progress toward legitimacy with a client community or focal population. This question is critical with respect to the AIDS pandemic. Given the isolation and resource impoverishment characteristic of women at risk for HIV infection (specifically, those who are lower-income, IV drug users, or commercial sex workers) it is unlikely that a grass roots educational campaign of self-protection would be instituted without outside impetus and resources. Efforts by established public health organizations to foster programs with populations of women at risk are as significant as grass roots organizations attempting to bridge the gap to the interorganizational network. As the Hindu maxim attests, "One can only clap with two hands."

Characteristics of Nonprofit Service Organizations (NSO's)

Nonprofits are categorized as derivative organizations in that they fill a niche left by a combined market/government failure (Hall, 1987). Distinct from both government and private businesses, nonprofits have been regarded as part of the third, or "independent" sector. Nonprofits have some distinctive characteristics and attributes which, taken to an extreme, can equally be regarded as shortcomings.

Nonprofits are regarded as particularly effective at working with groups having special characteristics, either in

terms of geography or the features of the population (Mazur, 1991:11). Their services tend to be more personal than government, often tailored to their population. But this specificity has also been regarded as a limitation because NSO's have difficulty extending themselves beyond their original scope. They can be parochial in that the organizational culture and services have developed around the needs of a highly specific group.

Nonprofits are known to be highly innovative. Drucker, for example, credits them with most of the great advances in health and longevity achieved in recent years and states that

whatever results there are in the rehabilitation of addicts we owe to such nonprofits as Alcoholics Anonymous, the Salvation Army and the Samaritans. The schools in which inner-city minority children learn the most are parochial schools and those sponsored by some Urban League chapters. The first to provide food and shelter to the Kurds fleeing Saddam last spring was an American nonprofit, the International Rescue Committee (Drucker, 1991).

One of the reasons for the nonprofits' success is their capacity to tap a community's intimate knowledge of an issue, and thus develop a more effective response. Chambers (1990) cites an example of an NSO that compiled a glossary of local terms and concepts of ecological significance when working in Nigeria on environmental monitoring. In the process they learned that the literal meanings of names for harmful insects identified habits and habitat. NSO's can act in partnership with a community by validating their intimate knowledge of a

problem, thereby cultivating the internal strengths and resources of a community.

NSO's that act in partnership with communities also enjoy the trust of the community which formal organizations, and particularly the state, may lack. For example, in the United States, there are well founded fears within minority populations of government organizations acting in a manner construed to be genocidal, from the Tuskegee experiments,¹ to the forced sterilization of minority women on welfare continuing into the 1970's. The resulting suspicion of public health institutions is manifest, in the case of AIDS, in the commonly expressed fear among minorities that the virus is a form of genocide. However illogical, the idea resonates with some people's experiences of public health institutions (Dalton, 1989:136)

The decentralized, participatory approach to management that typifies the governance of many nonprofits is both a source of effectiveness and a hindrance. On the brighter side, NSO's have been commended for fostering sustainable development through participatory processes. NSO's are a

¹ The Tuskegee syphilis experiment concerned "the purposeful exposure of black sharecroppers to syphilis so as to study the natural course of the disease. Although an effective treatment was developed mid-experiment, the men were never told about it and were never treated, lest the research be compromised" (Dalton, 1989:142). See **Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment**. New York: Free Press, 1981)

mechanism for people to define their problems and solutions. In fact, various international development theorists have asserted that sustainable development results when people are engaged and responsible for change in their lives (Freire, 1970; Korten, 1980; Charlick, 1983). It is in this role of enabling, as opposed to providing, that nonprofits engender the capacity for effective action (White 1987:161). Theorists of the social learning school² argue that only under circumstances wherein people become actors in controlling their own destiny does change actually occur (Freire, 1970; Korten, 1980). It is in their capacity as empowering organizations that nonprofits are distinctive, and this is their strength in fostering the behavior changes necessary to achieve development. NSO's can serve as instruments of empowerment for a community taking action.

At a management level, however, there are significant pitfalls to the participatory management style so suited to NSO's. Social learning theory is a widely touted philosophy

²The social learning approach, developed from community development theory and community renewal theory, assumes that involvement of community members in shaping a development program is essential for goal attainment and accountability (Ickis, 1983). White (1987) indicates that managers are encouraged to establish processes whereby community members and groups are engaged in management process and program development. For a more detailed discussion, see L. G. White (1987) **Creating Opportunities for Change: Approaches to Managing Development Programs**. Lynne Rienner: Boulder, Colorado.

in international development readily adapted to the small, voluntary agency (Chambers, 1990:212). But it conflicts with the bureaucratic orientation of most organizations in the NSO environment. Government and most private funding agencies are designed as top-down, goal-oriented organizations that stress traditional forms of accountability and control (White, 1987:162). Both public and private donors regard the traditional "command and control" modus operandi as a requisite for accountability. Donors routinely require a clear accounting of monies expended in relation to achievement of agreed upon goals. Moreover, even the most cursory review of participatory programs reveals little actual participation in the implementation process (Charlick and Vengroff, 1983). The approach is regarded as too unwieldy and out of step with the dominant organizational culture more easily characterized by strategic management.

In all fairness, the complaint that NSO's lack structure is a reasonable charge. In many cases it has "inhibited their ability to respond with predictability and continuity" (Freeman, 1974:202). For all the shortcomings of full blown bureaucracies, we must acknowledge that they persist because they do bring a modicum of predictability, convenience, efficiency, accountability and responsiveness to organizational processes (Fox, 1987:437). Moreover, we should not assume that structure does not exist merely because it has

not been formally delineated. Research by Freeman (1974) indicates that "egalitarian and unstructured" organizations ultimately "develop unwritten rules and an informal power structure."

Because of their covert nature, the rules and hierarchies cannot be subjected to criticism, and an important principle of rational bureaucracies, accountability, cannot be upheld. The loss of predictability and continuity is an additional shortcoming (Freeman, 1974:202-214).

Thus, NSO's characteristically exhibit an extant power structure and system of rules, upon observation. It is simply not charted.

If it is an organizational goal to develop an active, community-directed NSO, the organization can be under external pressures that are in serious conflict with its internal objectives. Nonprofits often fall prey to an organizational warp in which there are external pressures to professionalize and adopt a goal-oriented administrative structure, in which the NSO's goals suffer from a donor hegemony, and the organization is eventually led astray of its client community.

In fact, the literature on the organizational life cycle of NSO's confirms a pattern of progression from the decentralized, volunteer association to the professionalized, more bureaucratic organization (Shaw, 1991; Drabek, 1987; Rock, 1988). According to the literature, the nonprofit begins as an amateur, albeit grounded, response that is impelled

toward professionalization, conservatism, and conformity. It is in the process of professionalization that the organization is seen to lose contact with a volunteer base and any existing representative governing structure, and to transform from what Chambers (1990) described as the "enabling organization" to simply a service provider, progressively bureaucratizing in structure.

Writers of the social activist school, such as Piven and Cloward, have offered an even grimmer interpretation and asserted that

. . . organizations which survive do so because they become useful to those who control the resources on which they depend, as opposed to the lower class groups which the organizations claim to represent (1977:23).

The implication is clear that, while the professionalized NSO may appear to serve community concerns, it has become a Trojan horse, an instrument of the elite.

The Achilles heel that makes nonprofits vulnerable to this fate is their perennial difficulty in maintaining funding. In fact Piven (1977), among others, has asserted that NSO's which serve disenfranchised groups are driven inexorably to the elites and to the tangible and symbolic supports they provide (1977:xii). As NSO's come to depend on donors, their values grow more conservative and isomorphic with the donor environment. "Philanthropic paternalism" can result wherein "the nature of the sector . . . comes to be

shaped by the preferences not of the community as a whole, but of its wealthy members" whose preferences and perspectives are distinct from those of the poor (Salamon, 1987:41). In fact, Salamon dredges up an unfortunate history of NSO's following the "Lady Bountiful" script, wherein the organization is cast as the morally uplifting institution intended to set the poor onto a better path (Salamon, 1987). This very paternalism can destroy the enabling spirit that NSO's exhibit under better circumstances because, in denying clients a role in determining their course, it ceases to be empowering and cultivates dependency.

However, it would appear easier to distinguish in theory than in practice between an enabling service organization which empowers and the paternalistic organization which directs the course of its clientele. For example, in **Battered Women and Shelters, the Social Construction of Wife Abuse**, Loseke (1992) notes that the shelter environment is constructed to transform the abused woman, defined as "passive, dependent and of low self-esteem" into a "strong and responsible woman." Social service organizations directed to serve a disenfranchised clientele will perforce reflect a social construction of the problem and solution. The key distinction may be the role of the client community as participants who develop an organization's social construction of the problem and enact the solution.

The literature has often characterized NSO's as institutions which foster democratic processes through their governance. But however democratic they may appear to the nonparticipant, the literature indicates a tendency for the representative nature of the NSO to erode over time and the "iron law of oligarchy" to emerge (Michels, 1966).

According to this law, all organizations develop small but highly centralized and bureaucratic bodies of leaders who will necessarily compromise ideals. Besides the inherent autocratic tendencies of leaders . . . there are reasons for the spontaneous generation of oligarchies. (Bolduc, 1980:166)

Bolduc (1980) and Weed (1986), among others, have confirmed in their research that small voluntary associations tend to be run by a core of community elite. Moreover, there is a tendency for the leaders of NSO's to be involved in similar community organizations, resulting in an interlocking network of leadership that reflects social ties as well as professional affiliations.

In summary, nonprofit service organizations have an established history as innovative and empowering organizations that fill a niche left by a combined government/market failure. While they may be characterized as particularistic, amateur, and unstructured in their response, in the best of circumstances NSO's represent the interests of disenfranchised groups. NSO's may also, on occasion, offer disenfranchised people a voice, and opportunity to act on their own behalf and

participate in a democratic process. Pluralists argue that NSO's serve the larger governance process by bringing the interests of disenfranchised groups into the larger political dialogue. Unfortunately, NSO's waver in a precarious position between established political organizations and the population they represent. As a result, they may be easily coopted by powerful actors in their quest for resources, specifically, financial support and endorsement from the institutional network. Once on this slippery slope, they chance losing their representative nature, becoming service providers and, often, an extension of the state.

NON-PROFIT SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT: The United States

Relationships between nonprofit organizations and the U.S. government predate the American Revolution (Salamon 1987:31). Literature indicates that a number of voluntary service organizations have been an accepted and valued component of U.S. political life for centuries, largely due to their affirmation of self-reliance and individualism.

But the role of nonprofits in the United States rapidly expanded in the early 1960's with the advent of the Great Society when NSO's began to proliferate as service providers for the welfare state. NSO's offered government the opportunity to contract out publicly financed services and thereby extend the scope of public services without expanding

in size. In fact, in particular sectors such as health and social services, nonprofits have become the backbone of the human service delivery system as they "deliver a larger share of the services government finances than do government agencies" themselves (Salamon 1987:30). An additional appeal of the nonprofit sector in the United States has been the cost effectiveness of contracting out. The heavy reliance on donations and volunteers in the nonprofit sector enabled government to deliver more services for fewer dollars than when delivering the services itself or contracting with the private sector (Drucker, 1991).

In short, the growth in the nonprofit sector in the United States has been fostered since the early 1960's by demand from government, to the extent that today the single most important source of income for nonprofits is government (Salamon, 1987:30; Drucker, 1991). During the Reagan years massive budget cuts were justified, in part, by asserting that the immense voluntary sector would pick up the slack. But the perception of NSO's as an independent third sector quickly fell by the way as NSO's faltered with the loss of government funds (Hall, 1987). The dependence of NSO's was again affirmed in 1981 by Salamon and Abramson in **The Federal Government and the Nonprofit Sector: Implications of the Reagan's Budget Proposals**. The authors spelled out a bleak scenario wherein the social sectors most dependent on NSO's --

education, social welfare and the arts -- would suffer deeply from proposed cuts (Salamon and Abramson, 1981). Salamon and Abramson repeatedly characterized the relationship between government and the nonprofit sector as a partnership which developed as a result of the welfare state (Hall, 1987).

While Salamon and Abramson have portrayed the relationship between NSO's and government as a partnership, the asymmetric character of the relationship must be acknowledged. For example, the authors' study indicated that government has not intended to employ NSO's merely as providers of services, but also as vehicles for government policies. Given the financial dependence of the third sector and a pattern of donor hegemony over organizational goals, it is unlikely that NSO's would be able to sustain the degree of autonomy necessary for them to attain goals defined by other segments of their environment.

Non-Profit Service Organizations and the Developing World

In the context of developing nations, nonprofit service organizations have become a popular vehicle for achieving the "basic needs" objectives of development which have been advocated since the early 1970's. Nonprofit service organizations are valued by international donor agencies for their ability to engage the hardest-to-reach populations, the poor. As a result, international donor agencies have contributed to the proliferation of NSO's over the past few

decades, in a pattern that mirrors the relationship between NSO's and government in the United States. In the best of circumstances NSO's are viewed as fostering grass roots development, citizen participation, and achievement of community objectives. Development projects conducted by NSO's are considered low cost, incremental efforts that can result in innovative and sustainable change. But the challenges they face are not unlike those faced by the U.S. based NSO's.

The quest for organizational survival and legitimacy for NSO's in the developing world takes on an additional dimension with a constellation of donor agencies as well as an indigenous government. Research indicates that nonprofit organizations require a foundation of a strong community group, as a base independent of bureaucratic institutions, in order to continue to meet their locally defined objectives and survive (Antrobus, 1987; White, 1987). Without a strong base of local support it is difficult for NSO's to weather the vagaries of international agencies' ever-changing political agendas and pressures from the indigenous government, as well. NSO's can quickly become caught in a cycle of pursuing the objectives of international donor agencies in an effort to maintain funding. Antrobus has asserted that when NSO's become coopted, they often lose the ability to develop long run, effective management practices. This course can leave them without support from a traditional constituency or value

base within their own country.

In addition, NSO's are in a vulnerable position with respect to the indigenous government. NSO's are sometimes perceived as a threat to the local government's authority when in pursuit of an agenda that is politically challenging and/or advanced by external power bases such as international organizations. Further, nonprofits can be regarded as subversive when they initiate social change and advocate popular causes or populations. When NSO's are perceived as a challenge to the larger political order, governments will often seek to coopt or control them.

NSO's are critical to a number of health and social welfare objectives both in the developing world and in post-industrial democracies. In the best of circumstances NSO's serve the unmet needs of a population, they advocate on their behalf, and they initiate social change in an incremental manner. But they can also be easily converted into instruments for achieving state or donor agency objectives. Their survival depends on their ability to attract and maintain relationships with donors as well as with a service community. Therefore, organizational survival is closely linked to their ability to function strategically; to establish and maintain interorganizational ties within health and social service agencies and with public and private donors.

The History of NSO-Directed HIV Prevention in the United States

Brazilian writer Herbert Daniels stated that AIDS, "like every other epidemic, develops in the cracks and crevices of society's inequalities" (1989:37). While the course of the AIDS epidemic has affirmed Daniel's assertion, one of the initial characteristics of AIDS was its prevalence among healthy, middle-class, gay males, a population well represented and integrated in mainstream America. Gay men were notable for being diversified both professionally and economically and thus in an advantageous position to organize. For example, the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York City, "the first organization to provide education, prevention and counseling to the gay male population" was founded by a Wall Street businessman, Paul Popham, and "key officials of the GMHC [were] stockbrokers, publishers, directors, doctors and the like" (Perrow, 1990:107;109).

Gay-founded NSO's were highly effective at mobilizing resources and developing traditional organizational structures consistent with the expectations of the larger funding environment. Their management systems were compatible with donor requirements, and they defined risk of HIV in biological terms, as did the public health community. In fact, Patton noted that NSO's serving gays benefitted from a largely autonomous and well articulated infrastructure that in many

cities was already extant before the threat of HIV (1990). Gay communities in many instances had established newspapers, health centers, legal organizations and political caucuses ready to respond (Kessler et al., 1989:442). Patton also noted that gay organizations were able to draw on strong ties with the arts and private foundations to solicit financial and political support (1990:17). In spite of minimal federal funding, a degree of financial autonomy and a high level of support enabled gay-based NSO's to persist in their objectives. Gay-based NSO's enjoyed such a high degree of support that several were able to shun government restrictions on content of educational materials, and to continue development and distribution with private monies.

But in recent years, the demographics of the epidemic have shifted to include the urban underclass. Unfortunately, established NSO's have evolved in relation to the needs and perspective of the gay community, and they have been ineffective at extending themselves beyond their original service community (Arno, 1986; Muir 1991). The NSO's which are emerging to serve women, a new high-risk population, are finding their organizational existence, if not survival, to be a far more tenuous experience.

Women at risk for HIV are largely found among the poor and lower socio-economic strata. Given the fact that NSO's reflect the composition and character of a source community,

NSO's serving women have not enjoyed the financial, political, and professional resources that were available to NSO's supporting gays. The already established organizational infrastructure, community leadership, and diversity of contacts both within and external to the gay community enabled gay-founded NSO's to provide social services, mount prevention campaigns, and even protect the civil liberties of their members (Shaw, 1991:503). In contrast, within minority neighborhoods where HIV is now rampant, there is but a shadow of an independent community infrastructure. The few viable community organizations that remain confront an overwhelming assortment of debilitating social issues. AIDS is simply the most recent threat to grip the community. In the few instances where local governments have sought ASO's there have been few, if any, NSO's available to absorb funding (Perrow and Guillen, 1990:121).

Nor have leaders within minority populations embraced the problem of HIV. Leadership, both political and religious, has been reluctant to endorse or even acknowledge the need for HIV prevention due to its association with homosexuality, a culturally condemned behavior (Dalton, 1991; Porter, 1989). The most powerful institutions of the minority communities, often the churches, have found it problematic to encourage people to protect themselves against HIV without concomitantly seeming to promote behaviors which they denounce.

Finally, NSO's serving women have lacked the reservoir of resources that have benefitted gay-based NSO's. There has not been the diversity of professional resources, or connections throughout the business and political institutions, or contacts among people of the community who might be called to participate in the new organization. Nor have NSO's serving women had the labor pool of volunteers characteristic of gay-based NSO's. And while AIDS became the galvanizing issue among gays in their struggle for civil rights, minorities have not experienced or defined AIDS in the same terms.

To illustrate, gays and women have developed different social definitions of HIV infection due to differences in the primary modes of transmission. Among the gay population, risk is related most often to sexual practices. Moreover, the negotiation of safe sex between men is assumed to occur absent unequal power relationships. Hence, HIV prevention in that population has been defined as a life-style issue, a matter of personal choices, consonant with the traditional public health care approach. While this may be a viable educational approach when sex is assumed to occur between equals, it is problematic, if not ineffectual, among heterosexual women (Shaw 1989:512; Patton 1990:17).

Women have often defined their risk for HIV in terms of their lack of power in relationships; and minority-based NSO's have often defined risk in terms of larger systemic

powerlessness and devastation. HIV has become epidemic in lower income and poor communities because of preexisting social and economic conditions: intravenous (IV) drug use, poverty, poor medical maintenance, isolation, and lack of education. Among women in minority communities, the primary modes of transmission are via drug use, either by these women or their partners, or bisexual relations by their male partners (Dalton 1989:142). In short, a number of researchers have concluded that "women who are not in a position to control their drug use or their sexual interactions, often for reasons of economics or culturally established gender relations, are vulnerable to HIV regardless of their understanding of how the virus is transmitted. (Shaw 1989; Worth, 1991).

In conclusion, NSO's continue to play a pivotal role in reaching communities that have been devastated by HIV. But in recent years, the epidemic has shifted demographically to the urban underclass, and gay-based NSO's have had limited success at extending themselves beyond their original service community. The majority of AIDS service organizations continue their orientation toward gay men, the population initially affected, in spite of changing demographics. This generalization regarding NSO's can be extended to the larger western hemisphere. Hartigan (1991) noted that since the 1980's Latin America and the Caribbean have witnessed a

mushrooming of NSO responses to the virus; almost all of the organizations working in this region were formed by gay men. Presently, there is an "acute need to integrate non-gay concerns" and perspectives in the NSO's working in AIDS prevention and education "or run the risk of bypassing all other social groups who are sexually active and also at risk" (Hartigan, 1991:6).

It is also evident that minority and women-based NSO's will not have access to the resources or larger community support that have enabled gay-based NSO's to succeed. There are inherent differences in their abilities to establish legitimacy, both in the context of the interorganizational network and among specific groups at risk, which I will explore in the subsequent chapters.

Nonprofit service organizations continue to be in the most advantageous position for HIV education and prevention. They have enjoyed a relationship of trust with people who are often disassociated from established government and social institutions. NSO's also offer the advantage of fostering social change through individual empowerment. Certainly, the most effective strategy for stanching the AIDS epidemic lies in engendering behavior changes among individuals. For women at risk, behavior changes necessary to protect themselves go hand in glove with empowerment. The secret of how these organizations maintain the attributes of community empowerment

and engagement in HIV prevention despite the pressures of the institutional environment remain to be discovered.

Plan of Study

The second chapter addresses the issue of organizational legitimacy: the history of the concept in organization theory, different perspectives as to its source, its characteristics, and strategies that organizations commonly employ to establish legitimacy in the organizational environment.

The third chapter elaborates the methodology employed in this study with a brief description of the programs included in the case studies. The fourth and fifth chapters chronicle and analyze the issues of organizational legitimacy for the two organizations under study: a Caribbean-based peer outreach program for sex workers, and an HIV prevention program directed to a largely Hispanic population of women on the edge of a northeastern urban city of the United States.

The final chapter examines the facets of organizational legitimacy for NSO's in light of the two cases. It presents findings as to how nonprofit service organizations establish the linkages critical to their effectiveness and survival, through a cross-case comparison. In the conclusion, the lessons learned for HIV prevention among women are reviewed, as well as insights for NSO's engaged in work with marginalized groups, with a discussion of the relevance of these organizations for governance.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to sketch the course of legitimacy as a concept in the social sciences and particularly with respect to organizational theory. The characteristics of legitimacy identified in the literature are reviewed as well as the tactics organizations commonly use to establish legitimacy. The conclusion to this chapter directs the dialogue of legitimacy to ASO's and the issues they confront when working to establish their legitimacy as well as strategies identified in the literature for achieving it.

The Concept of Legitimacy

Legitimacy is derived from the Latin word "legitimus," which meant "in accordance with law." The term was extended through usage to mean "in accordance with custom or procedure" during the Medieval era (Stillman, 1974). Legitimacy has most often been referenced in political discourse which concerned the means by which structures of power and domination justified themselves to the ruled, and natural limits to the exercise of state power. In fact, works of modern political theorists such as Rousseau, Hobbes, and Locke addressed issues of legitimacy as they responded to the concern of how much power is reasonable for rulers to exercise in order to create

and maintain a just society.

Social scientists in a variety of disciplines have continued to address legitimacy in the context of power and authority although it has been construed in a more reciprocal and consensual manner in recent years. For example, anthropologists have theorized that consent of the governed is a requisite for legitimate power (Glassman, 1979:50; Levi-Strauss 1967). Weber's writings, which are the mainstay of modern social science discourse on legitimacy, are in this vein. Weber regarded consensually-based power as a more stable and effective means of social control because it produced a compliance which is voluntaristic and self-enforcing. Weber can be credited with identifying several characteristics of legitimacy in his writings but he did not leave a consistent or overarching theory from which to proceed (Bensman, 1979).

Weber defined legitimacy as "the capacity of a populace to believe in, or accept claims, promises, and justifications of power" (Bensman 1979:24). Although consent of the governed was the central tenet to his concept, Weber's writings only addressed legitimacy from the perspective of power. His deliberations focused on the means by which leaders solicit the support of those they rule - via coercion, manipulation, charisma, tradition, logic, and mythology (Bensman, 1979: 34). Weber's construct is inherently conservative because he does

not question whether the claims to power are valid but instead addresses how it is affirmed by leaders. As such, Weber contributed more to an understanding of how leaders justify their use of power rather than terms of acceptance of claims to power (Bensman 1979:37).

Weber developed a typology of legitimacy which included three sources of consensually-based power: charismatic, traditional, and rational-legal. Each was regarded as a foundation to authority with its own respective strengths, exercise of power and obedience. Weber also acknowledged that the foundations of legitimacy were not dichotomous but could overlap. For example, a charismatic leader could exercise traditional authority. But above all, Weber regarded rational-legal systems as the most powerful means of controlling people, by virtue of their logic. He believed bureaucratization was inevitable and irreversible once established, whereas traditional and charismatic forms were founded in belief systems that were not as resilient (Weber, 1968).

One of the critical elements of Weber's work on legitimacy is that the concept is inextricably linked with authority, and is therefore, difficult to differentiate. For example, Weber identified legitimacy as the means of transforming an extant power into authority (Weber, 1968). Power that is legitimated or "validated through collective

belief" becomes authority, or "herrschaft" which connotes dominion, command and prerogative (Selznick 1992:268). Weber ultimately does not create a clear distinction between legitimacy and authority in his work and, in fact, used the term "legitimate Herrschaft" to imply "rightful control." But clearly, the catalytic element in the creation of legitimacy, or "legitimate authority" is the existence of collective belief.

Weber understood collective belief in terms of the concept of 'verstehen' which he borrowed from Habermas. Habermas regarded 'verstehen' to be

the reconstruction of the subjective experience of others, the grasping of the subjective meaning of action (Giddens, 1982:83)

Giddens continues to note that Habermas as well as Gadamer regarded 'verstehen' as derived from "a common membership in a cultural frame of meaning - or what Gadamer called a tradition (1982:82). Thus, legitimacy as an accepted assertion of authority rests in verstehen, or a shared sense of meaning.

Friedrich, who critiqued and elaborated Weber's constructs also asserted that the foundation to all authority is reasoning based in a shared value system, including Weber's rational-legal power. Friedrich gave far more importance to established value systems as a basis to legitimacy, as did Habermas (Giddens 1982:84). Habermas contended that a

"unique moral order exists and legitimacy holds when social action between men is structured according to this order" (Richardson 1985:146; Habermas, 1972).

But in contrast to Weber, Habermas believed that legitimacy required more reciprocal and open structural conditions in order to transpire. "Legitimacy requires "unrestricted discussion based on the mutuality of unimpaired self-representation, and full complementation of normative expectations." (Habermas, 1972). Habermas' definition of legitimacy thus differed from Weber who accepted the asymmetric power relations in his construct of authority. Moreover, Habermas emphasized verstehen, the attainment of a shared frame of reference based on unimpaired self-representation as the central element to the achievement of legitimacy.

A recurrent theme among all of the writers is that claims to legitimate power "to act" will be asserted in the context of an established order. For example, Weber states:

Action, especially social action which involves a social relationship may be guided by the existence of a legitimate order. (Weber, 1968:31).

Thus, any entity seeking legitimacy must wrangle with an established belief system, and, in most instances, is constrained by values of this social system. Bensman cites the example of Talleyrand who once argued that "the regimes of

the French Revolution and Napoleon were illegitimate because they were not based in lineage, legal descent and tradition" (Bensman, 1979:18). Talleyrand lost to change, but like most arguments for legitimate exercise of power, his was presented in the context of the existing order. Even when acting in defiance, organizations and people will seek to justify their efforts in terms of a higher authority (Piven and Cloward, 1977). A more current example are the repeated references of Dr. M.L. King to founding political documents of the U.S. in his civil rights speeches.

While it must be acknowledged that belief systems are dynamic, so must we also recognize that powerful actors hold greater sway over the interpretations and constructions of social reality (Berger and Luckman, 1967:93). The existing order is seldom an outgrowth of the symmetrical and reciprocal process discussed by Habermas but a reflection of the unequal power relationships which guided the process.

Additionally, it is apparent that legitimacy is self-perpetuating, as an extant order is able to reassert and build upon particular tenets of the belief system which sustain it, and thereby entrench its position. Although organizations have been characterized as alternately autonomous or dependent in the literature, they have varying degrees of power as social actors to affect change. Organizations contribute to the existence of the social order insofar as they act within

the norms and expectations of that order.

Herein Weber identified the very nebulous, tautological character of legitimacy. That is, a given order is deemed legitimate if enough people believe in it or accept it as valid; conversely, we identify what people regard as valid in the context of what exists, the accepted order. Weber acknowledges that legitimacy is not dichotomous in this statement, but exists in degrees. All people need not believe in the validity of a regime for it to be considered legitimate, only a critical mass.

In summary, Weber left no theory of legitimacy but he did identify particular characteristics. From Weber and his contemporaries we learned that legitimacy, or "the collective belief of a people in a system of order" results in the granting of authority, or "rightful rule," a more effective and sustaining force than power. Entities assert their right to function in terms of the established social order. The inherently conservative and self-perpetuating character of legitimacy is evident in its relationship with the existing belief system. That is, they sustain each other.

Legitimacy in Organizational Theory

The study of legitimacy is rooted in the open-systems model of organizational theory, often referred to as organization ecology, in which an organization is regarded as an adaptive social system that must meet certain needs in

order to persist (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). Because the organization depends on the environment for resources it is vulnerable to external forces. It must therefore be valued by other environmental actors in order to survive. There is a spate of available definitions for the concept of organizational legitimacy but briefly summarized, it indicates the necessity of value congruence between an organization's activities and the social system within which it functions (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). Often defined retrospectively, the achievement of legitimacy indicates that powerful actors within an environment recognize an organization's "distinctive competence", which Selznick defined as "specific capabilities and proficient that are morally acceptable" (1949:14).

Thompson's (1967) work on organizational environment relations pertained to legitimacy in its treatment of how an organization establishes its' domain or relationship with its environment. Of primary importance to the organization is its task environment, or "the immediate set of relevant others in the environment that are important for accomplishing organizational goals (1967:28). More inclusive was the concept of domain consensus, defined by Thompson, as a set of expectations, or claims, established between an organization and members of the environment as to the organization's purpose and goals (1967:29). He noted that the interactive relationship established between an organization and its

environment, "cannot be arbitrary or unilaterally achieved," but requires that the organization be "judged by those in contact with it as offering something desirable" (28:1967). In spite of Thompson's construct of organizations seeking "dominion" over the task environment, Thompson recognized legitimacy as an issue of exchange and therefore, relationship, implicitly.

Perhaps one of the reasons that the study of legitimacy is still in its infancy is that it has not fit within our framework of organization-environment relations. The literature on organization-environment relations is framed almost entirely in language of control; how the organization seeks to maximize control over its environment or, conversely, the environment's control over organizations. For example, Thompson's term "organizational domain" refers to those aspects of the environment on which the organization depends, and therefore seeks to control. However, if legitimacy is actually a quality or status that is bestowed on the organization on the basis of shared values then perhaps it is more accurately construed as a relationship as opposed to a network of control among organizations. Legitimacy, defined as the "acceptance of an organization and its purpose by key actors in the environment," is distinct from domain consensus in that the organization is not in a status of controlling resources but establishing and maintaining relationships with

other organizations in the environment.

Another characteristic of legitimacy discussed in the literature is that it is almost invariably described as an integral whole. There is an inference that all relevant actors within the environment share key values with respect to the focal organization. Occasionally, the diversified nature of an organization's environment is mentioned but the assumption to date has been that if the organization has established itself with key stakeholders in the environment as "a valid institutional form for carrying out a particular course of action" (Dynes and Quarantelli, 1975:48) then its legitimacy is secure.

The literature on organizational legitimacy has traditionally addressed its constitutive parts, and its value to an organization once achieved. In spite of its acknowledged importance, little research has been conducted on the processes for attaining legitimacy largely because the concept is "highly resistant to empirical specification" (Terreberry 1968:608). Nor is there attention in the literature to the possibility that particular organizations, by virtue of their divergent task environments must achieve legitimacy in a multi-dimensional respect.

The tautological nature of the relationship between the legitimate exercise of authority, and values within a social order, has also contributed to the difficulty in producing a

theory of legitimacy. Theory construction and research in the social sciences has been approached in the tradition of positivism for some time. The goal of research has been to test or posit causal theories, requiring a dualism among variables. Positivist theories hold the assumption that it is possible to separate conceptually the variables under study. In fact, this dualism is a requisite for empirical research. Unfortunately, the concept of legitimacy has been too tightly intertwined with other concepts to permit a development of causal theory to date.

There are two branches within the study of organization theory that address the relationship between an organization and its environment: the resource dependency theorists and the institutionalists.

Resource Dependency Theory

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), among other proponents, have asserted in resource dependency theory a free-market theory of organizational interaction in which organizations are rational entities which compete for resources within a given environment. In resource dependency theory organizations are rewarded differentially the basis of their value to the superordinate system (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967). Although organizations are assumed to prefer autonomy (Thompson, 1967; Wilson, 1989) they must engage with other organizations in order to satisfy resource needs and placate powerful

constituencies which can threaten their survival (Ford, et al. 1988:410).

"The ability of an organization to exploit its environment in the acquisition of scarce and valued resources is a condition for organizational effectiveness" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967:898). From resource dependency perspective the external environment of the organization is the ultimate judge of effectiveness - as all organizations are in it and the environment rewards them unevenly on the basis of their value.

Resource dependency theorists believe organizational goals evolve and are displaced through the dynamic process of interaction with the environment. As such, goals are not organizational properties, but "strategies for enhancing the bargaining position of the organization for resource acquisition" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967:896). Resource dependency theorists do not deny that organizations have values but recognize their role as instrumental and derivative of the larger social structure.

Not only must the ultimate goal of the organization be functionally significant in general for that system but, in the case of a conflict of interests between it and the organization, the conflict is always resolved in favor of the superordinate system - - since the value pattern of the organization legitimates only those goals that serve that system (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967:896).

Consistent with our earlier assertion, resource dependency theorists see the terms of legitimacy resolved in

favor of more powerful environmental actors. Resource dependency theorists consider the organization a tool of the larger system. Its very survival and success are taken to indicate that the organization is regarded as a valid institution and, therefore, legitimate. In short, resource dependency theorists assert that resource exchanges are a manifestation of legitimacy (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967; Terryberry, 1968).

The Institutional School

In contrast to resource dependency theorists, the institutional school emphasizes the role of normative pressures as the preeminent force in an organization's quest for legitimacy. From this perspective, legitimacy is defined as "the acceptance of the formal organization by its relevant others, based on the congruency between its goals and activities and the dominant values of the superordinate system" (Hannigan, 1977:126). As the resource dependency theorists, institutionalists recognize the hegemony of the environment in shaping organizational goals, but institutionalists have identified a normative system which is active in the organizational environment and distinct from resource flows.

Theorists of the institutional school do not regard economic transactions as a cognate for legitimacy. They argue that an institution could ostensibly be valued by the society

and yet not receive the necessary resources. Conversely, an illegal drug organization could enjoy economic prosperity and yet not be construed as legitimate. Thus, the institutional school emphasizes the importance of values over resources in shaping the terms of legitimacy, specifically the values of a delineated institutional environment.

The explanation for organizational behavior is not primarily in the formal structure . . . but lies largely in the myriad subterranean processes of informal groups, conflicts between groups, recruitment policies, dependencies on outside groups and constituencies, striving for prestige, community values, the local community power structure and legal institutions (Perrow 1986:159).

Institutional theorists assert that an organization will be strongly influenced and eventually seek isomorphism with a collective normative order, referred to as the institutional environment. This conformity to professional norms, standard operating procedures, and government rules and regulations enhances the legitimacy of an organization, and in turn, its prospects for survival (Zucker, 1987:445). As did Weber and resource dependency theorists, the institutionalists acknowledge that legitimate authority for an organization must be grounded in an external belief system. But they identify the relevant environment as specific to an organizational set, and therefore an entity distinctive from the larger belief system of societal norms (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Institutional theorists ascribe a pernicious element to

the institutional environment in that its imposed norms do not necessarily conflate with efficient achievement of organizational goals. Research by Meyer and Rowan (1977; 1983) has established that an organization's conformity to the institutional environment often reduces efficiency in that organizations are inclined to align their structures and processes with the "myth and ceremony" of the external environment as opposed to the internal workings which advance organizational goals. The authors continue to state that in the interest of the internal work activities, organizations sometimes need to "uncouple technical processes from formal organizational structures (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:341). Hence, as organizational activities are infused with external values, technical activities may become thwarted or diverted from their original purposes. In more recent literature a few authors have acknowledged that organizations are subject to pressures from both the technical environments as well as the institutional environments (Zucker, 1987; Meyer and Scott, 1983).

Institutional theorists assert that organizational goals are often displaced and distorted in the organization's pursuit of survival. The institutional school is replete with studies of organizations that were swept adrift of their mission in their quest for survival (Perrow, 1961; Selznick, 1949; Wamsley, 1969; Zald, 1963). This is in marked contrast

to the resource dependency school which would regard an altered goal orientation as an evolution rather than a distortion of the organization.

In summary, the institutional school embraces values as the foundation to organizations and their legitimacy, but cautiously. Values are perceived as important to institution building. Moreover, a consonance between organizational values and methods, and those of the institutional environment is a requisite to legitimacy and survival. But there is an implicit assumption that institutional environments may create dysfunction within organizations because "core tasks are not performed as well as they would be in a market-oriented organization, and basic organizational objectives are also often deflected" (Zucker, 1987:445).

Both resource dependency and institutional theory contain an element of deference to rationalism, if not free market principles. Resource dependency theorists espouse a "laissez-faire" theory in which organizations compete for resources and the best are remuneratively blessed by the superordinate system. Financial success is taken as organizational legitimacy.

Institutionalists maintain the prominence of value congruence in directing organizational goals. But they recognize that the institutional environment may thwart the rational and efficient production component to the

organization. So, organizations must take heed that the institutional environment does not overrun the performance of the technical core. Institutionalists perceive organizational norms and resource exchanges as distinctive and interactive.

While there are differences between the two schools as to the manifestation of legitimacy, for the organization seeking validation from the environment the consequence may be the same. Legitimacy will occur in the context of the "collective belief system" operant in the larger environment. And, as Zucker notes, the power of the institutional environment "is often translated into control over resource flows to the organization, making it difficult to distinguish institutional from resource dependence explanations" (1987:457).

However, the institutional framework of legitimacy is more relevant to the experience of third sector organizations, or NSO's. First, and foremost, their existence is value based as opposed to profit oriented. Such organizations have clearly defined institutionalized environments which circumscribe domains, goals and procedures, making them difficult to adjust (Randall, 1973). Moreover, as public organizations, their survival is rooted not only in the quality of their product, but also in the political process of creating and maintaining support for their objectives among the public, other organizations and legislators for their objectives (Wamsley and Zald, 1976; Meyer, 1975).

Further, NSO's are seldom engaged in direct resource exchanges characteristic of the private sector. Resource dependency posits a reciprocal relationship wherein "A" engages with "B" for a given service or product. In contrast, NSO and public sector interactions are more accurately depicted by "A" paying "B" to deliver services to "C." As such, the relationship is more unilateral in nature wherein "C" is regarded not as a consumer but a recipient.

In the case of NSO's, it is important to remember that public organizations that receive funding from donors and serve clientele work to shape donor perceptions because "any activity on the part of the organization that can increase its legitimacy (within the donor environment) is important for its survival" (Weed, 1986:433). Absent a strong link between donors and beneficiaries, it is difficult for donors to ascertain whether services are adequate or whether demand exists because their perceptions are managed by the NSO (Galaskiewicz, 1985).

Weed asserted that the primacy of the donor/organization relationship means that NSO's ensure their survival by focusing legitimation tactics on donors, or the institutional environment (1986). Thus, we might assume that the many NSO's maintain strong donor and interagency relationships. It is the organization/client relationship that is not supported by financial exchanges.

Characteristics of Legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy within the organization theory literature continues to be closely identified with issues of value congruence, effectiveness, and organizational adaptation. The following section will elaborate the relationship between legitimacy and each of these issues.

Legitimacy and Values

The cornerstone of organizational legitimacy is captured in the term "distinctive competence" which Selznick used to mean those "specific capabilities and proficiencies **that are morally acceptable**" (1949:14). From the writings of early sociologists, such as Weber, Habermas and Friedrich, continuing through Selznick's work in TVA and the Grassroots, and the works of later organization theorists, the legitimacy of an organization has been grounded in its ability to act and justify its actions in relation to the collective belief system. Thus, the process of legitimation occurs as the organization asserts and defends its congruence with larger social values. In fact, Czarniawska-Joerges asserts that the character of the process, itself, must be congruent with these values (1989:539).

Research by Young and Larson (1965) confirmed that voluntary organizations which more nearly embodied the value constellations of their community were awarded the highest prestige rankings. Conversely, organizations that championed

"precarious values," those not widely shared by the dominant community and societal ideology, risked loss of legitimacy (Hannigan 1977:128; Weed 1986; Rock, 1988). Weed's study of welfare agencies indicated that agencies' survival and legitimacy were at risk when they offered discretionary services the community did not perceive as necessary, or when the client group was seen as "undeserving" (1986). Such organizations were also more likely to have their goals subverted (Clark, 1956). Thus, we see the hegemony of the collective belief system over the organization in establishing the context for legitimacy.

The need for organizations to establish legitimacy by emulating the collective belief system, if not more specifically, the values of the immediate institutional environment reaffirms the inherent conservatism of legitimacy. That is, the actions and discourse through which organizations validate their existence must conform with established norms. This is not to infer that organizations are entirely captive actors. As an organization becomes part of an existing order, it interprets and responds to that order through the process of interacting with other organizational actors. Some actions perpetuate and reinforce, others configure and extend the belief system. Thus, the operant values have been described in the literature as a dynamic organizational constraint in that they can be shaped by powerful actors in the

organizational environment (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). However, organizations vary in their ability to affect changes in larger societal values, and their ability relates to the extent of their authority, visibility, and resources (Hannigan, 1977; Weed, 1986), which in the case of NSO's are all limited assets.

But what is the impact of divergent belief systems in the organizational environment? If it is established that organizations naturally gravitate toward the dominant belief system, then it follows that the organization may cease to operate in relation to the belief system of an insular client community, or focal population. And if the exercise of authority requires a "shared value system" as Friedrich asserted, then it is possible that NSO's which respond to the hegemony of the institutional environment may cease to hold authority with respect to the client community and focal population. This argument presumes a divergence in belief systems, although it is possible that the value systems converge in such a way that allows the organization to develop legitimacy of a one-dimensional character.

Values and the ability to shape values is of preeminence among third sector and public organizations, for they are the basis of organizational existence. Just as resource dependency theorists regard resource flows as a manifestation of legitimacy, and "the ability to acquire resources as a

measure of effectiveness and organizational power" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967) so institutionalists have recognized the ability to shape values as a measure of effectiveness and power. This is particularly relevant to public and third sector organizations whose establishment and very existence is political. The currency for organizations of this ilk is values. As a result, these organizations are constantly engaged in the process of building support among relevant organizations, legislators and sympathizers in an effort to maintain awareness and support for their mission and objectives (Randall, 1973).

Legitimacy and Effectiveness

The second component of distinctive competence, **"those specific capabilities and proficiencies** that are morally acceptable" links the achievement of legitimacy to an organization's ability to demonstrate its effectiveness. For example, Weed's research on small community welfare agencies echoes Selnick's point: "to the extent that an agency's services are not duplicated within the community and that their expertise is recognized by relevant others, then their legitimacy is more secure." (1986:435).

Effectiveness has been defined in a variety of ways, but it is widely taken as a measure of an organization's ability to achieve its goals, and often defined in terms of outputs (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967; Cameron, 1980). For human

service organizations this presents a serious challenge because "neither their outputs nor outcomes are observable" (Wilson, 1989:168). Whereas the private sector may rely on profit margins or productivity to assess effectiveness, it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify inputs or outputs for human service organizations. Wilson (1989) coined the term "coping organizations" to describe organizations that do not easily establish their effectiveness because they lack a measurable connection between inputs and outputs and the "clarity of output standards is often low" (Singh et al., 1986:174).

Managers of social service organizations most commonly attempt to demonstrate effectiveness through indirect indexes and external referents (Perrow, 1961; Wilson, 1989). Indirect indexes may refer to reputation and credentials of personnel, specialized equipment, number of clients, or number of research projects in operation (Perrow, 1961; Wilson, 1989). External referents are usually associated with status and are not essential to maintaining production standards although they may be vital to ensuring acceptance and resources" (Perrow 1961:367). Examples of external referents include endorsement or funding from a respected donor, or "officials who have unambiguous claims to authority" (Bolduc, 1980:172).

Thus, effectiveness comes to be determined by social criteria, like the satisfaction and approval of external

constituencies (Daft, 1983; Singh et al., 1986). In fact, Perrow contended that the more difficult it is to establish intrinsic quality of services, the more the organization will depend on other groups to validate its claims (1961:337).

Perrow (1961) and recently Wilson (1989) have argued that as the organization seeks to establish its distinctive competence through indirect measures, internal procedures and goals can be reconfigured to generate data that validates the organization. There is a tendency for resources and goals to be displaced as the organization directs its energies to the "most easily measured and thus, most easily controlled activities" (Wilson, 1989:171); and, to endeavors which "foster prestige at the expense of activities which had little or no relevance to prestige even though they were essential for achieving official goals" (Perrow 1961:339).

The assertion that social service organizations will seek legitimacy through external referents and indirect indexes is consistent with the ideas of institutionalist theorists who argued that organizations project their "worthiness" in terms consonant with the expectations of powerful constituencies in order to establish their legitimacy. For example, Hannigan found that legitimacy depended largely on the organization's capacity to adjust to fit the model expected of it by its relevant others, especially those who possess direct fiscal power over it (1977:134). And Meyer and Scott (1983) asserted

that organizational environments often have institutionalized belief systems with respect to the ideal structures and process. The authors referred to these established belief systems as "rationalizing myths" because adoption of these myths may have little bearing on the organization's ability to achieve goals.

Organizations that conform (to rationalizing myths) increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:340)

In summary, the literature indicates that organizational efforts to garner legitimacy by asserting effectiveness are often achieved by projecting an **image of effectiveness** consonant with the expectations of powerful actors in the institutional environment. Organizations achieve this image by conforming to the expectations of the institutional environment, by developing external referents of prestige, and by generating data around measurable organizational activities. Unfortunately, the relationship between these processes and goal attainment may not be as tangible as donors would assume. In fact, the literature indicates that these activities are independent, and often detrimental to the development of intrinsic organizational characteristics necessary for the achievement of organizational goals (Perrow, 1961; Wilson, 1989).

Cameron (1980), who advanced four approaches to

evaluating organizational effectiveness suggested that in cases where external constituencies exercise a powerful influence over an organization, or when an organization is largely reactive to strategic constituency demands, that effectiveness is best defined as "the extent to which all of the organization's strategic constituencies are at least minimally satisfied" (1980:68). Strategic constituencies were defined as any group whose cooperation is essential for the organization's survival or who have some stake in the organization (Cameron, 1980). The question of effectiveness then becomes, what strategic constituencies are important for NSO's, and how would each gauge the organization's effectiveness? Presently, organizations respond to external pressures elicited from powerful factions of the organizational environment. However, clients may comprise an important strategic contingency as receivers of services and to the extent that they also constitute the organization's volunteer labor force. Unfortunately, the client community has little access or influence over the organizational environment. And because the organization often re-presents "the client" to the interorganizational environment, client satisfaction may actually be ancillary to organizational survival, particularly when the client population is isolated and largely invisible.

One of the ways that social service agencies attempt to

create balance among strategic constituencies is by placing clients on advisory boards (Weed, 1986; White, 1983). But White indicates that if clients represent a minority interest on the advisory board, they are easily coopted (1983). In fact, clients may often be selected to advocate for the agency's position, enabling the agency personnel to control the agenda (White, 1983).

White (1983) noted a natural tension between an organizational goal of citizen participation and effectiveness as presently assessed. As organizations emphasize efficiency there is a temptation to coopt the participatory process because it works at cross purposes with traditional systems of accountability and control. However, the author's research indicates that participation may enable organizations to act more responsively to citizen preferences and hence, more effectively in the long run (White, 1983). For example, as organizations become more representative through client participation, benefits are more broadly dispersed throughout the community rather than targeted to a select few (White, 1983).

Thus far, the establishment of legitimacy has required that an organization provide a service or product that is defined as morally acceptable and of merit by the collective belief system; secondly, legitimacy requires that an organization's demonstrate proficiency and effectiveness at

achieving this agreed upon end. But we have also recognized that the terms of effectiveness and of merit are established by the institutional environment. They reflect an intersubjective belief system that may or may not correlate with the experience of the organization in working toward these goals. For an organization that serves a population outside of this institutional environment and the mainstream social order, the terms of what is morally acceptable or effective, must also be derived from the client's social construction of reality. This is the quandary for NSO's, and particularly for the AIDS service organizations examined in this study.

The Process of Legitimation

The next element of legitimacy is intrinsic to previous discussions of its characteristics. That is, the **process** by which an organization asserts its distinctive competence, "those specific capabilities and proficiencies that are morally acceptable," depends on an organization's ability to act strategically with environmental stakeholders. Institutionalists and resource dependency theorists have differed in their conception of how the organization interacts with the environment, in part, because of a difference in their perception of organizational power, as well as their construct of the environment (Oliver, 1991). The following section will explore legitimation activities as discussed in

the literature and present the author's perspective as to how NSO's might engage in the process.

Institutionalists have taken the tack that organizations work toward isomorphism with the environment. Thus, legitimation is achieved when an organization conforms to norms manifest as standard operating procedures, professional certification, laws and regulations, and occasionally, public interest groups and public opinion (Zucker, 1987; Oliver, 1991). They have minimized the ability of organizations to dominate or defy external demands, or the usefulness of pursuing these strategies (Oliver, 1991).

In contrast, resource dependency theorists have attributed organizations with more control in the face of environmental pressures. They have elaborated a range of "choice behaviors" that organizations can exercise in order to cope with external pressures, "problematic interdependencies," and exercise some control over resource flows (Oliver, 1991:148-150). Environment is conceptualized as the task environment which embodies exchanges and resource flows, and is therefore, less tangible and binding than rules and regulations. The process of establishing legitimacy from the resource dependency perspective allows for manipulation and expediency in the interest of resource acquisition.

Both schools regard environments as dynamic; recognize that environments may present multiple and conflicting

demands; and assume environments are collective and integrated in character (Zucker, 1987; Oliver, 1991). But, while the institutionalist school has better captured the dynamics of public sector organizations with their low degree of autonomy and strong value orientation, they may have underestimated the organization's ability to respond to its environment strategically (Oliver, 1991).

Moreover, both resource dependency theorists and institutionalists appear to have overestimated the degree of integration in the environment of public organizations, perhaps because they have focused on the organizational set or task environment as comprising the sum of environmental actors. The role of the public as environmental stakeholders has been alternately minimized, acknowledged when presented in organizational form as a public interest group, or generalized to larger social values. But, the possibility of addressing a public as an environmental stakeholder which is not represented in an organizational form and which does not share larger social values, is not confronted.

The present study of organizations which serve a disenfranchised public and receive funding from government and private foundations is an example of an organizational environment which lacks such an interconnectedness or cohesive character. Organizations in such a position may not conform, but seek a strategic adaptation that will allow them to manage

divergent pressures, because isomorphism with one aspect of environment may preclude development of legitimacy with another equally important stakeholder.

Organizational legitimation, or the assertion of distinctive competence, occurs through the process of organization-environment interaction wherein the organization defines and progressively clarifies its distinctive identity; an expertise which is not duplicated (Selznick, 1949). The organization's ability to engage in this process is influenced by its' stage of organizational growth, its ability to adapt, and the characteristics of the external environment with which it contends.

Life Cycle Theory

Life cycle theorists of organizational growth and development indicate that the process of legitimation is influenced by the initial phase when the organization establishes its identity and subsequently, is enacted as the organization establishes and defines itself in the environment. Ross (1980) identified three stages in the growth process of organizations: **crystallization**, in which organizations identify their purpose or mission; **recognition**, wherein the organization creates linkages with the relevant environmental actors and engages in resource exchanges; and **institutionalization**, in which the organization seeks a level of stability.

Crystallization directs the future process of legitimation because during this incipient stage the organization develops a clear identity, purpose, and often "a mythology that presents an image of the organization that members value and which unifies them (Rock, 1988:375). An organization's initial lens, or interpretation scheme, for the external environment as well as its internal workings is developed during this first stage of development (Weick and Daft, 1983).

Founders are critical to the development of the organizational lens, and in fact, often import their professional orientation and values from previous organizations. As such, organizations are seldom begun anew but are more often composites of older organizations (Rock, 1988).

The second phase of the organizational life cycle occurs when the organization seeks recognition from external actors of its distinctive competence. Organizational recognition is achieved as the organization progressively clarifies its niche through interactions with external and internal actors. The organizational domain is established as the organization seeks recognition and cooperation, if not control over that aspect of the environment on which it depends for resources (Thompson, 1967). It is possible that during the recognition phase organizations direct their attention to a variety of

domains serially, as they become relevant to the organizational goals. In fact, Cameron (1980) noted that organizations will often emphasize different domains as they progress through their life cycle.

During recognition, organizations are most vulnerable to dissolution and suffer from what Stinchcombe termed the "liability of newness" (1965). Stinchcombe, (1965) related early organizational deaths to an immature external support network. Later research by Singh, Tucker, and House, (1986) and Rock, (1988) reaffirmed that liability of newness is attributable to the lack of external networks which secure resource flows and buffer the organization from turbulence, and is less a factor of ineffective internal workings (Terryberry, 1967; Hannigan, 1977). Ross (1980) and Hannan and Freeman (1984) have also noted that later in the life of the organization when resources are more secure, the relevant environment becomes less diffuse and more identifiable in character.

While we cannot assert that "liability of newness" is the same as the lack of legitimacy, we can assert that during recognition, organizations are most vulnerable for the lack of it, and will actively seek to establish their legitimacy with a broad array of environmental actors. The process of establishing distinctive competence may require that organizations engage in both conforming and individuating

behaviors depending on the homogeneity and degree of institutionalization of the environment.

A number of authors have argued that during recognition, organizations cope with environmental uncertainty by extending their interorganizational ties both vertically and horizontally, often beyond related organizations, in order to improve their information flows and diminish their resource dependence (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Weed, 1986). Galaskiewicz and Shatin argued that the basis for creating interorganizational linkages is often shared value systems, thus affirming the role of values in establishing legitimacy. For example, the authors found that status group affiliations, specifically racial and educational backgrounds were often the basis for interorganizational linkages (1981:446).

Interorganizational linkages among NSO's are further circumscribed by the relationships of organizational elites. Research by Galaskiewicz and Shatin (1981) as well as Bolduc (1980) has affirmed the role of "extraorganizational loyalties" often among a community elite in maintaining organizational funding and survival. Galaskiewicz and Shatin noted that the formation of cooperative relations or networks among organizations often occurs because organizational leaders have "overlapping memberships" (1981). The authors found a considerable overlap in the leadership of NSO's such that funding from one organization increased the likelihood of

receiving monies from others in the network. According to Galaskiewicz and Shatin, the resulting networks often circumvent a wider distribution of resources (1981). In short, NSO's will seek to establish an interorganizational network, or become a member of an existing network, in order to secure and stabilize resource flows as well as buffer themselves from environmental turbulence (Terryberry, 1967).

While community organizations may develop a wide ranging horizontal network, particularly in the beginning, there appears to be a tendency for vertical linkages to be few in number because of the demands of the relationship. Donors often impose a structure and terms of accountability that preclude an extension of vertical linkages for NSO's (Antrobus, 1987).

According to Oliver (1991) the extension of networks promotes isomorphism and conformity among NSO's because collective values are more easily diffused. Conversely, environments that are highly competitive and fragmented impede consensus and conformity (Oliver, 1991:171). Thus, organizations attempt to establish networks which reflect agreements as to domain, thereby mitigating competition.

The issue of competition is one of the greatest challenges for new organizations seeking recognition. As Rock said, "a new institution interferes with its surroundings; it introduces successive waves of adjustment, separation, and

definition." (1988:372).

"At the beginning, most of the organization's features will be raw, problematic, and unsettled, resolved only by the production of artificially heightened contrasts. They may even be resolved by a new demonology which magnifies the moral, symbolic, and social distance between the new association and the world lying beyond it, between feminists and men, between socialists and capitalists, between nationalists and imperialists, between gays and straights, between the enlightened and those whose consciousness is still dormant (Rock 1988:374).

Thus, new organizations will clarify and reclarify their identities and their roles as they establish themselves in an environment, often through exaggerating differences. It is possible that organizations influence the social context of the environment through interaction, and that their role extends beyond that of the passive actor which conforms. In summary, organizations seeking recognition do so by establishing their distinctive competence through a process of environmental interaction and adaptation, usually extending interorganizational linkages to maximize information, resources and consensus on domain.

The final phase of organizational growth, institutionalization, occurs when the organization has achieved a degree of stability and legitimacy has been established. Hannan and Freeman argue that established organizations are the least dynamic in their interaction with the environment due to the institutionalization of their

organizational networks over considerable time (1984). Their interorganizational linkages are fewer and stronger. Internally, organizations which survived the perilous early years are said to be reluctant to alter established structures and processes (Hannan and Freeman, 1984). Therefore, with the introduction of substantial changes in the environment, their survival is threatened because they have lost the ability to adapt.

Adaptability

Another issue that influences the process of legitimation is the organization's ability to adapt, or modify itself in relation to the environment. Legitimation results when an organization adapts in such a way as to be perceived as congruent with the collective belief system. The argument has been presented that organizations are in best position to establish legitimacy when they are able to adapt strategically, or determine when to duplicate norms and when to individuate. Adaptation has been defined as:

"the act or process of changing so as to become suitable to a new or special use or situation; an improvement in condition in relation to the environment" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1982).

The capacity to direct the process of organizational adaptation requires a degree of organizational independence and power. Commonly referred to as autonomy, it affords an organization the ability to exercise some control over

boundaries, or "turf maintenance" (Wilson, 1991). Selznick defined organizational autonomy as "a condition of independence sufficient to permit a group to work out and maintain a distinctive identity" (1957:121). Organizations are understood to require some level of independence in order to clarify and maintain their niche. The development of autonomy allows an organization to buffer itself against forces that are counter to the achievement of goals. In the context of legitimation as an ongoing process, the development of a degree of autonomy gives an organization some discretion over adaptation.

Wilson (1989) indicated that organizations establish autonomy by: "seeking out tasks that are not being performed by others; fighting organizations that seek to perform your tasks; avoiding taking on tasks that differ significantly from those at the heart of the organization's mission; being wary of joint or cooperative ventures; avoiding tasks that will produce divided or hostile constituencies; and avoid learned vulnerabilities." (1991:92-103). All of the above have at their heart the clarification and maintenance of a distinctive identity, the ability to maintain organizational boundaries.

The development of autonomy is problematic for public and nonprofit organizations when their objectives are circumscribed by mandates, federal decrees and other legally binding acts because they have limited ability to alter their

course (Hannigan 1977; Wamsley and Zald, 1976; Randall, 1973). Organizations in an inflexible, or determined position attempt to preserve political support for their issues among relevant institutional actors, legislators, community leaders, and the public, (Randall, 1973; Wamsley, 1976). Public and non-profit organizations actively seek to maintain political and constituency perceptions of their distinctive competence as well as the quality of their product. The dual agenda of delivering a product as well as managing political and public perceptions is a required survival strategy for "low autonomy" organizations.

Antrobus (1987) and Yudelman (1987), among others, describe NSO's which serve marginalized populations as "low autonomy" organizations because they often serve needs regarded as peripheral, and so it is difficult to justify their mission to the larger public. They can also be influenced by government mandates and agencies which can restrict their ability to adapt, though less than public organizations. NSO's most often respond to environmental pressures by conforming to the expectations of the donor environment and forsaking the client community and focal population.

Zucker noted that organizations are able to limit external penetration if they are able to challenge the external environment's control or power over the organization

(1987:451). If NSO's are able to maintain internally determined goals and objectives, through the support of a strong client community, it is possible that they can offset the environmental pressures to conform to more powerful donor environment. Both Antrobus (1987) and Yudelman (1987) have affirmed the necessity of a strong indigenous base of support for organizations to develop independence from the donor environment, maintain community objectives and long run fealty to the client community. Antrobus (1987), for example, noted the malaise endemic to nonprofit governmental organizations-- of changing hats with the shifts in donor agency agendas, and failing to concentrate on a client base.

The question of individuation and autonomy for an NSO serving a disenfranchised group is often tied to the ability to garner a sufficient resource base among the client community and focal population. Moreover, a variety of funding sources enables the organization to maintain stronger local autonomy because it is less subject to the directives of one donor agency. For instance, Weed (1986:433) found that community welfare agencies with multiple funding sources had greater local power because they were less dependent on a single source of money. And Yudelman's research on grass-roots women's organizations confirmed the importance of linkages to at least the most immediate environment via the board of directors, advisory committees, unions, other

federations and non-governmental organizations in protecting and supporting women's organizations. But the experience of most grass roots organizations confirms the necessity of legitimacy within the dominant belief system in order to survive. For example, the internationally known women's organization SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) in India is a widely acclaimed grassroots organization. SEWA has thousands of active members, most of whom live in poverty. But at the core of the organization is powerful cohort of middle-class women with political contacts that they have been able to draw upon for the benefit of the organization.

Thus, a strong resource base in the service community prevents the NSO from having to travel far into the institutional environment in the quest for legitimacy and survival. Client-based legitimacy and resources allow the organization some autonomy and the ability to withstand a lack of multidimensional legitimacy. For example, gay-founded NSO's were often able to disregard government requirements to modify program content because they worked from a strong base of community support and could afford to waive government monies (Patton, 1989).

Finally, NSO's which have pursued the philosophy of the "learning organization" must develop autonomy in order to advance internally generated decisions that are reached through the process of community interaction. If legitimacy

is only the passive adoption of social context established external to the organization then theorists have overdetermined organizational behavior. Theory in this vein negates the possibility of the organization functioning as a learning element, where information is generated from within, and the organization, in turn, informs the organizational environment. Institutional theory presents a serious theoretical obstacle in that it precludes the possibility that organizational structures or processes might be internally generated and then bubble up to inform the institutional environment.

In summary, the process of legitimation is strongly influenced by (a) the organization's stage in its life cycle, (b) its ability to manage adaptation which requires visibility, resources and a strong base of support. NSO's serving a disenfranchised population will be at a disadvantage developing the strong base of local support necessary to counterbalance the pressures and norms of the donor environment.

If NSO's fail to individuate and develop a degree of autonomy in their recognition phase, they may persist as subunits of larger organizations that fund them. Even as NSO's work to solidify their goals and objectives, they confront strong competition from other NSO's and often an uncertain funding environment. Once an organization has

matured and established an interorganizational network it may enjoy some organizational stability but it is limited in its ability to extending into other realms. For example, Wilson warned in his discussion of turf maintenance that organizations threaten their autonomy when they "take on tasks that produce divided or hostile constituencies" (1989:191). NSO's, are often characterized by informal rules of order, homogeneity of membership, and a reliance on normative appeals and group consensus for internal control (Rothchild-Whitt, 1979:513). This may well explain why gay-based NSO's are experiencing difficulty extending to the new populations affected by HIV, women and minorities.

"The opportunities for defiance are structured by features of institutional life" (Piven and Cloward, 1977:23).

Legitimation Strategies/Buffering Strategies:

In the previous sections legitimacy was considered in terms of its component parts and the process through which an organization would establish it. According to the literature, legitimacy requires an organization to adapt to the context of a collective belief system. However, in the case of nonprofits serving disenfranchised populations, the environment must either be construed as non-collective and highly fragmented, or the role of the focal population and client community must be disregarded. Moreover, an organization that embodies the voice of a disenfranchised

population will most often present a perspective that challenges the collective belief system, thereby precluding its ability to establish legitimacy. It is assumed therefore, that not only organizations, but environments structure the opportunities "to defy, to reject, or react."

Therefore, organizations which seek legitimacy with divergent stakeholders may buffer key organizational processes from other stakeholders. Perhaps, like Thompson's example of the organization protecting the technical core from environmental changes, NSO's with strong client community may seek to maintain this relationship as an integral component to their effectiveness. Resource dependency theorists have asserted that organizations need to maintain discretion or autonomy over decision making in order to maintain stability and achieve a predictable flow of resources. It may, however, also be necessary in order to hold on to internally derived organizational processes and values.

A recent article by Oliver reviewed various strategic responses that organizations enact when faced with institutional pressures toward conformity and developed a typology (1991). One of the most indisputable methods of establishing legitimacy with the environment is **acquiescence** (Oliver, 1991). "They will deck proposals in the rhetorical attire that is considered best calculated to earn approval" (Rock 1988:380). In other words, organizations are inclined

to comply, if not reformulate goals to fit structures and processes accepted as valid in the institutional environment (Oliver, 1991; Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975)

Acquiescence may take the form of imitation, habit or compliance (Oliver, 1991:150). Imitation is said to occur when organizations are "uncertain about alternatives and pursue one that is recognizable and known;" habit is "an unreflective adoption of norms often because they are so ingrained;" and, compliance infers a more strategic response in that the organization chooses to comply in anticipation of specific self-serving benefits (Oliver, 1991; DiMaggio, 1988; Meyer and Scott, 1983).

NSO's would be expected to engage in acquiescent behaviors when there is a high degree of regulation, or cohesiveness in the institutional environment. However, DiMaggio and Powell noted that the more uncertainty the organization confronts in the environment, the more likely the organization will imitate established structures and processes. (1988).

The second alternative is **compromise** wherein an organization responds to conflicting, or multiple constituent demands and seeks to find a mutually agreeable course of action (Oliver, 1991:153). "Organizations may attempt to balance, pacify or bargain with external constituents" (Oliver 1991:153). Balance infers that the organization "seeks

parity" among competing constituents; pacifying denotes meeting expectations at least partially, and bargaining occurs when the organizations actively seeks concessions from a constituency (Oliver, 1991:153).

Compromise is a valid tactic for NSO's when there is some parity among interorganizational actors or constituent groups. For example, it is conceivable that organizations would engage in compromise in an effort to establish domain. Compromise is also possible in the face of conflict with the institutional environment, but it assumes a strong commitment on the part of donors to organizational objectives and power on the part of the NSO.

The third tactic organizations employ in response to institutional pressures is **avoidance** (Oliver, 1991:154). Oliver defines avoidance as "the organizational attempt to preclude the necessity of conformity," most often achieved by "concealing their nonconformity, buffering themselves from institutional pressures, or escaping from institutional rules or expectations."

Buffering tactics which fall under this heading are likely behaviors for an organization in pursuit of methods or objectives not sanctioned by a powerful donor environment, or even a focal population. An NSO serving a disenfranchised population may find concealment and buffering an effective tactic when dealing with donors who have limited interaction

with the client community, or seldom visit the organizational site. For example, several gay-based organizations used federal funding to print educational materials in violation of the Helms amendment, which severely restricted language and content. In the case of a focal population, an organization might present a public image consonant with widely held values in order to encourage membership and circumvent attack.

Concealment, however, may work against the important organizational objective of legitimacy if it diminishes organizational visibility (Hannigan, 1977; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1989). As previously discussed, an established organizational profile is often necessary for the maintenance of resource flows and recognition (Hannigan, 1977). Moreover, effectiveness is often adjudged on the basis of visible adherence to institutional norms.

Concealment can be therefore distinguished from the acquiescent strategy of compliance by the degree to which conformity is apparent or real. From an institutional perspective, the distinction between appearance and reality is a theoretically important dichotomy (Scott, 1983; Zucker, 1983) because the appearance rather than the fact of conformity is often presumed to be sufficient for the attainment of legitimacy (Oliver 1991:155).

Note that the appearance of effectiveness is often more important for social service organizations than actual effectiveness, as it is so difficult to evaluate.

The third avoidance strategy of escape occurs when an organization alters its domain such that it is not required to

conform with a given institutional environment (Oliver, 1991:155). An organization that moves to Mexico to avoid labor or pollution requirements in the United States is an example. It is the most dramatic of efforts to "circumvent the conditions that make conformity necessary" (Oliver, 1991:148).

One of the most commonly employed strategic responses to environmental pressures is **manipulation** (Oliver, 1991; Dowling and Pfeffer; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) wherein the organization engages in "purposeful and opportunistic attempts to co-opt, influence, or control institutional pressures and evaluations" (Oliver 1991:157). Selznick elaborated cooptation as an option for attaining support for an organization's goals in TVA and the Grassroots. He defined it as "a method for widening support for an organization by absorbing into the leadership or policy-making segments of an organization, elements (or alliances) that in some way reflect the sentiments or possess the confidence of the relevant public" (Selznick 1949:14). Although an element of control is forfeited over policies and agendas, Selznick concluded that in some instances, as in the case of TVA, this compromise may be a requisite for success, if not organizational survival.

Organizations routinely coopt problematic or hostile elements via cash contributions, recruiting prestigious people to the organization's board of directors or even having one's

own executives recruited to prestigious boards (Galaskiewicz 1981:296). Thus, organizations which are resource dependent are likely to view cooperative strategies as viable alternatives.

Similar to cooptation is the frequent organizational attempt to identify the organization with powerful symbols, values, institutions, and individuals who have a strong base of legitimacy (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975).

In any given culture certain symbols, metaphors and myths become consensually recognized as indicators that a particular behavioral response is "morally" appropriate (Richardson 1985:144).

Richardson offers the example of "gift giving" used as the metaphor for transplanting organs from dead bodies, an attempt to establish the legitimacy of a potentially repugnant activity. In turn, efforts to highlight middle-class heterosexuals who are HIV positive, particularly white women, who can be constructed as the "perfect victim"³ is an attempt to counteract the strong moral stigma attached people who live with the virus. In recent years, the efforts of innumerable prominent entertainers, the inordinate attention directed to young Kimberly Bergalis, who contracted the virus from her dentist, and the announcement of Ervin "Magic" Johnson

³ Loseke (1992) indicates that the construct of victim is often a prerequisite for helping. Victim implies moral purity and powerlessness -- the idea that the individual was not complicit in the situation.

reaffirm the efforts of AIDS organizations to "normalize" the public's construct of a person living with the virus.

Several organizational theorists have asserted that organizations will attempt to "enact their environments" (Weick, 1969:13; Rock, 1988:377), which is to say that they will attempt to construct their social reality and the "facts" to which they respond. Rock made note of this in his discussion of how new organizations often construct their self image in relation to other environmental actors by exaggerating conflicts, enemies, and associations (1988). "It is most helpful at the beginning to locate an enemy, elaborate its character and so refine one's own" (Rock, 1988:375). An example of such a strategy, the D.C. Women's Council on AIDS, a relatively new organization in relation to the gay-based Whitman Walker Clinic, which receives the majority of city funding for HIV prevention, has publically railed against Whitman Walker and their treatment of minority women on several occasions in civic and community forums in an effort to differentiate and portray themselves as **the provider** in the D.C. area for women of color.

Another mode of manipulation that commonly occurs with NSO's is the inference of speaking for the community, or behavior I regard as "speaking in the name of." It is the presentation of a reality that is hard to question and which validates the learning organization vis the institutional

environment. Bolduc noted in his study of a neighborhood association,

"In spite of the remarkably small proportion of the population actually affected by this well-publicized and spirited community organization, the Association leaders speak of their "Program for Neighborhood Youth" . . . as if the bulk of the neighborhood were active, represented and enthusiastically participating (Bolduc, 1980:168).

The disparity between actual numbers involved and the popular parlance of organizational leaders is, of course, most significant in terms of established legitimacy when the association attempts to represent or speak for the neighborhood in its dealings with private groups or government representatives (Bolduc, 1980).

Myths are a commonly employed form of manipulation that buffer organizations, both internally and externally. Myths may be generated because they institutionalize a favored perspective; for example, advertising that presents a corporation as committed to ethic of social responsibility (Lentz & Tschirgi 1963; Galaskiewicz, 1985).

Myths also perform important sense-making roles and perpetuate organizational legitimacy in the face of conflicting societal preferences and ideologies (Schied-Cook 1989:163). For example, Scheid-Cook coined the term "mediatory myths" to refer to beliefs organizational actors hold that "provide cognitive bridges" between contradictory elements of the organization's definition, or purposes.

Mediatory myths allow organizations to conserve a perspective of organization's goals or objectives that aids in the establishment and maintenance of legitimacy. Scheid-Cook found that organizations which employ mediatory myths generally support one of the conflicting purposes, but never both simultaneously.

Scheid-Cook also noted that organizational myths can serve to maintain an internal legitimacy, by either perpetuating a favored image of organizational objectives or obfuscating changes which may have occurred. Scheid-Cook concludes that organizations may cultivate different foundations of legitimacy through generation of myths to accommodate the expectations of the internal and external organizational environment.

The last strategy identified by Oliver is **defiance** wherein the organization actively resists institutional processes and norms. The author notes that this organizational response to external pressures can only be pursued in situations where the costs of rejecting institutional norms are low and where internal interests diverge dramatically from external values. The three forms of defiance include: dismissal, or ignoring rules and values; challenge - a more offensive tactic than dismissal which requires strong support from insular groups in order to withstand the loss of institutional support, and; attack - the

most aggressive response -- "the assault, belittlement, or vehement denouncement of institutional values and constituents that express them (Oliver, 1991:156). This last tactic is said to occur when the organization believes its rights, privileges or autonomy are in serious jeopardy (Oliver, 1991:157). There may be a serious disjuncture between the organizational ethics and those of the institutional environment, and therefore, nothing to lose by acting against it.

Gay-based organizations have often developed the degree of community support necessary to defy in the most common sense of dismissal or ignoring the rules. More radical groups have actually moved to the form of open challenge and attack; the most notable example in the case of AIDS prevention is the national organization, ACT UP. The "AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power" is a activist group largely comprised of gays and members of the art community in New York City and the east coast region who perform more than protest. ACT UP was founded by playwright and grass-roots activist Larry Kramer, after he was expelled from one of the first gay-based AIDS prevention organizations, the "Gay Mens Health Crisis in New York." "ACT UP had significant success in 1989 and 1990 in speeding up trials for new drugs and calling attention to pharmaceutical companies' prices and profits" (Perrow and Guillen, 1990:109).

In conclusion, the process of legitimation for an organization which serves a disenfranchised population may require that the organization develop buffering strategies to facilitate a strategic adaptation to the environment. These buffering strategies may be necessary to preserve the integrity of organizational efforts that represent the interests of less powerful stakeholders, namely the client community. The organization's ability to buffer may be particularly important when it lacks a strong power base and confronts a highly fragmented environment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation has proposed comparative case studies of two nonprofit social service organizations (NSO's) engaged in HIV education and support services in an effort to identify how organizations assert their legitimacy in fragmented, or multi-dimensional environments. One organization is located in a large urban city of the United States and serves a predominantly immigrant, Puerto Rican population of women in the surrounding neighborhood. The second organization is located in the Spanish speaking Caribbean, directs its services to commercial sex workers, and is funded by international donor agencies.

Research on the topic of legitimacy to date is limited, in part, because it is resistant to experimental design, the prevailing method of inquiry in social sciences (Zinke, 1989; Zucker, 1987). As a result, our understanding of the concept is still in its infancy, as we "[lack] an overarching theory of legitimation to guide inquiry" (Galaskiewicz 1985:298).

This dissertation has assumed a case study design that is inductive, naturalistic, and ethnographic in character, to explore the concept of organizational legitimacy. In the following chapter, I will explain the application of case study research to this dissertation, elaborate the research

design and its strengths and limitations in reference to the research question. Subsequently, I will discuss the rationale for the selection of cases, the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Case Study Method

Case study research is the preferred method for contextual, holistic inquiry, such as organizational behavior, as it focuses on understanding the dynamics in a particular setting (Yin, 1984). Yin defined a case study as an empirical inquiry

that investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984:23).

The research design of a case study may be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination. Qualitative research designs are particularly suited to the study of organizational processes rather than structures, as they allow for researchers to bracket phenomena within their particular social context (Das, 1983). Gharajedaghi and Ackoff, (1985:23) in particular, have asserted that organizations cannot be analyzed as component parts, but must be studied as a whole, or "the function and meaning of the parts are lost" (Patton, 1990:79).

Finally, "qualitative research designs are particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic"

(Patton, 1990:44). They allow researchers to progress from observations to patterns, and then theoretical categories. As Eisenhardt notes, "inductive strategies allow for the generation and confirmation of theory that emerges from close involvement and direct contact with the empirical world" (Eisenhardt, 1989:534). In an instance where there is little theoretical base on which to build, case studies are the preferred research method for exploratory research designs and theory construction (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Eisenhardt, 1989) in part, because they allow the researcher to investigate the interplay among several variables instead of specifying the variables prior to the data collection and analysis.

Qualitative research designs may also incorporate an ethnographic perspective. An ethnographic inquiry allows the researcher to become immersed in the setting and seek the perspective of insiders (Spradley, 1979). It validates the subjective experience of both participants as well as the researchers as necessary for establishing the meaning of particular actions and events. Additionally, ethnographic and naturalistic inquiries support the existence of multiple, and divergent realities.

Finally, naturalistic studies recognize that knower and known are interactive and inseparable. Naturalistic construct assumes that "inquiry is value bound; that there are multiple

constructed realities that can be studied only holistically, and prediction and control are unlikely outcomes although some level of understanding (verstehen) can be achieved" (Lincoln, and Guba, 1985:37). As such, the external validity of a naturalist study is problematic, if not simply limited, in terms of the expected capacity to generalize from the results.

This study has proposed case studies for the purpose of generating, if not extending, theory of how organizations confront the issue of organizational legitimacy in a multi-dimensional environment. Given the idiographic nature of the information generated, it must be recognized that it is highly contextual in its generalizability.

Eisenhardt (1989) noted that in such cases research ideally begins "as close as possible to the ideal of no theory under consideration and no hypothesis to test." Instead, the researcher should identify the research problem and the potentially important variables (Eisenhardt, 1989:536). The author continues to note that a clean theoretical slate is virtually impossible to achieve but it is important to forestall assumptions about relationships between variables in order to allow for a clearer inductive process.

Mile and Huberman (1984), however, argue that seldom is theory purely deductive or inductive in nature. Qualitative research, as a rule, is characterized by an avoidance of commitment to a theoretical model (Yin, 1984). But

researchers usually hold some a priori notions about which factors are most influential and even when pursuing a highly inductive study, as in the case of grounded theory, will argue that "it is best to begin with general research questions that give direction but do not overly constrain the study" (Miles and Huberman, 1984:35). In brief, this study is intended to construct a theory of legitimacy by documenting and reconstructing the history of legitimation strategies in two organizations which navigate a highly fragmented environment.

Selection of case studies

One of the essential differences between qualitative and quantitative research is captured in the logics that undergird sampling (Patton, 1990:169). Whereas quantitative sampling is designed to achieve random, statistically representative data, qualitative studies purposefully identify data sources that are theoretically relevant to a given research question. The following dissertation examines organizational legitimation by selecting extreme examples. The logic of selecting extreme cases is that the process is more dramatically enacted and therefore more readily observable.

Organizations engaged in HIV prevention among disenfranchised populations were selected because of the highly fragmented nature of their environments and the value conflicts inherent to their mission. Legitimation is problematic for nongovernmental service organizations (NSO's)

engaged in HIV prevention due to the low priority of the populations affected, the stigmatizing nature of the disease itself; the often incongruent world views of the focal population and donor networks, and the lack of association between the two.

The two cases included in the study were carefully selected for the following reasons: first, both appeared to have been successful in establishing their legitimacy along the dimension of the organizational networks and had survived more than three years. Second, both organizations had active clientele communities, an indication of the possibility of legitimacy within this network, as well. The Caribbean-based NSO was highly regarded and recommended by a number of international health organizations: the National Council on International Health, which maintains an AIDS network among hundreds of private voluntary organizations (PVO's) engaged in HIV prevention across the globe; Pan American Health Organization staff engaged in HIV prevention; and Family Health International, a U.S. based NSO located in the Research Triangle, of North Carolina.

The United States-based NSO was strongly recommended by other NSO's engaged in HIV prevention located in the same city, it had received grants from the state government, and had become a member of the city's Community Shares program, an umbrella, fund-raising foundation, similar to United Way,

which channels resources to twenty-one different organizations in the community advocating for social change and social justice.

A third factor that strongly influenced the selection of the cases related to accessibility of information regarding the inner workings of the organizations. It was essential that researchers have access to interorganizational memos and organizational documents, attend meetings, and interview organizational personnel and participants freely.

The study selected a case from within the United States and one from without to capture the characteristics of the legitimation process for the two prototypical circumstances of NSO's. First, NSO's have been the organization of choice in international development efforts for the past decade, yet they have suffered a perennial lack of sustainability due to their inability to establish legitimacy with the focal populations (White, 1987). In addition, NSO's have become the most common form of health and social service delivery for the U.S. government as elaborated in the preceding chapter. Scholars of development are increasingly aware that the problems of development are not specific to the Third World, but often include pockets of poverty within post-industrial nations. Thus, the juxtaposition of two organizations with the same objectives but working in distinctive environments was intended to elucidate important similarities and

differences in the process of legitimation for NSO's.

Finally, the international case study presents the unique circumstance of disparate resource and value pressures, wherein the international donor agency acts from a value orientation that is distinct from that of the indigenous government and population. The study of this particular NSO may contribute to a finer conceptualization of the role of resources versus values in the process of legitimation as exemplified by the present conflict in the literature between institutional environmentalists and resource dependency theorists.

The United States case is a prototype of domestic NSO's engaged in HIV prevention in that major sources of funding and the institutional environment are inseparable.

Data Collection

Data was collected from a variety of sources: historical documentation of organizational events in the form of organizational memos, publications, and newspaper clippings; interviews with clients, organizational personnel (both paid and volunteer), members of the board of directors, personnel with related NSO's in the city; and donor agencies. Researchers also engaged in direct and participant observation. Characteristic of qualitative case studies, the sampling parameters within the cases were less circumscribed (Miles and Huberman, 1984:37). The assumption of the study

was that research questions might require an ongoing defining and redefining of the sampling parameters as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984:37).

Within the case studies, the two organizational sites determined the settings for the studies; the informants were selected first, on the basis of their role within the organization, and second, through use of the snowball technique, or chain sampling, wherein the mention of individuals who had a role in the organization either in the past, or presently, such as a former director or peer group leader, would result in seeking them out and interviewing them, as well. Any events related to the organization, from daily organizational activities, on-site peer training workshops, to hearings with legislative actors in the city were considered worthy of participant observation. The study paid particular attention to past events in the history of the organization in the form of changes in the board of directors, directors, funding sources, goals, services offered, clientele, location of the organization, and changes in external alliances with other organizations or community actors.

Members of organizations in the larger organizational network were also surveyed to identify the nature of their relationships with the NSO; whether they endorse the activities of the NSO; or support the organization by other

means, such as referrals; whether they are in a competitive relationships with the organization. The nature of the relationship (dependent, competitive, cooperative) was documented as well as explanations offered. If the region offered an authoritative reference source for acceptable services, it was checked to see if the organization was listed.

Particular processes were important for observation: the means of communicating information between the client community and the administration of the organization was a point of interest; how communication reaches the administrative director or staff, what channels were formally and informally available; what was considered information and what was not. Another process that was important was the creation and maintenance of the organization's meaning/identity through stories: who were defined as heroes, villains, adversaries? What mythologies or stories were told and by whom?

Data collection was conducted by two researchers, the author of the study as well as a Hispanic woman from the Caribbean country included in the study. Miles and Huberman (1984) as well as Eisenhardt (1989) advocate the use of multiple investigators in case study research because their convergent perceptions are said to increase the empirical grounding of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1984:538) by

diminishing individual biases and increasing the probability of insights. Thus, the involvement of two researchers was intended to strengthen the objectivity of data collected and counter the foreign versus indigenous and Anglo versus Hispanic influence on informants' responses as well as on researchers' perceptions. The second researcher also contributed intimate knowledge of the organizational culture of her government and NSO's operating in the country due to twelve years of experience working in these arenas. The researchers found an advantage to their interchanging roles in the two cases wherein one researcher felt the role of insider while the other chronicled the obvious and often overlooked.

The collection of initial information, selection of cases, and on-site studies occurred in three distinct phases. During the initial phase, interviews were conducted with directors of a number of NSO's engaged in HIV prevention among women, as well as international organizations engaged in HIV prevention and health care, in order to identify organizations that had been particularly successful and to begin distinguishing the critical issues for these organizations.

The initial data collection cycle began in March of 1990 in the Caribbean and September of 1991 in the United States. In the initial on-site visits, data was collected in the form of written documentation of the history of the organization, inter-agency memos, newspaper clippings, open-ended interviews

with clients, volunteers and paid personnel, and direct observation. In content, the questions were broad based and informant driven. Taken from an action research model, the inquiries were directed to the informant's role in the organization, what helped in the accomplishment of goals, and what was a hindrance, with particular attention to perceptions of organizational objectives and goals.

The second phase of data collection was conducted in September and November of 1992 in the Caribbean and the United States, respectively. Sources of information were the same -- archival, interviews, and direct and participant observation. Interviews, however, were more focused in content and directed to the themes that had emerged from the first on-site studies. The variety of sources of evidence provided the opportunity to cross-validate, or triangulate, information and thereby assure the internal validity of the studies.

From the literature review and initial field work three themes continued to surface around the issue of organizational legitimacy: the central role of value congruence and the difficulty of satisfying all actors concomitantly; importance of perceived competence and its intrinsic relationship to the values of the institutional environment; and finally, that legitimation appears to require that an organization be able to develop an identity, and achieve a balance between conforming and autonomy in its environmental adaptation.

Research Protocol

The following research protocol was developed for the interviewers' use with the intent of maintaining focus during data collection and functioning as a point of reference. The purpose of the research protocol was to identify central questions, sources of information, and relate the information to the research question of how organizational legitimacy is established. The research protocol was used as a starting point, with open acknowledgement that new questions and sources of information would appear through the course of the study, and as always, we discover the best research questions when the study is complete.

Event History of the Organization:

Founding: Who founded the organization and with what intent? What was the original mission statement; the professional affiliation of founding members and organizations which they had worked in prior to founding the NSO? Identify original board of directors and first staff; their affiliation and reason for serving on the board.

Purpose: Identify characteristics and direction of organization as originally constructed as a starting point for process of legitimation.

Sources: Organization documents, interviews with board members, founding members that can be located; newspaper clippings.

Initial Organizational Networks: Who was defined as the first focal population, what services were delivered; how were first contacts made with focal population? What other organizations were stakeholders within the focal population as well as among interorganizational network and donors? Were there competitors? Who were the original donors? What expectations were spelled out? What was the role of board members in defining external contacts?

Purpose: Identify and begin construction of history of organization/environment interactions; the purpose of them and with which organizations in the environment.

Sources: Interviews, memos and correspondence, newspaper clippings, old personnel records.

Present Organizational Networks:

History of Organizational Changes: What changes have occurred in terms of the board of directors, directors, organizational goals (defined and informal), services rendered, population served, funding sources?

As each change is identified, seek information on the impetus for the change, the decisions available and the result of the change for the organization

Purpose: Continuation of characterization of organization/environment relations and identification of who the organization has had the most contacts with and the strongest alliances. Attempt to identify most influential environmental players.

Sources: Interviews, newspaper articles, correspondence in office,

Organizational Culture

Environment: A brief examination of the organizational environment: Where is the organization located? What is the structure of the offices and lobby; is it a formal or informal environment? What are the pictures and posters on the walls and coffee tables? Is there public space? Do people have doors shut or open? Who sits and chats with whom? Who goes to lunch with whom? Do they discuss office issues or personal issues?

Purpose: To discover informal alliances, unwritten rules and structure of the organization; informal and formal channels of information flows between administration, staff and client community;

Sources: direct and participant observation

Mythology: An examination of organizational stories: what stories were consistently repeated in recounting the organization's history? Who were the adversaries; who were the villains and who were the heroes? What images do the

organizational stories convey of the organization and the actors? Who tells the stories?

Purpose: To discover organizational values and priorities; what is regarded as threatening, or sacred turf; identification of informal and formal channels of communication within organization

Sources: direct and participant observation

Characteristics of Organization/Environmental Networks:

Organization/Client Community Interaction: Who comprises the client community; how are they socially constructed by the organizational staff; how does the administration communicate with clients and visa versa? What constitutes communication/information? What are perceived client expectations, goals for the organization, how do clients see these being achieved? Are there conflicts in this arena, or have there been in the past? How are they resolved?

Purpose: Identify the goals, values and objectives of clients for organization; characteristics of organization/client community relationship - how each perceives the other and how communication occurs; whether organization meets expectations of client community, or acts within the client community's value construct; what efforts it makes to tailor its construct of objectives and mission to the client community's requests.

Sources: Interviews, direct and participant observation

Organization/Focal Population Interaction : How is the focal population socially constructed (defined and characterized)? How does communication occur between the focal population and the organization? (formally as well as informally). What constitutes communication/information? How the organization believe itself to be perceived by the focal population? How do focal population organizations (neighborhood organizations, local leaders) define and characterize the organization? What are the expectations of the focal population of the organization? How do these expectations relate to what the organization is actually doing? Has there been/is there tension between the organization and the focal population and what form would it most likely take? If conflicts exist, how has the organization responded?

Purpose: Identify characteristics of organization/focal population relationship - how each perceives the other and how communication occurs. Intent is to identify how organization

achieves visibility in this network; whether organization meets expectations of focal population, or acts within the focal population's value construct and what efforts it makes to maintain some appealing construct of its objectives and mission.

Sources: Interviews with neighborhood organization leaders and people within neighborhood, looking for consistently occurring statements regarding purpose of organization, and familiarity with it

Organization/Institutional Network Interaction: Who are the major stakeholders in the institutional environment? How do they communicate with the organization and how does the organization communicate with them (formally as well as informally). What constitutes communication/information? What are the expectations of the stakeholders of the organization? How do these expectations relate to what the organization is actually doing; Is there tension between the organization and major stakeholders and if so, what form has it taken? If conflicts exist, how have they been addressed by the organization?

With which external groups has the organization been most closely aligned? Has it experienced disputes with other organization in the environment? Why? (turf; differences in perspectives; political differences; competition over resources) and how has the organization addressed these conflicts? What are the expectations of major actors in the institutional environment of the organization and what is their stake in the organization's success? Has this changed over time?

What are the indicators that the organization is committed to particular expectations spelled out by major organizational actors? How have they responded to these expectations to date?

What cooperative relationships have benefitted the organization most?

Purpose: Identify characteristics of organization/focal population relationship - how each perceives the other and how communication occurs; how organization achieves visibility in this network; intent is to identify whether organization meets expectations of focal population, acts within the focal population's value construct and what efforts it makes to maintain some appealing construct of its objectives and mission.

Sources: Interviews with neighborhood organization leaders and people within neighborhood, looking for consistently occurring statements regarding purpose of organization, and familiarity with it

Internal Organization Interactions: Are there internal factions within the organization and if so, what impact have they had on organizational goals and processes? What is their external support? What is the nature of the relationship between the organization and its board of directors over time?

Identify organizational processes or structures and how/whether they relate to maintaining or achieving support from key stakeholders in the institutional environment; the focal population; and the client community

Purpose: look at how organizational structures have evolved in response to environmental pressures and see if any of them appear to be protected.

Sources: interviews, direct and participant observation

Summary of Organization Environment Interaction: What organizational changes/compromises occurred in efforts to gain/maintain support from particular organizations or groups? (e.g., were there govt regulations, agencies, laws, court orders that influenced the organizational processes?; did the org seek endorsement from an umbrella group such as United Way or Community Shares?)

What impact did they have on the organization's goals?

Whose support has been most important for org survival? Were there public orgs and/or figures whose support was seen as important and which/who were solicited? How were they solicited - and to what end? Was there an organization/figure whose support was unattainable - why? Whose support was/is most tenuous and why? How was support maintained?

Purpose: Ascertain what the major external pressures have been on the organization and how it has responded; what impact this has had on its goals and objectives; if they have been reconstructed over time to meet expectations of a particular environmental network.

Sources: documents of donor relationships, interviews with board of directors, directors, other NSO's in the environment and long term client volunteers.

Organizational Effectiveness:

Indirect indices: Has the organization been required to generate indices of effectiveness; what are they? e.g., number of women attending the programs; number of condoms distributed; number of peer educators; number of clients who indicate that they insist on condoms; drop in rate of STD's as measured by clinic;

External referents of effectiveness: Who has established the measurement/standards for effectiveness? Has anybody challenged organization's assertions of effectiveness over course of organization's history? On what basis? How did the organization respond? What does the organizational staff and director regard as the organization's major accomplishment/contribution? What indications do they read of success or achievement?

Impact on organization of generating effectiveness measures: Who/what component of organization generates this data? What impact does the generation of this information have on other organizational goals? What other goals?

Purpose: To ascertain if effectiveness is defined in a manner that is consistent with value expectations of institutional environment; if the organization has differing construct of effectiveness, or the client community has a differing construct of effectiveness; and what impact the effectiveness measures have on organizational processes.

Sources: internal documentation, interviews with director, people who gather data, and donor representatives

Data Analysis

When the purpose of research is theory generation the phase of data analysis should overlap data collection, according to Eisenhardt (1989). In the following study the research protocol was developed from data gathered in the initial data collection phase and then extended upon throughout the process of collecting data.

Miles and Huberman (1984) asserted that there are "few

agreed on canons for qualitative data analysis and seldom are the methods of qualitative analysis reported in detail." But the authors note that qualitative data analysis often occurs as a combination of data reduction, displaying, and conclusion drawing, throughout the process of data collection (Miles and Huberman, 1984). As such, "qualitative data analysis is a continuous, iterative enterprise" (Miles and Huberman, 1984:23).

The case studies will begin with an historic analysis of the organizations; identification of the founding members and the original board, size of the board when the organization was founded; the original mission, goals, and clientele, and the initial sources of funding. Literature on legitimacy indicates that the creation of the board of directors is often one of the most effective means for coopting external constituencies (Selznick, 1949; Singh et al., 1986; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

The study will then seek to uncover organizational changes in both structure and process as well as the impetus for each change in the organization with respect to members of the board of directors, chief executive, service area, goals, client groups, donor agencies, or membership in larger collective organizational networks. Interviews will be conducted with organizational personnel to identify the endorsements that have been sought of other organizations and

actors in the environment and to what perceived benefit or detriment. Interviews will also focus on relationships established among other organizational actors which are cooperative and offer symbolic endorsements or actual endorsements, or provide opportunity for collective action.

The research protocol was designed to create a conceptual crosswalk in that data are sought chronologically, by environmental sector, and through the organization's culture in order to weave a chain of evidence. The goal of the data analysis is to construct a causal map of legitimation strategies for each organization based on critical events in the organizational history.

The following two chapters will review the individual case studies followed by a chapter of cross-case analysis and conclusion.

"Public money is like water, everybody helps himself to it"

Italian proverb

CHAPTER IV

AN HIV PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR SEX WORKERS IN THE CARIBBEAN

The question of legitimacy has been presented as problematic when an organization confronts an environment of stakeholders with highly divergent values. The case study of a peer outreach program for sex workers captures a prototypical situation: An NSO is created by international donors to serve a marginalized population. The donors seek to establish the organization with indigenous institutions and populations to foster the long-term sustainability of the program. The sustainability of COSA, the NSO in this case, requires that it be able to establish legitimacy with three disparate groups: international donor organizations, indigenous public and/or private institutions, and a relevant public, in this case, people in and around the sex industry.

This chapter commences with a brief examination of background information on the country and the social and economic factors which contribute to the spread of HIV. There is also a review of the nature and extent of emigration between the Dominican Republic and the United States (a) to illustrate why international and U.S.-based aid organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would regard the control of HIV in the Dominican Republic to be of consequence; and (b) as an illustration of the impossibility of containing or addressing this pandemic at a national level.

The chapter then turns to a discussion and analysis of COSA, the "Center for Peer Outreach Against AIDS." The format follows the research protocol outlined in the previous chapter, beginning with a preamble of events that led to the establishment of COSA. This introductory history of how and why COSA came to be founded also serves to identify major actors in the organizational setting and their orientations. The text will then track the evolution of organization-environment relations, organization-client relations and organizational changes in program goals that occurred over the course of the program. The organizational culture and mythology are subsumed under the three previous headings, where they are discussed in context. The conclusion presents an analysis of the organization's legitimacy as it has developed in relation to the environmental networks within which the organization functions.

BACKGROUND:

The Dominican Republic is a small country on the island of Hispanola in the Caribbean, some six hundred miles southeast of Florida and west of Puerto Rico. Haiti encompasses the western third of the island, and the two

countries are separated by a mountain range. The country is densely populated, with nearly seven million people on a land mass roughly the size of New Hampshire and Vermont (Garris et al., 1990).

The economy of the Dominican Republic, like that of most Caribbean countries, is heavily dependent on external trade and investment for economic growth. Traditionally, the nation has relied on primary products for export earnings; first and foremost of these is the sugar cane industry, followed by ferronickel and coffee (Safa and Antrobus, 1992:51). This rather fragile economy was severely damaged in the 1980's with an economic crisis that shocked most of Latin America and the Caribbean. Real wages fell, with people earning an average of 70% in 1987 of what they earned in 1980 (Ceara, 1987). The cost of living more than doubled during the decade, while unemployment rates lingered at 20%, and rose as high as 27% in 1985 (Safa and Antrobus, 1992:50).

The nation made an effort to diversify its economy in the 1980's, shifting to an emphasis on light industry and tourism (Safa and Antrobus, 1992:51). Free-trade zones were developed, particularly around the capital city of Santo Domingo. By 1988, more than 85,000 workers, mostly women, had found employment in export manufacturing with wages averaging \$90 U.S. per month in 1986 (Joeques, 1987:55).

In 1985, tourism replaced the sugar industry as the major

generator of foreign exchange, and the country now welcomes well over a million tourists a year (Garris *et al.*, 1990), primarily from the United States and Canada. The Dominican Republic is also a popular tourist attraction for Europeans, particularly Italians and Spanish. The sex trade has burgeoned in recent years, a spin-off industry to tourism and an economic alternative in a devastated economy. The sex trade flourishes in the resort areas of Puerto Plata in the north, and within the capital city of Santo Domingo. There are an estimated 25,000 female sex workers in the capital city alone (Sor Maria del Carmen, 1991). Weekly earnings range from \$200 U.S. per week in the more upscale and renowned brothels to \$50 U.S. a month for women who work in the public squares and parks.⁴ Unfortunately, commercial sex workers, both male and female, have been identified as pivotal in the transmission of HIV by the government and international health agencies, as evidenced by higher rates of HIV transmission within the tourist districts.

HIV Transmission Patterns

It is unclear how HIV first arrived in the country. The Ministry of Public Health (MESPA) has speculated that HIV

⁴ As meager as \$50 a month appears, it must be compared to the average of \$65 a month earned by a female domestic who would not have the option to live with her children or family; is responsible for arduous domestic chores; and is off-duty from Saturday noon to Monday morning, weekly.

first entered the Dominican Republic in the mid 1970's via gay or bisexual male tourists. The first four cases recorded were male homosexuals and bisexuals in 1983. But by 1986 the number of people infected through heterosexual transmission had surpassed homosexual transmission (Yanguella, 1992). In March of 1989, the World Health Organization (WHO) placed the Dominican Republic sixth among countries in the Americas with the highest rates of HIV infection, (number of cases per 100,000 population), and fourteenth in the world (WHO, 1989). Presently, the World Health Organization characterizes HIV transmission in the Dominican Republic as Pattern I/II, indicating initial transmission among the male homosexual population but recently characteristic of Pattern II, or heterosexual transmission, with a male to female ratio of 1.8 to 1 in 1989 (Garris et al., 1990).

Exact figures on the number of AIDS cases in the Dominican Republic are misleading, given the lack of access to health care and the cost of testing. Moreover, there are bureaucratic difficulties that have sorely distorted the data. For example, in the summer of 1991 there was a three-month strike of public doctors and nurses during which no statistics were recorded. However, between 1983 and 1990 the government estimated 1,202 cases, 43% of which were reported in 1989 alone. The sharp rise in reported cases for 1989 may indicate that HIV prevalence is rapidly expanding (Garris et al.,

1990); or it may simply represent an attention to HIV testing and data collection within certain populations over the course of the year.

In addition to the role of a commercial sex industry in HIV transmission, the migration of Haitian cane cutters, or "braseros," to government owned sugar cane plantations known as "bateyes" is considered a factor. The annual migration of braseros averages 100,000 but there are as many as 500,000 Haitians who remain on bateyes year round, with increasing numbers of male workers living in the barracks with their families (Cruz, 1990; Yanguella, 1992). From all indications, the Haitian sugar cane workers are fairly isolated both geographically and socially, and they experience considerable discrimination from the Dominican population. But they do engage in sexual relations with women who live in and around the camps. Recent studies have indicated an HIV seroprevalence as high as 10% within the bateye populations (Cruz, 1990).

Among other social considerations in the transmission of the virus is the tradition of consensual unions which predominates and is typical of Caribbean countries, particularly among the lower income population. By 1990 statistics, four out of every five babies was born to a consensual union (de Moya, 1990). The low incidence of legal marriages reflects "a long history of male outmigration, the

destruction and reconstruction of the African family from slavery, and the specific realities and requirements of the local economy" (Safa and Antrobus, 1990:70).

Additionally, there is the established cultural convention of "machismo" which permits, if not actively encourages, men to engage in relations with a number of female partners as an expression of their masculinity. Male fidelity to a marriage or consensual union is not a highly valued social more. To wit, in a 1987 survey of 240 Dominican men, ages 18-27, seven out of ten freely indicated that they had engaged in sexual relations with someone other than their steady partner in the past three months (Frias and de Moya, 1987). One out of every five indicated that they had been sexually initiated by a female sex worker (lower class: 18%; middle: 29%; upper, 22%); and 17% indicated they had experienced at least one homosexual experience in their lives (Frias and de Moya, 1987).

In contrast, the social purview of women is narrowly circumscribed in Dominican culture, particularly in rural areas, and is largely limited to the home (Yanguella, 1992). Women's social position is frequently characterized by the concept of "Marianismo"⁵ in which they are held responsible

⁵Marianismo refers to a gender construction of the culturally ideal woman in much of Latin America, modeled on the Virgin Mary, where women are to be religious and pious, focused on family, secluded at home, and the moral force of their

for family name and virtue. In fact, Dominican women routinely defend their sons by admonishing other women to keep their daughters out of the public sphere where they run the risk of getting "trampled on, because my rooster is loose." It is considered the obligation of women to remain safe from the public world, the ambit of men.

Sociologists at the National Institute on Sexual Education at a University in Santo Domingo say only half in jest, that women are not recognized as sexual actors in Dominican culture. Women's sexual relationships with men are characteristic of the structure of social relations where women act as service providers, if not passive participants (INSAPEC, 1990). Consistent with women's role is the assumption of their responsibility for birth control and the physical health of both partners. Women are expected to exercise celibacy, then fidelity to an intimate relationship. Those who do not adhere to culturally defined norms of "Marianismo" risk considerable social reproach and stigmatization. So, just as men are defined by the expression of their sexuality, women continue to be defined by their restraint. As a result of this particular gender acculturation, there is an established HIV transmission pattern wherein men pass the virus from sexual partners

families (Gross and Rojas, 1989).

outside of their primary relationship to their wives and/or consensual partners.

An additional factor in HIV transmission in the Dominican Republic has been bisexual behavior among men who may not identify themselves as homosexual. Within the Latin American culture, homosexual behavior is strongly sanctioned but narrowly defined (Carrie, 1989). For example, within same-sex acts, only the recipient male is considered homosexual by the cultural definitions of his society. Furthermore, researchers indicate a higher reported incidence of bisexual behavior, or what might better be defined as "socially constructed bisexuality" among Latino men compared to Anglo men, due to the heavy social censure of homosexuality (Carrie, 1989; Worth, 1989). As a result, male bisexual behavior has fostered the transmission of the virus to the heterosexual population.

A cofactor in the transmission of HIV is a high incidence of other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) within the Dominican population, particularly among sex workers, both male and female. For example, a 1986 study of 139 female sex workers in Santo Domingo found that 25% tested positive for syphilis, 13% had gonorrhea, and 3% were seropositive for HIV (PROCETS, 1986). Garris *et al.*, (1990) noted that within the general population, "incidences range from 100-308 cases per 100,000 for gonorrhea; 107-360/100,000 for syphilis (1990:6).

De Moya (1988) and other representatives of the Ministry of Health argue that these figures should be considered to be underreported by at least 50%. In addition, herpes, chlamydia, and genital chancroid are prevalent and contribute to HIV transmission. Unfortunately, many women who are married or within consensual unions often are unaware that they have an STD, and do not seek treatment. Moreover, studies indicate that "self-medication with subcurative antibiotic doses is common" (Moreno et al., 1990).

The Dominican Republic and the United States

A recent newspaper article in the **New York Times** entitled "Dinkins Greeted as Friend in Dominican Republic" announced that Mayor Dinkins of New York City traveled to the Dominican Republic as a part of his "Caribbean campaign." According to the **Times**, Mayor Dinkins received a "rousing welcome from national leaders as well as citizens," who were quite supportive of him compared to the Puerto Ricans he had visited a few short days before. During his visit, Dinkins spoke of the new health care programs his administration had proposed for the Washington Heights section of the Bronx, which has the largest concentration of Dominicans in the United States" (Sims, 1992:B3). Dinkins discussed how he had "helped their expanding community in New York through the appointment of Dominicans to high positions in his administration, and by fostering participation of Dominican community leaders in city

planning sessions" (Sims,1992:B3). The article continued to note that Dominicans hold Mayor Dinkins in high esteem because he is an African American and "serves as a role model" for Dominicans, who are predominantly of color (Sims, 1992:B3).

That the Mayor of New York City would extend a political campaign beyond the borders of the U.S. may strike many Americans as preposterous, or political chicanery. Yet, those as wily as Dinkins may interpret his Caribbean campaign as an astute recognition of his constituency and the practice of politics in our global village. By all interpretations, Dominicans are the fastest-growing immigrant population in New York City; and Santo Domingo might as well be Hoboken, New Jersey.

Dinkins' Caribbean jaunt reflects, in part, recognition of what has been referred to as the "va y ven"⁶ syndrome. In contrast to past American immigrant populations, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans have often actively maintained ties with the home country and migrated back and forth for employment, vacations, and retirement (Lehman, 1991). Eunice Diaz, of the National Commission on AIDS, coined the term "air bridge" to describe the circuitous flow of traffic between Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the United States, notably New York City and Miami (Garris et al., 1990). Air travel between

⁶Literally, "go and come."

the capital city, Santo Domingo, and San Juan, Puerto Rico, requires less than an hour; transit from New York to either capital city is less than four hours, with hundreds of passengers traveling every day.

International migration is a time established survival strategy among Caribbean countries (Safa and Antrobus, 1990:78). In fact, the Caribbean as a whole sends out a greater percentage of its population than does any other world region (Chaney, 1985:15). By conservative estimates, close to one-half million Dominicans live legally in the United States, not including their offspring and former citizens of the nation (Garris et al., 1990). Among these, roughly 60% are said to live in the New York City metropolitan area, 20% in Miami, and 10% in Puerto Rico (Garris et al., 1990). More realistic estimates indicate that close to a million Dominicans live in the New York City metropolitan area alone (Lehman, 1991). Figures on legal immigrants from the Dominican Republic to the United States have averaged more than 20,000 per year throughout the 1980's (Pastor, 1988).

Dominicans on the island and in the United States often have an extended network of community and family that includes members outside of the country. These members have historically been critical to survival. In fact, Safa and Antrobus note that in recent years remittances from U.S. based Dominicans to relatives back home have been a critical factor

in sustaining the island economy (1990). While it is difficult to calculate the amount of money entering the Dominican Republic from the U.S., a recent study conducted in New York indicated an average monthly remittance of \$183 U.S. (Del Castillo, 1987:54).

HIV Transmission among U.S. Hispanic Populations:

The steady circulation of people has contributed to the spread of HIV, particularly considering that Dominicans reside in U.S. regions that report the highest number of AIDS cases as well as the highest HIV seroprevalence⁷ among Hispanics⁸ (Amaro, 1989; Worth, 1989). But living conditions of new immigrant populations can also foster the spread of HIV. Arriving Dominican immigrants have found themselves at the "undesirable, illegal, or disorganized end of the labor market, working in sweatshops, selling illegal substances, operating gypsy cabs and nightclubs" (Lehman, 1991:102).

On a more positive note, Dominicans have been described as industrious by analysts of urban America, and credited with revitalizing previously decimated parts of New York City, including the Bronx (Lehman, 1991). But Dominicans have

⁷Seroprevalence refers to the presence of HIV in blood.

⁸ The Center for Disease Control noted that New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Florida, and Puerto Rico have reported the highest proportion of women with HIV (Amaro, 1988:431).

lacked access to health care and social services due to economic difficulties, language barriers, simple unawareness, and, for many, their legal status as aliens. The Dominicans who have migrated over the past twenty years have struggled economically and their families are experiencing the secondary effects of poverty and cultural dislocation: family dissolution, teenage pregnancies, and drug use. Recent Dominican immigrants have been characterized as more educated and middle class than those of the past (Safa and Antrobus, 1992), in part due to more stringent U.S. immigration requirements. But they continue to struggle against a lifeless job market both here and at home.

Although research by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that intravenous drug use and crack cocaine have contributed significantly to the transmission of HIV among Hispanics both in the United States and in Puerto Rico,⁹ the term "Hispanic" is problematic because it precludes identification of subgroups that appear to be at higher risk of HIV than others (Amaro, 1988:432). In the eastern United States, the largest Hispanic populations are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Cubans (Amaro, 1988:432). From available indications, drug use has been less prevalent among Dominicans than Puerto Ricans, both in the United States and on the

⁹Forty-five percent of the AIDS cases reported among Hispanics have been drug related (CDC, 1988).

islands, although this pattern may be changing (Amaro, 1988; de Moya, 1988). Dominicans may be following the pattern of New York's Puerto Rican population, whose economic problems have been closely associated with drug use and drug dealing (Worth, 1989; Rodrigues, 1987). Interview data and recent research by Yanguella (1992) indicates that crack use is now becoming known within the Dominican Republic and is a consideration in HIV transmission. The peer educators of the sex workers with whom we spoke were familiar with crack cocaine and estimated that roughly 15-20% of the women were now using the substance with clients.

In summary, HIV transmission in the Dominican Republic has been fostered by a variety of factors. The nation experiences a continual traffic of expatriated citizens from the United States, particularly from the northeastern corridor, Florida, and Puerto Rico, which report the highest seroprevalence rates in the U.S. (Amaro, 1989). The constant comings and goings of "Dominican Yorks" has fostered a cross-cultural amalgam of American mores and traditional Dominican values, manifest in rapidly changing sexual standards for women; the lesser trappings have included drug use, specifically the use of crack cocaine on the island.

The Dominican Republic in recent years has developed a high rate of tourism and an accompanying sex industry in male and female sex workers (FSW's). There is also a segment of

female sex workers who are international and travel throughout the Caribbean, to Venezuela, and to Europe. The Dominican Republic receives Haitian migrant workers; has high indigenous rates of conventional STD's, particularly syphilis; and a distinct cultural perspective toward sexuality that encourages men to have multiple partners. Finally, in a nation rife with destitution and few economic opportunities, the sex trade has become, for the young and impoverished, a viable strategy for survival.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO HIV IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

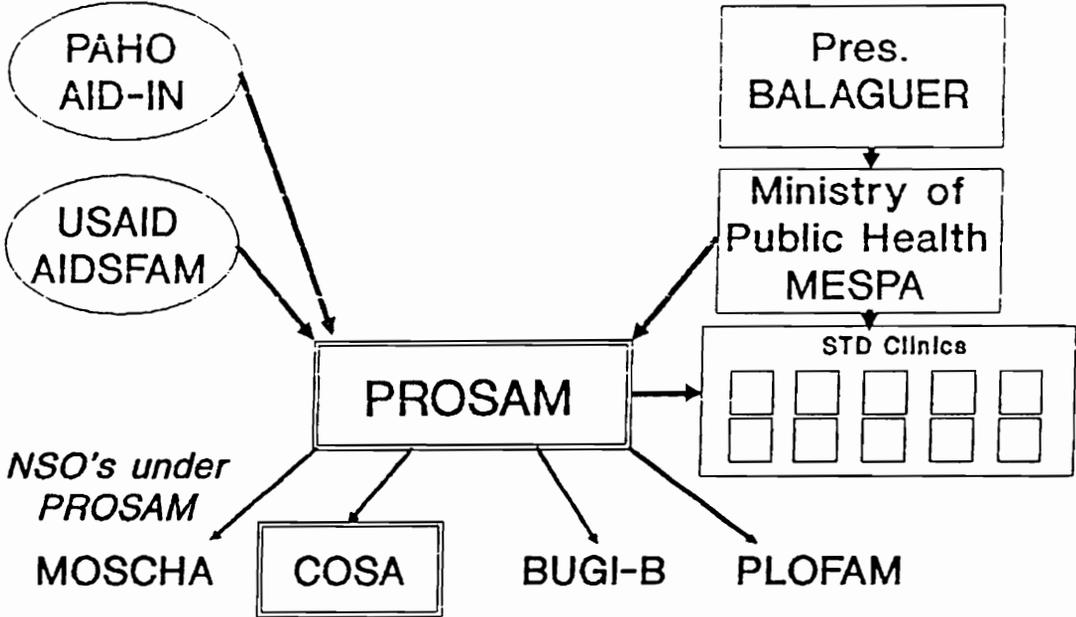
A variety of Dominican public agency documents note that the government began to recognize the potential problems of HIV transmission in 1983 when the first cases of AIDS were reported. Government publications claim that by 1985, the Dominican Republic was one of the first countries in Latin America to address the problem of HIV by collecting data through the department of epidemiology under the Ministry of Public Health (MESPA). While rumblings of a potential AIDS epidemic might have captured some public attention and disturbed a few officials in the government, there is little indication of attention to the issue.

The government of President Balaguer, and the Ministry responsible for public health, MESPA, had been stumbling along for a number of years under substandard conditions. CONAPOFA, the National Program for Family Planning funded by the Pan

Map of Organizational Actors, 1987 - 1989

International Donors

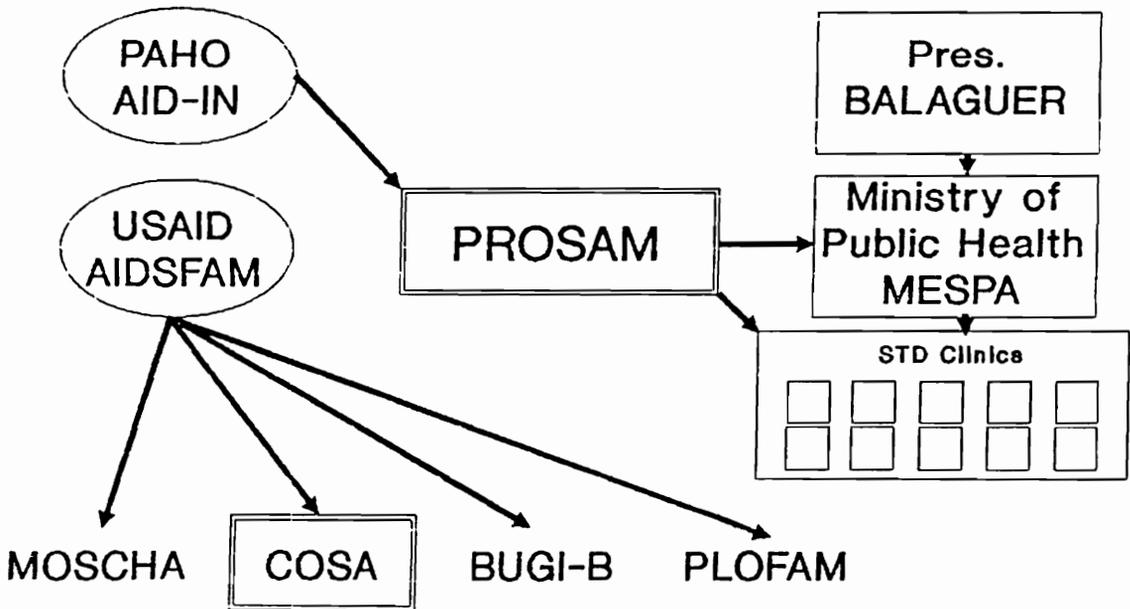
Indigenous Government



Map of Organizational Actors after 1989

International Donors

Indigenous Government



American Health Organization (PAHO) notes in their reports that although the entire population legally has access to public health facilities, MESPA has only been able to provide services to 60-70% of the population, at best (1991:3). MESPA had been unable to keep public clinics and hospitals equipped with essential medical equipment and supplies, which often were diverted by civil servants to the black market, and MESPA employees earned wages that could not sustain them.¹⁰ Deficiencies within the public health sector were reflective of larger government tribulations that have plagued various Balaguer administrations: low paying jobs for civil servants, economic crises, widespread corruption, graft, and election rigging.

In 1986, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) proposed a partnership with the government of the Dominican Republic to coordinate a wide range of activities aimed at reducing the transmission of HIV. PAHO and USAID sought to address HIV transmission in a number of countries by focusing on two modes of transmission: sexual activity and blood transfusions. The donor agencies presented a two-pronged approach, wherein PAHO would offer training and

¹⁰ A licensed social worker with a college degree working in the MESPA averaged a salary of \$100 U.S. per month in an economy where the cost of a modes rent would exceed this.

technical assistance to health professionals, and the blood bank infrastructure, to improve screening under the organizational name AIDS International (AIDSIN). USAID would offer expertise and funding for developing educational programs to high-risk segments of the population, as well as a condom promotion campaign under the name AIDSFAM. As planned, both AIDSIN and AIDSFAM would direct resources through a soon-to-be-established government program situated under the Ministry of Health (MESPA).

Dr. Ernesto Guillermo, an employee of MESPA, was the director of the government's sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinics in the nation at the time. He was aware of the growing problem of HIV as well as the high rate of other STD's. Dr. Guillermo was one of the first people contacted by the donors, in no small part because of his expertise and knowledge of the problem. Dr. Guillermo played a large role in convincing MESPA to undertake an AIDS prevention program and he subsequently became the first director of the Ministry of Public Health's "National Program for the Control of AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases" (PROSAM) which was formed in early 1987.

The mission of PROSAM as originally written was to

- (a) contain the transmission of HIV in the Dominican population;
- (b) direct attention to the needs of people who suffer from opportunistic infections as a result of their HIV+ status; and
- (c) to promote the human rights and dignity of

people, and the families of people, who live with HIV (Boletin Epidemiologico, 1990).

PROSAM was directed, foremost, to the education of risk groups, which were identified as gays and sex workers by the international donor organizations. However, PROSAM also had an established mission to foster the general public's understanding of sexual transmission of the virus, the dangers of perinatal transmission, the preventive value of condoms, and the relationship between HIV transmission and other STD's. PROSAM sought to emphasize positive themes identified as "health," "love," and "life" in an effort to build the self-esteem of people at risk for contracting the virus, and to destroy the negative myths surrounding transmission and people who have the virus (Boletin Epidemiologico, 1990).

PROSAM was responsible for managing and coordinating HIV-related programs with other government agencies, professional associations, and local nonprofit social service organizations (Yanguella, 1992). Both USAID and PAHO had embraced the use of NSO's in development strategies, not only in cases of disaster relief but also for sustainable development efforts. In fact, USAID has repeatedly asserted that NSO's are "integral to halting the spread of HIV" (USAID, 1992).

The trust nongovernment organizations enjoy at the grass roots puts them in a privileged position to help bring about the kind of behavior change which can thwart the spread of HIV (USAID, 1992).

Both donor organizations had conceptualized the spread of HIV as a development issue and not exclusively a health problem, in that a "rapidly changing pandemic impacts societies in a broad spectrum of ways" (USAID, 1992). In contrast to most epidemics which devastate the very old and the very young, AIDS impacts the most productive members of a society, and leaves surviving adults burdened with the care of many children. The remaining adults often are unable to sustain their dependents, particularly in subsistence economies.

In spite of an apparent preference for working with NSO's, the donors sought a bilateral agreement with government, and a jointly established program. Actually, the Pan American Health Organization is required to establish explicit bilateral agreements with indigenous governments in order to offer programs, and so this was no exception. USAID does not consider it a requirement but usually finds it to be in its best political interest to work with an indigenous government for a number of reasons.

First, it allows the U.S. ambassador some leverage on the government because the U.S. is essentially cofinancing a number of government activities. In addition, indigenous governments are often the most effective mechanism for diffusing general messages to the population and legitimating the programs promulgated by external donors. Finally, donors

often seek bilateral agreements in the hope that the established program will be sustained, as in this instance. Both USAID and PAHO, like a number of other international donors, have attempted to root projects within the indigenous government and local institutions in an effort to generate an indigenous commitment and foster permanency.

Donor - Government Values in Conflict and the Birth of COIN:

Dr. Ernesto Guillermo was selected by the donors and MESPA as the first director of PROSAM. He was consistently described as dedicated to the mission of PROSAM by the organization's staff as well as resident directors of the two donor agencies. Moreover, as a former director of the STD program, within MESPA, he was well aware of how the Ministry of Health functioned. Donors indicated in a series of internal documents, including the mid-term assessment, that although PROSAM was off to a good start, it had experienced some "growing pains during its first year." These can largely be attributed to a tension between the organizational values of MESPA and the donor organizations which held sway over PROSAM.

Foremost among the growing pains, as elaborated in interviews, was the problem of PROSAM's priorities. The Ministry of Public Health (MESPA) is responsible for a nation where there are a number of publically supported and underfunded health concerns. The people in the Dominican

Republic suffer from a number of health problems typical of developing nations that have experienced rapid industrialization and increased population density. Among the most pressing health issues are: infant mortality, malnutrition, family planning needs, water sanitation and attention to infectious, water-borne diseases. Any one of these probably accounts for more annual deaths than AIDS, and is treatable. In any event, a potential HIV epidemic was not a high public health priority, as evidenced by the external impetus for PROSAM's founding. In fact, in 1987 HIV could hardly be construed as a pressing agenda for MESPA, Balaguer's government, or the general population of the Dominican Republic. In contrast, the AIDS pandemic had progressively become a preeminent concern of international aid organizations in recent years, and it was the sole agenda of PAHO and USAID resident program directors who were acting through PROSAM. Due to the magnitude of donor funding, PROSAM quickly overshadowed unsubsidized sectors of MESPA.

In part, the disregard for HIV can be related to the population that was perceived to be at risk. From the position of MESPA, PROSAM had unlimited dollars to protect the health of a small population widely regarded as social and sexual deviants, namely prostitutes and gays, from a disease that was yet to be widely perceived as a threat to the general population. As such, by virtue of its notoriety and

resources, PROSAM was creating a national public health agenda that was inconsistent with the priorities of MESPA officials, were they disposed to activate a public health agenda.

A second organizational tension, typical of donor-funded projects in developing nations, concerned the bilateral donor arrangement. PROSAM became an organization serving two Caesars from the start. The salaries of several of the professional staff, as well as the computers, rent for a well-situated office building in the capital, jeeps, and other necessary equipment and supplies came by way of the donors. There were routine processions of high level PROSAM staff to and from the USAID office for meetings and planning sessions, testimony to donor guidance over program goals and processes. (The PAHO-funded director of AIDSIN had an office within the PROSAM building itself.) In the meanwhile, PROSAM remained, by design, one of several government offices under the Ministry of Public Health, where it soon came to be regarded as an indulged and preening cygnet in a nest of ducklings, if not simply a meal ticket.

Another frustration of MESPA personnel concerned the salaries of the PROSAM technical staff, which due to donor funding were well above the pay of Dominican civil servants. The hiring of a cadre of skilled and dedicated local professionals at a salary substantially more than what most government employees received generated resentment and

dissension. It was an indication that an elitist flagship organization with its own subculture was developing within MESPA. In a government bureaucracy characterized by employee despondence, where achievement was seldom rewarded, where there was no budget, few goals, and no discernible accountability in relation to salary earned, PROSAM was results oriented. And its achievements were not celebrated by MESPA.¹¹ Not that PROSAM was particularly unusual. There are a number of substrata government units enriched by outside donors. While they do not live with the ignominy of an AIDS program, neither are they well received when they assert an organizational culture of their own. By all accounts, PROSAM's location within MESPA left it exposed to the vagaries of Balaguer's administrations, and eventually afflicted with the accompanying organizational dysfunctions of the indigenous government.

One of the central organizational tensions between the indigenous government and the donor organizations, which ultimately impacted PROSAM, was the "cacique," or spoils system. Like most of Latin America, the government of the Dominican Republic is characteristic of the cacique. In the tradition of Indian chiefs of precolonial times, cacique

¹¹Several PROSAM staff members as well as the Program Director of AIDSIN conveyed their perceptions that they were resented and envied by top staff in MESPA for their achievements.

refers to the convention of replacing employees, from the top of an organization down, with friends, relatives, and loyal followers upon receiving an appointment. Typically, government positions are offered to people who are perceived as loyal; they are also offered to people who worked on the last campaign (dedicated and loyal); lastly, positions are offered on the basis of merit. This is not to imply that merit is irrelevant, but it is seldom the primary motivating force behind a political appointment. Governments characterized by the cacique system may have a considerable number of people in the administration who have no particular qualifications, definable responsibilities, and, at lower levels, may not even report to work.¹² In brief, the indigenous government did not constitute an organizational bureaucracy in any Weberian sense, nor an ethic or tradition of civil service. Nor is there widely held respect for government employees. To offer an example, when I first went in search of the national government office building in the

¹² Two examples come to mind: As I passed through PROSAM's on various occasions, I often noticed a few women seated in the lobby. They chatted with the chauffeurs and other PROSAM employees and, on occasion, they offered coffee. The women were concierges, which are politically assigned positions. Although they had no definable responsibilities, they were there, as Dominicans say, to "cap whatever leak sprang up." On another occasion, we happened upon a Dominican cab driver in New York city who announced that he had been drawing a Dominican government paycheck for the past several years thanks to a relative who was able to collect it for him.

capital, the large, fourteen-floor "Edificio de Oficinas Gubernamentales," I would ask for it by name. People would look puzzled, because most knew it only as "the crate." I later learned that it is routinely referred to as the crate in intergovernmental memos and reports. The metaphor of government offices as bottles in a crate is a cultural inference that employees were "taken care of," most of them with few discernible responsibilities.

A second organizational tension between donors and the indigenous government concerned the prevalence of institutionalized corruption in the form of graft, or "la mordida" (the bite). Given the extremely low government salaries, there is widespread acceptance and an expectation that public officials will skim funds, or be paid off. President Balaguer himself privately acknowledged that public officials could not live on their salaries, but with the additional remuneration they received (from graft) they did well enough. The problems of government graft/salary augmentation began almost immediately in the case of PROSAM and the Ministry of Health, and the resulting tensions continued through the life of the project, as will be discussed later.

In any event, the first director of PROSAM, Dr. Guillermo, was a beneficiary of the cacique system. An experienced political contender, Guillermo presumably

understood that his tenure within PROSAM would be limited to the appointment of the next Minister of Health. Dr. Guillermo must also have appreciated that as he refused to transfer funds, vehicles, and other program resources to the Minister of Health over the course of the first few years, he was cutting short his tenure as director. He may have understood, as had many government professionals before him, that his alignment with international donor agencies would offer more secure public-sector employment possibilities and benefits. What is unmistakable is that Guillermo used the power of his position to construct a future position for himself, or a "nest," once administrative shifts occurred. This is the short story of how several Dominicans believe COSA came into being. But waxing retrospective, an equally compelling account of why COSA was founded could be constructed from the value conflict that HIV prevention presented for the government. In a society and a government infused with the traditions of Catholicism, social hierarchy, and strong class sentiments, government involvement in "street outreach" was incongruous. PROSAM employees were unprepared to interact with a population widely regarded as contemptible and depraved. Officials as a group did not welcome the idea of their well-appointed offices becoming the gathering place for persons they viewed as a contemptible collection of pariahs. In short, donor money and technical research were appealing,

but high-risk populations were not.

It also appears that PROSAM employees lacked the ability to establish effective HIV prevention programs with high-risk populations. As previously noted, PROSAM recruited some of the best local professionals from a variety of disciplines to pursue HIV prevention. However, most were doctors or medical technicians, and few exhibited knowledge of how to interact with people "of the street," or how to establish a program based in their life experiences. Guillermo had discerned, perhaps from interaction with donors or from experience with the STD clinics, that in order for HIV prevention to occur, effective programs would have to be developed that engaged high risk populations "one on one." Ultimately, that might have to occur one step further from the Ministry of Public Health than PROSAM was positioned.

THE CENTER FOR PEER OUTREACH AGAINST AIDS (COSA)

COSA was founded in 1987 by the Ministry of Public Health as an institution directed to work with groups who were regarded as being at risk for HIV, by virtue of their sexual practices, and who were also understood to be marginalized legally, socially, and economically (Educando por la vida: 1990). The founding board of directors included: Dr. Ernesto Guillermo, director; his former assistant from the public STD clinics, Mr. Santos Rosado; another physician, Dr. Rafael Alcastura; and Sor (Sister) Maria del Carmen Abenia, whose

role will be explained shortly.

COSA was directed to AIDS prevention for commercial sex workers and the gay population, with a projected goal of including the industrial zones, bateyes, and street children in the future. Education programs were to focus on dangerous behaviors specific to risk groups; they were peer-oriented, and carried such names as "One on One." COSA began its outreach program and HIV education in the sixteen public health STD clinics where registered FSW's could receive information regarding HIV and other STD's, as well as free condoms, while they waited for their legally required monthly check-ups.

The mission and objectives of COSA constituted the germ of what the donors, AIDSFAM and AIDSIN, had initially sought in PROSAM, and now believed was not forthcoming. AIDSFAM and AIDSIN were aware that the Minister of Health was bleeding PROSAM accounts for resources, and various organizational value conflicts between PROSAM and the Ministry of Health were now apparent. Dr. Guillermo and the resident advisor for AIDSFAM addressed a few of these issues rather imaginatively in the creation of COSA.

Guillermo and his assistant, Santos Rosado, were aware of the work of a religious order of nuns in the country, the Sisters Adoratrices. The nuns had an established mission to work with infected prostitutes and had come to the Dominican

Republic in 1986 at the behest of the Organization of American States (OAS) to address the "burgeoning sex industry" (Yanguella, 1992). Dr. Guerrero incorporated the Sisters and their work in the mission of COSA, and placed Sor Maria del Carmen on the board of directors of the new NSO. The nuns were given responsibility for managing COSA's finances and their programs were integrated with several components of the organization's activities. (The contribution of the Sisters Adoratrices to COSA is more fully discussed in the subsequent section.)

Although the involvement of nuns in the public health sector may appear incongruous, nuns have a history of public service delivery activities in the Dominican Republic. The government of Balaguer has long maintained a close and public alliance with the Catholic Church. In the recent past, several government hospitals and clinics have hired nuns to manage clinic supplies and resources. The nuns, due to their honesty and commitment, have enabled some clinics to circumvent the problem of graft that has plagued so many government services. Clinicians recounted stories of shipments of syringes, medicines, and supplies that would disappear in short order until nuns were placed in charge of inventories.

The incorporation of the Sisters Adoratrices was a critical buffering strategy for COSA in that it granted the

organization a degree of protection, if not legitimacy, from public agencies important to the project, particularly from the Ministry of Public Health. MESPA officials would accuse no director of mishandling funds (an accusation that could result in the destruction or absorption of a program). Nor would the mission of the program be openly attacked as unbecoming or inappropriate. Thus, COSA began as an NSO dedicated to the education of sex workers and gay men. International donors provided the impetus for its creation. COSA was directed and funded by the umbrella organization, PROSAM, with technical and financial assistance channeled from AIDS-FAM and AIDS-IN, and complemented by the services of an order of evangelical nuns.

COSA and the Turbulent Organizational Environment:

COSA began to institute and direct AIDS prevention programs for gays and female sex workers with its founding in 1987. The peer outreach program for sex workers, in particular, soon received recognition in international aid circles for its success. Nonetheless, in late 1990 the new Minister of Health ousted Dr. Guillermo from his position as director of PROSAM, with some pomp and ignominious ceremony, and replaced Guillermo with his former student, Dr. Moreno. Within weeks of Guillermo's ejection from PROSAM, he assumed directorship of COSA, and there began an accompanying defection of the core technical staff from PROSAM to COSA (at

the behest of AIDSFAM which was intent on maintaining program continuity).

AIDSFAM and AIDSIN continued to funnel COSA resources through PROSAM, but managerial and technical assistance was direct. COSA continued to persevere in its mission, but it had become vulnerable to political turbulence emanating from its parent organization, PROSAM. Since Guillermo was no longer directing PROSAM, COSA was not buffered from the Ministry of Health (MESPA).

Over the course of the first seven months of 1991, PROSAM endured three different directors in conjunction with changes in the Secretaries of Health. Dr. Moreno entered PROSAM and left, followed by Dr. Manuel Suarez, who was later succeeded by Dr. Altagracia. The leadership changes in MESPA generated disruptions throughout public health, affecting COSA as well as other NSO's funded by PROSAM.

COSA was, however, able to weather shifts in MESPA commitments, because of the continuity of managerial and technical support provided to COSA by AIDSFAM and AIDSIN. But the program began to feel the effects as personnel in PROSAM were replaced by new MESPA ministers. The personnel changes were mitigated somewhat as COSA absorbed key staff members who had previously worked for PROSAM, but the relationship between COSA and PROSAM was marred by unexpected staff changes.

A example of how seriously changes in PROSAM affected

COSA relates to the STD clinics. Sex workers are legally required to carry a card indicating their health status, which they receive in monthly check-ups at the STD clinics. COSA staff had made the STD clinics an integral component of the peer outreach program, using them as the initial contact point with sex workers. COSA staff had developed educational modules and materials to educate women about STD's and HIV as they waited for appointments. However, as MESPA became less stable, the STD clinics were intermittently closed, or kept irregular hours. At other times, they had no equipment or supplies. During one period, STD clinics were opened, but with armed guards standing at either side of the door, so women refused to enter the clinics. Worse yet, MESPA health inspectors, who routinely visited brothels to check the required STD cards, became actively involved in selling health cards to brothel owners, which impeded program success.

In short, the relationship between COSA and PROSAM was weakened by a rapid succession of directors, accompanying changes in staff, and a lack of government commitment to initially established program goals. Moreover, directors of PROSAM continued to siphon off COSA project resources for the Minister of Health. Upon replacing Dr. Guillermo, PROSAM director Moreno had announced a policy of consolidating PROSAM funds under the general revenue fund of the Ministry of Health. Although the nuns protested, Dr. Moreno was

successful in the short run. COSA and PROSAM monies were used and unaccounted for.¹³ Program officials have contended that the MESPA Minister was under pressure to help with the national election of the President. At other times and for less political reasons, resources from AIDSFAM and AIDSIN were diverted to the national family planning campaign (condoms), or used to augment the lifestyles of high ranking officials.

The donor agency, AIDSFAM, responded to the graft by closing out PROSAM-managed bank accounts and opening one managed by the AIDSFAM resident advisor. The AIDSFAM resident advisor continued to counsel and advise COSA staff who remained within the PROSAM building. But privately, he began to pressure the USAID director to allow him to relocate both his office and COSA and to formally separate COSA from PROSAM, completely bypassing a Dominican government link in AIDS prevention.

By the close of 1991, the budding PROSAM had lost its footing as a leadership organization in HIV prevention, and COSA had also begun to show the signs of disruption. As the mid-term assessment drew near, USAID and AIDSFAM personnel privately acknowledged that PROSAM was no longer capable of

¹³ A particularly disheartening loss was the public mass media campaign for AIDS prevention which ended almost as quickly as it started. The Minister of Health took a 30% cut of all monies due to the media consultants and public relations agencies which made the commercials, so international donors halted the project.

functioning as a stable coordinating institution for the various NSO activities. Both donor agencies were disillusioned with what they regarded as a lack of accountability, a lack of commitment to program goals, budgetary legerdemain, and the instable positions of key program personnel throughout government due to the cacique system. Donor disillusionment with PROSAM was reinforced by the experiences of other health sector projects funded by USAID and PAHO, (Child Survival, Family Planning, Immunization, Vector Control, and Health System Management).

PAHO, however, remained committed to the bilateral agreement with PROSAM. The resident director of AIDSIN, who had worked throughout Latin America, explained that in his experience, newly appointed Ministers honored contractual agreements with international donors in the breach. He maintained that an internationally funded program could rely on government commitment and collaboration only insofar as the original actors who formed the agreement maintained their positions. This lack of commitment to past agreements is an impediment to the continuity of programs funded nationally or internationally, and NSO's can often be caught in the balance.

Midterm Assessment and Reorganization: the second phase of COIN:

At the time of the midterm assessment, Dr. Altagracia was acting as director of PROSAM. She had significantly altered

PROSAM's AIDS prevention program, redirecting the campaign to school children instead of high-risk groups, using brochures as the communication medium. Dr. Altagracia also was responsible for several public announcements claiming that, under her directorship, PROSAM was now close to ending the problem of HIV in the Dominican Republic. Behind the scenes, Dr. Altagracia was succumbing to pressure from the Minister of MESPA to deliver PROSAM condoms, vehicles, and other resources to MESPA.

In light of the midterm assessment, the USAID mission director informed Dr. Altagracia in writing that USAID/AIDSFAM was going to pull out of PROSAM, taking the donor-funded computers, equipment, resources, and key staff. Shortly thereafter, COSA was moved out of the PROSAM building and into a new building selected by the AIDSFAM director. It became the location for COSA staff offices, the patio school where sex workers were taught to read by the nuns, weekly peer group meetings and skill-building workshops held for sex workers.

The extrication of COSA, and eventually other AIDS prevention NSO's from PROSAM, stabilized the programs but proved to be problematic in some respects.¹⁴ First, organizational restructuring significantly augmented time

¹⁴PROSAM had been directing five NSO's besides COSA; the central meeting place for all of the NSO's thereafter was the new COSA location.

commitments of the AIDSFAM and AIDSIN resident directors because they were unable to share administrative responsibilities with PROSAM. Second, it placed the AIDSFAM and AIDSIN director a bit at odds, in that both organizations had jointly funded the programs and the directors now had to work harder at coordinating activities.

PAHO has maintained an unswerving mandate to coordinate projects with the public health sector, so AIDSIN remained in PROSAM. Although the project director complained of program losses and the inefficacy of continuing, he was unable to withdraw. USAID, it appears, requires far more project accountability than PAHO and is willing to sacrifice bilateral agreements when pinched. The AIDSFAM resident advisor noted that USAID insists on a "U.S.-style paper trail which can be nearly impossible to effect down here."

With the midterm assessment, Santos Rosado became head of COSA; Dr. Guillermo remained on the board of directors but resumed his position as director of the STD clinics. The selection of Santos Rosado as director of COSA was the choice of the board of directors and it was also strongly favored by the resident director of AIDSFAM. Rosado was a licensed social worker who had worked for years in the STD clinics under Guillermo, directing health inspectors of brothels, so he was familiar with the sex industry as well as public health. Rosado was often described by Dominicans as a "tigre"

or someone who is street smart. He brought intimate as well as technical knowledge of risk groups into the management of COSA, and for this he was favored by the AIDSFAM resident director. Rosado functioned on the margins of what the international donors would have considered "gringo propriety," but he knew how to work the system and get things done. Although he was clearly regarded as being out to make things happen for himself, the AIDSFAM resident director, Dr. Guillermo, and the nuns considered Rosado to be sincere in his commitment to COSA.

Rosado was not as well received as the new COSA director by PROSAM higher ups, however. As previously noted, there are strong class differences within Dominican society. Rosado was dark skinned, and from a lower income background. He had not attended the more prestigious university in the country, and he was a bit of a maverick. Within PROSAM there were a few professionals from the upper class, of predominantly European background, and educated in the United States, who felt they should have been offered the position of COSA director. These PROSAM members occasionally clashed with Rosado in meetings and over program objectives. But Rosado understood that he enjoyed the support of the AIDSFAM and AIDSIN directors and that the necessity of coordinating COSA activities with PROSAM would continue to diminish.

ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In 1987, there were two organizations in the Dominican Republic committed to AIDS prevention: PAHO and USAID. The United States, in particular, exercised a profound influence over the health agenda of the Dominican Republic because USAID is the biggest donor to the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Health Organization establishes the agenda of PAHO. Three years into the program, I asked the resident directors and upper level staff in COSA, "Who would support AIDS prevention if your organization stopped today?" They invariably responded, "Nobody." The reasons were captured in the following quotes:

AIDS is still regarded as the problem of a small group of bad people and social deviants. There is so little social recognition or value placed on what we're doing in comparison to what public health usually does. I mean, we're not out saving babies and we're not regarded as heroes here.

or alternately,

Public health in this country is one of the most corrupt of government agencies, it is dominated by a small, pernicious group of people whose only interest is to pad their pockets.

In short, AIDS prevention challenged social values and the organizational structure and processes of donors conflicted with established norms of the indigenous institutional environment of public health. COSA, the NSO caught in the middle, was able to persist because of international donors' commitment to HIV prevention, and the

financial and professional resources they provided. The AIDS prevention program continues because, as one resident director quipped, "He who has the cookies makes the rules. . . and I have the cookies." Dominicans repeatedly affirmed this situation. A Dominican director of another international agency offered,

Right now, there are two things that are getting attention (read funded) in this country, AIDS and the five hundredth century celebration of Columbus. Any other projects are out of the loop."

This perception speaks to the power of international donors and the government in setting the agenda. But, in spite of their influence and efforts, international donors were unsuccessful in rooting a program of HIV prevention in the indigenous government because they were moving at cross purposes to the values and norms of indigenous institutions and the larger society. There were differing organizational priorities regarding the public health agenda, resentment of the high salaries and accomplishments of an internationally funded program within the government; and conflicting organizational values regarding paternalism and graft.

Because donors exercised the power of the purse, they were able to persevere. AIDSFAM regularly salvaged the HIV prevention program, changing organizational names and structure (from PROSAM to COSA; from public sector to NSO), and retrieved key staff when MESPA changed directors and

staff, in an effort to keep HIV prevention on course. But, in the steadfast adherence to an international agenda and international organizational norms, COSA failed to become a property of the indigenous environment. Perhaps "failed" is the wrong word. In all fairness, indigenous support for an HIV prevention program was not forthcoming because of the degree of public sector disintegration, and the challenges the program presented to operant social values. AIDSFAM eventually abandoned the objective of program sustainability and disengaged from the public sector.

PROSAM had exhibited a hybrid organizational culture under its first director, Dr. Guillermo. But under subsequent directors the bonds with donors were tenuous, leaving PROSAM subject to organizational norms of the Dominican government. In fact, PROSAM's director, Dr. Altagracia, pursued the more culturally palatable version of AIDS prevention, as she shifted the program focus to school-age children and brochures became the communication mode. (The donor resident directors, however, were exasperated and referred to Altagracia's "girlscout version of AIDS prevention"). Finally, AIDSFAM, frustrated and at odds with the Dominican government, took their program and equipment and moved elsewhere. They left MESPA with a skeletal staff, no money, and an echoing building.

In contrast to PROSAM, COSA evolved almost exclusively in

relation to external organizational expectations and values. In doing so, COSA forfeited the ability to establish legitimacy with the indigenous government. From the institutional theory perspective, this was not a loss because of the dysfunction that accompanied adherence to this organizational environment. The symbolic legitimacy accorded COSA through government endorsement was enough.

Unfortunately, the public sector, and particularly the Ministry of Health, is in such an extreme state of disarray that the modus operandi is personal survival grounded in patronage. In fact, COSA often paid the public STD clinics (which often closed at noon) to maintain afternoon hours so that COSA could conduct education programs for sex workers.

Nor did COSA build a niche or advantageous link with the private sector. There were few options of support available in the external environment. The medical establishment continues to be fearful of AIDS and is often unwilling to treat people who might be HIV positive. Furthermore, medical personnel and clinics are engaged in a daily struggle for survival. The medical establishment is not in a position to respond to any number of worthy medical causes, and AIDS is probably far down their triage list.

As institutional theorists would predict, the organizational culture of COSA followed the structure and norms established by AIDSFAM. COSA's goals and objectives

were basic "AIDSFAM boilerplate," to which they have adhered closely over the past five years of organizational existence. The methods for achieving them, however, were based in the particular culture and experience of Dominican risk groups. For example, COSA continued to include clients in the development of AIDS prevention strategies. As the government became an undependable partner, COSA refocused their points of contact with people in the sex industry from the STD clinics to the cabarets and bars. This shift also enabled COSA to direct HIV education to clients and men in the sex industry.

Initially, AIDSFAM sought to establish the legitimacy of HIV prevention with the government. The legitimacy of the program, however, was based in relationships with individuals, as opposed to the institution. As individuals changed, the program lost government commitment to its goals. The fact that PROSAM was unable to pursue street outreach, even in the beginning, is an indication of a lack of institutional legitimacy. COSA continued to hobble along until the AIDSFAM donor tired of buffering the NSO and moved to escape by altering the organizational domain. This very move indicated where the power was in the organizational environment.

Donor organizations compensated for the lack of institutional commitment to HIV prevention by establishing NSO's, most specifically COSA, which became the centerpiece of risk-group education. COSA expressed even less value

congruence with the public sector than PROSAM, as it was more explicit in its challenge to larger social values in outreach with gays and sex workers. While COSA was created by a director of PROSAM, it was really a product of donor goals and expectations. COSA was sustained and nurtured by the international donors and only nominally connected to the indigenous government. As a result, COSA evolved in relation to donor expectations. It never established strong ties outside of this vertical relationship. In fact, the word legitimacy may be an inappropriate description of the relationship between AIDSFAM and COSA, in that the organization never did individuate or mature. COSA did succeed in establishing legitimacy with the client community, as will be elaborated in the subsequent section.

The buffering strategies an organization might employ when attempting to protect goals derived from the relationship with a marginalized client community were not exhibited by COSA in this case. Instead, AIDSFAM advanced buffering strategies to protect COSA from the public sector and the focal population because COSA did not develop the autonomy or power base to buffer itself. Furthermore, the buffering of COSA most often occurred in relation to the indigenous government, which posed the most serious threat in their repeated attempts to coopt the program.

AIDSFAM, for example, buffered COSA when it coopted the

Sisters Adoratrices, a powerful symbol of the moral integrity of COSA's mission. AIDSFAM assumed control over funding previously channeled through the government, when they closed out the MESPA accounts under Director Moreno. AIDSFAM maintained program continuity by rehiring staff members important to the program's mission as they were fired by new PROSAM directors. Finally, and most significantly, when AIDSFAM found the relationship with the government untenable and detrimental to COSA program objectives, AIDSFAM went so far as to truncate the organizational relationship and funding arrangements with the government.

In short, COSA never developed the capacity to buffer itself, because, for all its success with the client population (which will be discussed in the next section), it was a completely dependent organization. Nor has COSA been able to establish a broader base of support within the D.R. which would enable it to diminish its dependence on international donors and individuate as an organization.

INSIDE COSA: PROGRAM EVOLUTION AND THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY WITH THE FOCAL POPULATION

When COSA was founded in 1987, PROSAM provided the space for meetings and offices. With the benefits of donor funding PROSAM occupied a prominent building across from a university, downtown in the capital city. The well-situated building also housed the AIDSIN resident director and served as a meeting

place for personnel of other NSO's, like COSA, which were under the wing of PROSAM.

The PROSAM director's office was near the front entry, although the door was generally closed and only accessible through a secretarial staff. The rest of the building was taken up with PROSAM offices and meeting space. PROSAM had the rather formal atmosphere of a government office, with its chauffeurs, concierges, and professionals entering and exiting. AIDS educational posters, typical of organizations engaged in HIV prevention, were not widely displayed, but could be found in the offices of a few professionals. In fact, an individual entering from the street would not have any indication of the purpose of the organization.

Below the surface of polite relationships and official decorum, the tensions between PROSAM staff and the COSA personnel were manifest. COSA staff spoke about their relationships with PROSAM only when the director was out of the building and then in whispered tones, ever aware of who was near. The turmoil and frustration in their relationship with PROSAM was clear.

Lena Aguilar and Milagros de Leon, two COSA staff members, had offices near the back of the building where it opened onto a large patio. In fact, COSA was the only NSO to take up office space in the PROSAM building, a testament to its importance. This was also a conference area where sex

workers met for their weekly meetings and workshops.

The conference area at the back of the building where the COSA offices were located was separated from the rest of PROSAM by a wall. In this secluded area the sex workers met for the patio school, the focus groups, and the weekly meetings with the educators. The separate area allowed COSA to create its own environment, insulated somewhat from the officiality of PROSAM. Program staff and clients seemed to feel at ease in this space.

After the mid-term assessment, when COSA was moved to another building, the organizational environment improved considerably. Personal interactions among COSA staff did not appear to be guarded, even when resident directors of the donor agencies visited. The building was easily accessible by clients and they had more of an opportunity to "create their own environment" without worrying about how they affected an official government office.

However, the typical HIV prevention posters were still not publicly visible. Instead, on the lobby walls one would find religious images of the Virgin Mary, a symbol of virtue and forgiveness, and of Jesus on the cross. Upon entering the halls, one encountered more HIV-specific information, but nothing to acknowledge a relationship between HIV and homosexuality, or sexual promiscuity. This projection of religiosity and virtue was clearly an effort to counter public

perceptions of COSA and project a more socially acceptable image of their purpose.

Beginning the Peer Outreach Program for Sex Workers

COSA's peer outreach program was developed by Lena Aguilar and Milagros de Leon, both licensed social workers, who were hired by the first director of COSA. Lena and Milagros told me that they began the outreach project by making contacts with FSW's who came to the STD clinics. As Lena and Milagros developed relationships with some of the FSW's who came in for required monthly check ups, they invited the women to COSA's center, then located at the back of PROSAM, where they talked with them about the risk of HIV and how they could become involved in educating other women who were sex workers.

Milagros and Lena also initiated contacts with bar and brothel owners to educate them about COSA, the risk of HIV, and the importance of monthly check ups for FSW's. They affirmed the importance of the health of FSW's to the success of the business and allayed any misgivings about COSA's intention to ultimately remove the women from the business. Lena and Milagros understood that the education of FSW's would require cooperation from men in the sex industry, particularly from the owners of the bars and brothels.

Lena and Milagros began the peer outreach program with five FSW's they had recruited from the STD clinics who acted

as health messengers, or "mensajeras de salud." The mensajeras were paid a nominal \$5 a month, intended to compensate the women for their time so that they could afford to take part in the program. The mensajeras were to educate other sex workers about the risk of HIV and other STD's and about how to use condoms effectively, and they distributed free condoms. The mensajeras also encouraged sex workers to come to "charlas" or talks at COSA's center on their day off, and to bring other FSW's with them. Women who attended the patio talks for the day were paid their cab fare and were served a meal. At the patio school, FSW's learned more in-depth information about HIV and how to better protect themselves from STD's. They could also take part in the literacy program conducted by the Sisters Adoratrices.

By 1990, COSA had grown to support 22 full-time mensajeras in Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata, each paid \$70 U.S. a month, and 287 volunteer educators. The cities of both Puerto Plata and Santo Domingo had been divided into districts with one or two mensajeras assigned to each one. The mensajeras assumed responsibility for making contact with FSW's, and for establishing relationships with the owners and businesses in their respective districts.

Development of a knowledge base: Milagros and Lena facilitated the development of the educational program with the female sex workers by building a knowledge base of their

experiences and integrating technical knowledge of how STD's and HIV are transmitted. The women created the knowledge base through focus groups conducted at the center. When I asked the educators what they had learned from the women, Lena freely offered, "Everything." The educators both noted that developing a body of knowledge regarding the following subjects had been critical to developing an effective HIV prevention program: the nature of client/sex worker interactions; how sex workers protect their health and their routine hygienic practices; the sex workers' relationships with men in the sex industry; and the dependence of family members on a woman's earnings.

The educators explained that first and foremost, sex workers were seldom willing to risk disruption of their client relationships. Sex workers are in a highly competitive, informal industry where maintenance of client satisfaction is a means of survival, not only for themselves, but for other people as well. Most of the women relied on their earnings to supply a number of dependent family members, including a child or two, with food and shelter. So, if a client felt his pleasure would be diminished by condom use, then women were less inclined to insist on it. Also, clients routinely offered to pay more, or double, if the sex worker would forego use of the condom.

An additional issue that influences sex worker behavior

is the fact that the industry is pervaded by overtones of violence. Threats, as well as acts, of physical violence against women are commonplace from both clients as well as men who run the sex industry, and the dangers are reinforced by an established mythology. Sex workers are wary about taking risks with clients, not only for fear of lost income but for reasons of personal safety. Hence, program personnel actively sought to develop an HIV prevention program that incorporated knowledge as to how sex workers might persuade clients to use condoms in a manner that was non-adversarial and that recognized the context of the client/sex worker interaction.

On the other hand, the program sought to educate FSW's regarding the long-term health implications of HIV. From the KAP¹⁵ study the educators were aware that the women were not geared toward maximizing earnings, per se, but toward surviving. All sex workers understood illness as a threat to income. But the harsh reality of HIV as incurable was reinforced in educational messages, and the mensajeras began to incorporate the phrase "50 pesos is not worth your life" in their teachings.

Additionally, Lena and Milagros emphasized the importance of self-esteem to behavior changes required for HIV

¹⁵The KAP study was conducted jointly by PROSAM and COSA to ascertain the knowledge, attitude and practices of sex workers, in order to build the peer outreach program.

prevention. Both contended that in order for women to take the short-term risks of protecting themselves, they had to first believe themselves to be worth protecting. Women who are sex workers are constantly and profoundly deprecatd in a culture that assesses women on the basis of their chastity. So sex workers hold extremely low self-concepts. The program addressed this, in part, by rejecting the term "prostitute," which embodies a multitude of negative associations and presents women's lack of virtue as a motivating force. Instead, the program referred to the women as sex workers, a gender- and value-neutral term which acknowledges that economics is the motivation for this work.

The peer outreach program also sought to reinforce and elaborate positive self-concepts that were available to the women, namely, their roles as mothers, a revered status in Latin culture.¹⁶ (According to the KAP study, most of the FSW's surveyed had one or two children.) The mensajeras also emphasized the threat that HIV posed to this critical relationship in their lives.

In addition to building self-esteem and emphasizing the importance to their immediate family members of staying healthy, the program encouraged FSW's to think in terms of the

¹⁶In fact, it may be that role conflict vis a vis their mother/child relationship is an impetus for leaving the business, as often women quit sex work when their children reach an age of comprehension.

future. One of the realities of poverty is that the future is seldom well conceptualized because it is often irrelevant. Life is uncertain and geared to day-to-day survival. COSA's peer outreach program encouraged the women to think of their futures. Sex work is a temporary trade, particularly in a Latin culture that celebrates youth and virginity in women. Most women seek an exit by their early twenties. And none of the women we encountered had either envisioned themselves as sex workers or saw it in their futures. The most commonly expressed dream was an escape through emigration or marriage to a foreigner. The mensajeras were aware of this and emphasized how HIV would destroy their dreams of either escaping to New York or falling in love with a "blue-eyed prince."

Lena and Milagros indicated that FSW's have beliefs about how to maintain their personal hygiene and keep themselves disease free that are inadequate and potentially harmful. The educators sought to develop materials that documented and expanded on the FSW's traditional hygienic practices in language that they understood. They constructed materials that revealed the dangers of contracting STD's, how they are prevented, and how they are cured once contracted. Most importantly, they emphasized that HIV is incurable. The program sought to instill in FSW's the insidiousness of HIV; that clients could look healthy and strong, yet be HIV

positive; and that the disease may not manifest symptoms for years.

Lena and Milagros developed a more sophisticated understanding of the relationships of sex workers to men in the sex industry, the amount of abuse that occurs in this inner circle, and how little control sex workers often have over their immediate circumstances. Marxist analysts might grimly refer to the social relations of production inherent in the sex industry; that is, women's exploitation at the hands of men who profit and control women's labor. While there is some variation among business owners, they are a determining factor in client behavior with respect to safe sex. However, there is an assortment of male roles in the Dominican sex industry and it is often within the industry itself, through sexual relations with men in the business, that women incur the greatest risk for HIV.

For example, brothels usually employ a doorman, a cashier, and a few men who advertize on the street, in addition to the manager. Female sex workers are required to engage in sexual relations with these men in order to work out of a bar or brothel. Unfortunately, men in the sex industry often carry STD's and they are not required to be registered or produce public clinic cards affirming their health status, as are FSW's. So, a young woman entering a brothel may be infected with an STD as she receives the blessing to work

there, and well before engaging in relations with a client. Worse yet, conventional STD's predispose any individual to contracting HIV through subsequent sexual exposure.

In addition, the sex industry is closely linked to tourism, and there is often a complex ring of bar owners, taxi drivers, and hotel managers, all linked through a "maipiolo,"¹⁷ or tour guide. These men all precede the sex worker in their interactions with the client, and they are paid by the client for providing access to the FSW. Thus, it is impossible for a sex worker who insists on condoms to refund a dissatisfied client's money. And, in fact, her insistence may place her in a position of risking physical abuse.¹⁸

Women who work solely with pimps out of the parks, plazas, and streets, may be freer to practice safe sex with their clients if their pimp would agree to it. But they traditionally do not use condoms with their "husbands," as they commonly refer to consensual partners acting as their pimps¹⁹. In fact, it is the very absence of condoms that

¹⁷The term maipiolo originates in the Latin term for "first mother" or the head nun in the Catholic church. It is used to mean "kingpin" or "ringleader."

¹⁸One of the women FSW's was beaten and dragged down a flight of stairs by her hair in an altercation with a client regarding use of condoms during our contact with COSA.

¹⁹ FSW's commonly refer to their male companion as a husband and consider it an insult to refer to him as a pimp.

establishes the intimacy of this sexual relationship. Thus, it often in their sexual relations within the sex industry, and within consensual unions, where there is frequent and unprotected contact that sex workers run the greatest risk for contracting HIV.

Participatory Development of Educational Materials: The FSW's who came to the patio talks occasionally worked in focus groups to develop the educational materials for the program, some of which were reviewed briefly in the previous discussion. One of the initial focus group projects was to develop information as to why clients did not want to use condoms. The process of developing the materials is presented here in brief as an illustration of program development and the evolution of client-organization relationships.

Project managers and educators indicated that the initial focus groups were stilted and the information women offered was vague. In fact, Baroja, the AIDSIN resident advisor, noted that by the second focus group "it was evident that the dynamics of the sessions were not what was needed to gather in depth information". The facilitators then decided to radically revise their interview process and include some "ice breakers" that would enable the women to feel more comfortable sharing intimate secrets with relative strangers." It may have resulted from false assumptions which emanate from stereotyping sex workers, but the women expressed considerable

discomfort and tension discussing sexual issues. Sex workers preferred language that was discreet, and program materials were ultimately developed with a sensitivity to this.²⁰ Facilitators also learned that the sessions were more effective if the groups conformed to the hierarchy within the profession and did not combine women from brothels with women from the bars and streets. Focus groups comprised of mixed groups were unproductive as well as tension-producing for the women.

One of the most valuable educational materials generated by the focus group exercises was a comic book used by the mensajeras to educate FSW's, and which they also distributed in beauty salons. The comic book was developed from a series of focus groups held at the center that addressed "Reasons why clients do not want to use condoms" and "Methods of convincing clients to use condoms." The materials reviewed the risk of HIV but also offered strategies for implementing safer sex practices that were easy for FSW's to incorporate into their intimate interactions and which would minimize the disruption to client relationships.

In the resulting comic book, a fictitious sex worker,

²⁰PROSAM researchers indicated that it was more acceptable to use medically appropriate language when working with young teenagers than with sex workers, who occasionally found it offensive and appreciated a little more delicacy and discretion.

Maritza, engages five prototypical clients, the macho young man, the business executive, the smooth talker, the family man, and the last who is potentially violent. In four of the scenarios, Maritza persuades the client to use a condom in a manner that is engaging and effective. In the last, when she confronts a client who is potentially combative, she seeks an exit. This rather sophisticated educational product amassed the knowledge of sex workers, the technical assistance of a psychologist from PAHO, and the skills of graphic artists and layout people paid for by the project. The sex workers remained engaged throughout the production, particularly with respect to the dialogue in the comic book and the visual appearance of the sex worker and her clients.

The Religious Order of the Sisters Adoratrices

In the midst of all of COSA's efforts to achieve a self-affirming, participatory educational project grounded in the life experience of sex workers were the Sisters Adoratrices. At the beginning of their involvement with COSA, in 1987, there were fifteen nuns working in Santo Domingo alone. The Sisters' responsibilities have continued to expand with the growth of the program although their mission is evangelical at the core. Apart from their financial responsibilities the nuns are dedicated to training sex workers in sewing, florist skills, hair styling, and silk screening. The Sisters also conduct a patio school which teaches women how to read and

write. They have also had some success placing women in factories after completing some training in their program. By 1990, they had placed over seventy women in factories.

Over the past few years, as the STD clinics became less reliable, the Sisters drove the mobile health care unit at night to the Malecon, a well known avenue bordering the oceanfront which sex workers frequent. The nuns provided transportation for women to the monthly STD clinics, when the clinics are operational and when they have gasoline and access to the van. The nuns have also helped sex workers pay lab fees at the STD clinics (10 pesos per visit).

The nuns are regarded as dedicated by all involved in COSA and PROSAM, and they also enjoy a reputation for confidentiality. They are well aware of the widespread fear of the virus, which, unfortunately, pervades the medical community as well. So they are careful to protect those who are infected. For example, the nuns have a day-care center available to the FSW's when they are attending the programs. Some of the children who attend the day-care center are HIV positive which makes it difficult to recruit people from the neighborhood to help them at the center. But the nuns refuse to identify children who are HIV positive or isolate them from other children. Moreover, the nuns routinely care for FSW's who have contracted the virus, providing them with food, medical supplies and some income, without revealing any

particulars of their illness to their families.

The relationship between COSA and the Sisters Adoratrices has been an important buffer for the organization with respect to other powerful organizations in the indigenous interorganizational environment. The nuns conferred a degree of integrity on the organization's mission, if not its client population, and facilitated interorganizational relationships that enabled the women to achieve their goals. For example, when the nuns transported sex workers to their monthly STD clinic checks, to factories for job interviews, or around the jails, the women were treated with greater respect. The nuns have improved the organization's ability to achieve its goals in a large degree, because of the respect that they evoke in a predominantly Catholic country.

Clearly, the evangelical component of the Sister's agenda, the rehabilitation of the sex workers, is distinct from the goals pursued in the peer outreach program of COSA. Lena and Milagros seek HIV prevention for women but they take their occupation as a given. In fact, they confer some degree of validation and respect for the women by accepting the context. The nuns, on the other hand, assume a distinctly judgmental stance.

For this reason, the effectiveness of the nuns in rehabilitating the women is considerably limited. The sex workers do not appear at ease with the nuns. Interaction is

formal, and the nuns preserve a social distance both in their use of language and in their attitudes. The nuns maintain their own interpretation of sex workers' motivation, which they attribute to the women's sinfulness and desire for physical pleasure. One Sister explained that women continue to sell themselves because "these women are hot on this island -- they are immoral and they enjoy this lifestyle." In contrast, participant observers in this study attribute the sex workers' perseverance in nun-directed classes to their determination to find a life with some dignity rather than a lack of personal integrity. Nor did Milagros or Lena regard the nun-directed programs as "successful with the women" because they believed the Sisters were "inflexible" in their teaching methods and judgmental in their perspectives. Nonetheless, Lena and Milagros expressed great appreciation for the contributions the Sisters made to the program.

In spite of differences in goals and approach, the Sisters Adoratrices and the educators, Lena and Milagros, worked well together. In fact, they sometimes worked at the same meetings and addressed the same groups, but the Sisters never traveled with other COSA staff because, as one Sister explained, "That would be like canonizing the condom, and you, of course, understand how the Church feels about this."

In spite of the church's objections to condom use and birth control, the Sisters take a very practical and pragmatic

approach. They know that safe sex and family planning are necessary; while they don't want to endorse them, they don't act as obstacles either.

Evolution and Adaptations of COSA

Throughout the program there have been efforts to assess the effectiveness of the mensajeras' street outreach and to build on their understanding of HIV transmission. The following section briefly highlights four changes in COSA that have occurred since its inception.

In 1988, a little over a year after the program was established there were at least thirty-six mensajeras between Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata, and a series of focus groups were conducted. The focus groups used an action-research format wherein the mensajeras were asked to identify the goals of their work as they perceived them. They were asked what helped them pursue these goals, what impeded them, and what they appreciated most about their roles as mensajeras.

The mensajeras were clear about the established goals of their work: to distribute condoms and brochures to FSW's in the bars and brothels; to organize talks among the women in their districts and to show films once a month; to talk with their companions both one to one and in groups, about how they could prevent STD's and AIDS. However, the FSW's also perceived other goals as equally important: providing emotional support for women who had tested HIV positive;

encouraging women who had symptoms of an STD to visit the clinic and follow through with the pharmaceutical treatment; and following sex workers to ascertain whether they felt comfortable using the condoms and were, in fact, using them.

New Service Population: Men in the Sex Industry

One of the themes that consistently emerged from the action research was the importance of including the owners of the businesses in the program. The women noted that owners often made it difficult for them to conduct their work. The mensajeras believed that the participation of owners would increase the ability of the FSW's to protect themselves. Given the commanding role of men in the sex industry, a program that focused responsibility on the least powerful members of the sex industry would have limited success. Business owners were able to limit access to the sex workers, they could impede their check-ups at the monthly clinics, waive the use of condoms for clients, or throw the women out of the business.

Under Rosado, the technical staff began to pursue strategies for including the men in the sex industry. The objectives of reaching owners and men who were intermediaries were: to increase the knowledge that owners and intermediaries had regarding AIDS and other STD's and how to prevent them; to improve relations between the mensajeras, volunteers and owners; to inform men of how to use condoms

effectively and include them in the group responsible for distribution; and finally, to impress upon men the long-term advantage of personal health to them and their livelihood (Rosado, 1991).

The education of men in the sex industry was aided by MESPA health inspectors who had previously checked STD cards in the bars and brothels. The inspectors accompanied the mensajeras, bringing an official presence and making program participation obligatory. The mensajeras presented education modules developed for men in the sex trade. Owners who were resistant to participating received veiled threats that inspections of health cards would be stepped up.

More in-depth education and official status for mensajeras

Program directors learned from the action research that the mensajeras wanted mini-courses on STD's and AIDS in order to have greater technical knowledge and feel more competent in their work. The women also indicated that they needed identification cards. An indication of their position and credentials would persuade business owners to allow them to enter the establishment, and women would be more inclined to listen to them. Both the government identification cards and mini-courses followed the action research project.

The mensajeras indicated that the program goal of arranging monthly group meetings among sex workers was difficult to achieve. They found it more effective to visit

the brothels and bars to talk with groups of women informally. Thus, with the extension of the program to men in the industry came a shift in program delivery away from the STD clinics to the bars and brothels. The timing of this shift is also attributable to the instability of the STD clinics. They had become an ineffective point of education and contact because services were frequently unavailable.

Theater groups and Client Education

An additional program change that resulted from the attention to education within the brothels and education of the owners was the development of a theater group. A number of former sex workers developed skits or vignettes that they presented at the cabarets to educate clients about condom use and AIDS. Introduced by Rosado, the theater groups offered COSA and the mensajeras yet another venue for transferring information and reaching another group in the sex industry -- clients. The education of clients, in turn, made it easier for the FSW's to negotiate safe sex practices, given the more powerful position of clients in the exchange.

ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATION - CLIENT COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The focal population of sex workers is not easily transformed into a community. Sex workers are a highly transitory population, often teenagers, with little education. They are isolated by men in the industry who seek to limit the resources available to them in order to maintain control.

There were roughly 2,000 registered sex workers in Santo Domingo alone who had been educated by the peer group leaders at one time or another in the program, but a far smaller number would qualify as active in the COSA programs and projects for sex workers.

Sex workers - program staff The legitimacy of the organization and client population relationship rested on the program materials as well as the nature of the interaction between program staff and sex workers. The peer outreach program was developed and implemented with the sex workers, and as such it sought to build safe sex into the experience of sex workers, while also empowering them. The development of a program in the social learning context, where facilitators place themselves in a position to learn as they teach, where they seek to understand the norms of interaction in the sex industry as they seek methods of integrating new ones, resulted in a program that was value congruent, and the product of many people's work. This type of program development and fine tuning in the implementation phase gave COSA a resounding legitimacy with the clients, as evidenced by the number of women who participated in various skill building workshops, job training programs, and focus groups over the course of the past five years.

The relationships between the sex workers and the program staff also contributed substantially to the legitimacy of the

program vis a vis clients. Interaction between program staff and sex workers has been dynamic and reinforcing, in that perceptions on both sides have evolved. The initial goal of educating sex workers was established by the sub-agreement between the donors and the indigenous government. It was not a commitment that resonated with PROSAM staff, and so it was taken up by COSA under the direction of Guillermo. The COSA educators utilized the training module offered by Profamily Health (PFH) an international NSO engaged in AIDS prevention that had subcontracted with USAID. COSA staff followed the program development format established by the donors and reinforced by the management style of the resident director.

As the program began to take shape, relationships were formed between COSA staff and the initial mensajeras. The organizational values espoused by the AIDSFAM resident director became the prevailing standards within COSA. But, as staff members followed through with program development, they noted that their perceptions were changed by engaging in the process. Throughout the course of the research interviews, the two resident advisors, as well as technical staff from COSA and PROSAM, expressed respect and admiration for the women in the program and remarked that their attitudes toward FSW's had been altered by what they had learned in working with these women. Two years into the program the interaction between staff and FSW's was a world away from the beginning

months of COSA.

In turn, the FSW's found a source of personal validation and self-esteem by participating in the program. Women who had participated expressed a sense of ownership over the program. They referred to program materials as their own in conversation, and recognized them as a product of their work. Through the patio school, the skill-building workshops, and the HIV education talks, through the program's redefinition of the women as "sex workers," and through the validation of the women's experience when creating the program, the women's construct of themselves and their behavior within the organization changed dramatically.

An example of the women's self-esteem and the respect for them within the organization was illustrated for me during the meetings jointly held by PROSAM and COSA, which the mensajeras attended. During one particular meeting there was an extended discussion and analysis of the second KAP survey of sex workers, nationwide.²¹ The mensajeras as well as a few other FSW's responsible for administering the survey to sex workers, were in attendance. The women took their seats around a large table of civil servants and medical doctors and made several suggestions regarding the survey design and delivery through

²¹The KAP studies reported on a series of interviews conducted with sex workers throughout the country, assessing their knowledge, attitudes, and practices in an effort to determine the effectiveness of the AIDS prevention program.

the course of the day. Their comments provoked further dialogue and resulted in alterations to the draft survey. The women's contributions and repeated interaction with a largely professional group, and the acceptance of their input, were evidence of the women's self-esteem, and the extent to which the group had come to value their contributions to the program. When I noted this to a resident advisor, he indicated that in the first year of the program, it is unlikely the women would even have attended the meeting.

It is difficult to ascertain how COSA's peer outreach program with its skill-building workshops affected the nuns' efforts at job training and literacy. The strong relationships that developed between particular COSA educators and the sex workers through the weekly meetings made the nuns' interaction with sex workers appear incongruent to the participant observers. Their formality and judgmental stance ran counter to COSA norms. But the nuns played an important interfacing role between COSA and other Dominican institutions, such as the government, the prisons, the factories, and the STD clinics. They buffered COSA from PROSAM, and they buffered clients from poor treatment from other organizations. The nuns provided vital services to women in the project, from child care to training in marketable skills. The nuns may have also provided COSA with an internal touchstone of larger societal values.

Ultimately, the combination of a program that staff and clients felt committed to, and the ensuing relationships between staff members and the FSW's fostered the strong advocacy roles the mensajeras and volunteers exhibited in their work. The sex workers fervently advocated program goals and participated under extraordinary conditions, not simply because they believed in the threat of HIV (several spoke of how they needed to protect the health of the pueblo) but because the program became a source of self-esteem and larger purpose for many of the women. Freire wrote that empowerment is to become aware of one's reality, and to realize this reality is not a closed world without an exit over which one has no control, but rather a limiting situation which can be transformed (1970). By this definition, the program was a successful avenue for empowering women.

Unfortunately, the ability of the mensajeras and other sex workers to become part of the organizational structure within COSA is limited, particularly in comparison to the gay population which COSA serves. Because of the strong social stigma that prostitution carries, women frequently keep their participation in COSA anonymous. Even the mensajeras who are paid employees of the program do not live in the city zones where they work. Often their neighbors are unaware they are employed by COSA.

In addition to wanting their work to remain unknown,

women's lack of literacy or professional training limits their participation, often leaving them no organizational options beyond acting as volunteers. In contrast, gay men have begun to move beyond the isolation and social stigma. They have organized and formed a collective voice. Moreover, gay men may cloak their dedication to organizational objectives in their employment. They can attribute organizational involvement to an employment opportunity, whereas the women are usually working as volunteers. Within COSA there are a few staff assistants, one doctor, and one social scientist who self-identify as gay. The advantage of gay men who work in a professional capacity within AIDS service organizations raises the question of what direction programs will ultimately take, should donor goals shift, or should the organization develop an autonomous power base among the focal population of gay men. The asymmetrical power relationships between the two risk groups reflects a reality of the external environment. There is considerable, albeit subterranean, financial and professional support for gay men, and little in comparable resources for female sex workers.

Mensajeras - female sex workers: The source of the mensajeras' legitimacy with other sex workers was rooted in their own experience as sex workers. Their intimate knowledge of FSW-client interactions, the social construct of women in sex work, where businesses were located, and the internal

norms of the sex industry, enabled them to educate at a level congruent with the experience of FSW's. The mensajeras spoke with women about how to protect themselves in a manner that was consistent with the women's life experience, and with an understanding of the limitations within that context. The mensajeras understood what power women had in the context of a client-sex worker relationship, and how to build on that in order to protect their health and safety.

Program Staff - Men in the Sex industry: Glick (1967) said that when we begin to describe a cultural system of illness and our response to it we must begin with the question, "Where is the power?" One of the realities of the sex industry is that women who are sex workers and men who are profiting are not of the same community; they do not share the same goals and values. As such, appeals for the health of the women are not necessarily perceived as important by business owners, particularly if there is a large number of young women migrating from rural areas to the city who are easily drawn into the sex industry. Moreover, work in HIV prevention has repeatedly demonstrated that successful HIV prevention among any population requires some level of personal empowerment, for it is people's very lack of power over personal circumstances that predisposes them to risk. But the process of empowerment challenges the equilibrium, the standard relationships, and is not welcomed by men in the industry.

The peer outreach program was accepted by the owners when COSA incorporated the power of the state by providing the mensajeras with government identification cards and by including MESPA's STD inspectors in the owner education program. Owners were essentially threatened with closure or increased inspections if they did not participate in the educational module. Moreover, the official identification cards made it nearly impossible for owners to interfere with mensajeras when they were trying to contact sex workers. The government identification cards transformed the peer educators from ex-sex workers to public officials of the state. Once the program was directed to the education of the owners and men in the industry, the inclusion of clients through the skits in the bars and cabarets was a natural phase.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEGITIMACY IN THE CASE OF COSA:

This chapter began with the intention of exploring the multidimensionality of legitimacy and how organizations which must engage highly divergent stakeholders resolve the inherent conflicts. According to Selznick's definition, legitimacy has two components: it requires that organizational objectives be construed as morally acceptable; and it requires that the organization pursue them in a manner that is regarded as effective and efficient. In the case of the peer outreach program, HIV prevention was a goal of international donors who created and sustained an NSO to pursue that goal. HIV

prevention was not a morally acceptable goal of the government or any identifiable public beyond the specific client community of sex workers. The indigenous government was found to be in an extreme state of decay and disarray, and private organizations to be engaged in a struggle for survival. Sex workers were an isolated and transient group with limited resources and no established voice within the society or government.

The organizational environment of public and private institutions available to provide interorganizational linkages and resources to sustain COSA was highly turbulent and competitive. The medical community exhibited neither the resources nor the inclination. The circle of people who worked for the university and internationally funded NSO's was a source of employees and information exchange. This informal group attended the same meetings, university talks and interacted frequently, sharing information and transferring from agency to agency over the years. But this network was not a source of sustainability for the organization in terms of finances. It provided an informal network of communication regarding inner organizational workings, who and what was getting funded, and a pool of talented and qualified personnel.

Neither was the sex industry a viable source of funds for sustaining the program. In spite of the tremendous amount of

money that circulates within it, and in spite of what could be construed as a service that COSA provides to the industry, there were significant value differences between the goals of COSA and those operationalized in the sex industry. Effective HIV prevention required that women exercise some control over their sexuality and COSA empowered women. And this is the crux of legitimacy at the client level: the more legitimacy (effectiveness/value congruence) COSA had with sex workers, the more it challenged the values of the industry.

One researcher, speaking of the maipiolo and the complex ring of players, likened the sex industry to a "cotorra" or "parrot economy," typical of many Latin American countries. As the parrot eats, food falls to the bottom of the cage where it provides sustenance for another level of existence -- mice, ants, and roaches. But the use of this metaphor for the sex industry suggests that sex workers are in a position of power. In reality, the livelihood of men in the sex industry depends on their ability to control the women. So COSA was only successful with the client group of owners and men in the industry insofar as it exercised the power of the state.

Unfortunately, HIV prevention programs around the world have targeted female sex workers as deadly vectors of AIDS.²²

²²From all indications to date, sex workers have been unduly singled out as a risk group. Data indicate that they are more at risk, themselves, than to other people, because "male-to-female transmission of HIV is the overwhelming mode of

In doing so, programs have often placed responsibility for the spread of the epidemic on sex workers, the people least capable of "carrying the health of the pueblo forward." COSA moved beyond these value assumptions in a variety of ways, through its valuation of women who participated, and by extending the program to men in the industry. HIV prevention directed to sex workers is not intended to protect sex workers, it is intended to protect men from bad women. By placing responsibility on men in the industry, the program challenged the norms of the sex industry as well as larger social values. And COSA required the power of the state to implement this component of the program.

The lack of a felt need for the organization's services within established institutions and powerful publics made it virtually impossible to establish a niche beyond donors, or to develop organizational autonomy. For example, Wilson (1991) discussed how organizations establish themselves, by

"seeking out tasks that are not being performed by others; fighting organizations that seek to perform your tasks; avoiding taking on tasks that differ significantly from those at the heart of the organization's mission; being wary of joint or cooperative ventures; avoiding tasks that will produce divided or hostile constituencies; and avoiding learned vulnerabilities" (1991: 92-103).

All of these means are precluded in the case of an organization which pursues an objective that is not regarded

heterosexual transmission" (King, 1990:155).

as important in the first place.

COSA engaged in two activities that may be interpreted as aiding in the establishment of an organizational identity. First, as COSA bonded with AIDS-FAM, it differentiated in relation to PROSAM. Rock (1988) noted that organizations sometimes exaggerate an enemy in the process of constructing an identity and elaborating their character or distinctive identity. It is possible that COSA mythologized the evils of PROSAM in the interest of differentiating itself and bonding with the donor agency.

Second, when COSA incorporated the nuns, it acknowledged the depth of its need to manage public perceptions of the organization's mission. COSA's need for protection and affirmation by a legitimated social institution was far greater than any need to differentiate its services from another provider. The fact that COSA and the Sisters Adoratrices made an incongruous pair was irrelevant in the face of a threatening organizational environment.

In any event, the process of legitimation was approached serially in that donors sought to establish commitment to their project through the bilateral agreement with the government, manifest in the creation of PROSAM. PROSAM, in turn, spawned NSO's in general and COSA in particular. COSA established the peer outreach program for sex workers, which expanded its focal population to include men in the sex

industry. The program undoubtedly found a base of support in the sex workers, but because of the lack of social support or available resources for them in the external environment, sex workers were limited in their organizational roles.

The buffering activities projected to occur as an organization seeks to mediate the conflicting expectations of stakeholders were conducted by donors. Because the NSO did not individuate and establish a distinct power base, it was not able to defend itself against onslaughts from the government. So the donor organization buffered COSA by protecting program resources, by rehiring project personnel who lost their jobs with new PROSAM directors, by coopting the nuns to engender acceptability, and finally, through avoidance as the donors severed the bilateral agreement with the government.

Value congruence with key stakeholders is the primary element of legitimacy. Effectiveness is a secondary issue, and assessment is often based in values. For example, the potential for conflict in definitions of effectiveness, or whether an organization has been able to sustain legitimacy with a client population is irrelevant if there are no other organizations committed to the same goal.

The secondary component of legitimacy concerns capabilities and proficiencies, that is, the organization's effectiveness in meeting goals. COSA's effectiveness was

always measured and asserted in terms of donor values and expectations because COSA's goals did not become a property of the indigenous environment. However, the methods for achieving these goals were client property. They became client property only because donors facilitated this in their processes and structural relationships. Thus, legitimacy did not exist multidimensionally but along the same continuum at two distinct levels.

Since the program's inception, AIDSfam routinely evaluated and documented program effectiveness through the two CAP studies of sex workers attitudes, perceptions, and knowledge of HIV transmission; through action research, the focus groups, and indirect measures such as the numbers of condoms distributed, number of people attending programs, and number of sessions attended.

Unfortunately, the problem inherent in HIV prevention is that it is impossible to quantitatively verify effectiveness. Were the program directed to family planning, program officials could point to figures of annual birth rates declining or rising. In the case of AIDS, it is impossible to point to a relationship between X million dollars expended and Y impact on the epidemic. The inability to quantify program effectiveness is a problem in the case of COSA. According to staff members there is a tendency for international donor organizations to respect sophisticated, quantitative

evaluations that are rational and data driven. The problem in a developing nation is that it is often difficult to generate objective data, and nearly impossible to sustain a continuous program which is necessary to generate statistics. COSA staff noted that they could discern a relationship between program participation and condom distribution when the inspectors would crack down on the clubs. Program officials also saw the numbers of condoms distributed go up during the tourist months. But it was impossible to verify program results in terms of a decrease in HIV occurrences.

One of the resident advisors spoke frankly, after changing jobs, about the difficulties of assessing effectiveness for donors and how these difficulties had negatively impacted program funding. He said,

You know intuitively when people travel all the way across town -- when they don't have the money to participate in a one hour training session -- that the program is working. But how do we measure group spirit, self esteem or a sense of cause and plug it into some behavioral model? These were basically some abused and humiliated people who got to feeling like they were a part of a cause, a movement. They tasted some level of leadership and capacity building in the theater and self expression workshops and it changed their lives for a little while.

The donors evaluated the program on the basis of numbers, and on the basis of sustainability, which we couldn't achieve. And I guess I should say in terms of the political agenda, which shifts. Ultimately, its hard to go to Washington, or USAID conferences and brag about programs like this. They're politically a bit risque.

In the fall of 1993, COSA had one more year of secure funding. USAID had decided not to continue supporting AIDS programs in the Dominican Republic. The donors have shifted to a new agenda, the democratization of organizations.

CHAPTER V

AN HIV PREVENTION PROGRAM SERVING HISPANIC WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES

The preceding chapter examined the varied facets of organizational legitimacy for a foreign-funded nonprofit social service organization (NSO) pursuing goals outside of the established cultural norms. COSA had sought to establish its legitimacy with two interorganizational environments: the public sector and the sex industry. The following case presents a similar but less daunting organizational challenge: the South Gale Women's Center (SGWC) is engaged in HIV prevention, in addition to a variety of support services, for a predominantly Hispanic clientele in a U.S. urban setting.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the social and cultural issues relevant to HIV transmission among women in the United States and the role of public health institutions in prevention. As in the preceding chapter, I will discuss the characteristics of the client population, the impetus for founding the South Gale Women's Center, and the dynamics of the interorganizational environment. The organization's quest for legitimacy, heretofore identified as distinctive competence recognized by relevant groups of stakeholders, will be reviewed in the context of interactions with the focal population, clients, and the interorganizational environment.

HIV TRANSMISSION AMONG HISPANIC WOMEN:

The changing demographics of HIV transmission in the United States were briefly reviewed in the introductory chapter but will be revisited here in the context of Hispanic women. We had earlier noted that transmission has progressed from gay men to the urban underclass through the course of the 1980's. By 1988, two out of every five reported cases of AIDS (40%) were either African-Americans or Hispanics (CDC, 1988). Among the underclass, transmission has been fostered not only by homosexual and bisexual transmission, but also the drug epidemic. Intravenous drug use (IVDU) has been identified as the most effective mode of transmission, particularly intravenous cocaine use. But presently, behaviors associated with smoking crack cocaine contribute to the high rate of heterosexual transmission among Hispanics and African Americans.

Crack cocaine is a highly addictive drug which gives a short-lived high and is closely associated with indiscriminate sexual behavior. Women who are addicted frequently exchange sex for crack, so much so that crack-addicted women are commonly known by the street name "strawberries." In fact, Dr. Howard Minkoff, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the State University of New York, noted that women who test positive for cocaine in their urine are five to six times as likely to test positive for syphilis and HIV (Minkoff, 1990).

AIDS now ranks among the five leading causes of death for women in the United States; it is the leading cause of death among women ages 20-45 in major cities on the east coast of the United States, (WHO 1:1990). Women are also the fastest growing population of AIDS victims and their risk has been related to the drug epidemic and heterosexual contact. Within the United States, the preponderance of women who have tested positive are members of the urban underclass. In fact, African-American and Hispanic women together account for more than 77% of the women with AIDS (Worth, 1989). In 1990, more than half of with women with AIDS had contracted the virus from injection drug use (52%); an additional 26% had contracted the virus from heterosexual contact (67% of whom had been infected by a partner who was a male intravenous drug user (IVDU), 11% had contracted the virus from blood products, and among remaining cases the source of infection was unknown (Shaw, 1988:506).

In spite of the alarming rise in the number of AIDS cases among women, figures continue to be grossly underreported. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control noted in 1990 that more than 65% of all women with HIV in the United States died without ever receiving an AIDS diagnosis largely because the operant definition of AIDS until 1991 was based on opportunistic diseases that occurred among homosexual males. Although the CDC definition was changed to include diseases

that occur in women in 1991, they remain underrepresented in the statistics for a variety of reasons (CDC, 1991).

First, women are disinclined to seek testing or treatment. Recent statistics indicate that six men seek HIV testing for every one woman (Ohio Dept. of Health, 1992a). Moreover, the majority of women tested are in pre-natal care, a strong indication that the test was advised by the physician (Ohio Dept. of Health, 1992b). One of the most important issues influencing testing among women is their poor quality of routine health care and the lack of a health care provider.

There is also a tendency of health care providers to misdiagnose symptoms in women because they have not been regarded as a high risk group, and the common AIDS-related infections among women are not readily recognized as such.¹ Finally, hospitals are disinclined to test people who appear to have AIDS if they are homeless because they cannot legally discharge them if they are HIV positive.

A recurring and persuasive argument is often presented in the literature that lower-income women are disproportionately affected by HIV infection because they are the least likely to be reached by education campaigns and they seldom have access to adequate health care (Mann, 1990). While access to information is a key factor in prevention, the role of

¹AIDS-related infections in women include pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic vaginal candidiasis, and cervical cancer.

cultural mores and gender relations have often been ignored by AIDS education programs (Friedman, et al. 1990). Medical anthropologist, Dr. Dooley Worth noted (1989:111),

the effect of AIDS on minority women and their response to AIDS education is poorly understood in the absence of [understanding] the political economies which shape the gender, class, and race relations of individual women's lives and identities, and the specific impact of racial, social, and economic oppression on socialization patterns in minority communities.

The World Health Organization reiterated this perspective in an October 1990 press release declaring that "women suffer from a social vulnerability" to HIV infection. That is, "the social, economic and cultural conditions under which women live contribute to women's risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV infection" (WHO 1990:2). The World Health Organization, among other international public health care institutions, concluded that it is unlikely education efforts will be successful without addressing the "non-medical" conditions that place women at risk (WHO 1990:1).

But traditionally, public health care programs in the United States have disregarded the role of social and economic forces in their response to disease, though they have often been a powerful undercurrent in the definition of causation. Public health care in the U.S. was an outgrowth of the Progressive era and has maintained a scientific and technologic orientation in its approach to problems that might

otherwise be defined as social. Public health care has routinely pursued a three-tiered agenda: control of infectious diseases through vaccination campaigns, sanitation of the environment, and education of individuals with respect to hygiene practices. Public health education programs are based on a behavioralist model known as "lifestyle theory" which regards disease causation largely as a consequence of individual choices (Gorman 1989; Muir 1991; Tesh, 1990). Individuals are assumed to be equally responsible, if not equally able, to choose which behaviors are in the best interest of their health. Good health thus defined, is the product of a disciplined, if not virtuous, life style. Conversely, particular afflictions are "a natural consequence of societal and individual transgressions, as in the cases of sexually transmitted diseases or substance abuse" (Gorman 1989:159; Brandt 1988).

Community-based health organizations (CBO's) which have spawned AIDS prevention programs in the United States have varied in their orientations to HIV prevention depending on their client populations. While some CBO's have employed the individual lifestyle approach, others have defined HIV causation in terms of cultural and social factors which place people at risk, taking on the ecological definition of health. The ecological approach constructs wellness as the product of an individual's adaptations and responses to environments,

both socially and humanly constructed. From the ecology perspective, humans and their societies are deeply interrelated. Ecological proponents may often question the validity of a distinction between individual and society, or the idea of the individual as preeminent (Tesh, 1990). As such, the ecological model places responsibility for wellness at the level of the larger society or political system, as opposed to the individual.

NSO's engaged in HIV prevention among women in the United States have generally recognized and defined risk in social terms; women's powerlessness in interpersonal relationships. Organizations serving minority women extend the construct of powerlessness beyond interpersonal relationships to living in a society where they have been oppressed, poorly valued, and lack access to resources. As Dazon Dixon, director of Sisterlove in Atlanta stated, "AIDS prevention is about addressing the issues in women's lives in a way that makes them feel safe and supported. It is about helping women work through those painful issues that keep them from taking control over their lives." The focus of HIV prevention then becomes an extended and supportive approach to personal empowerment and behavior change. As a number of authors have concluded, women who are not in control of their sexual behavior or their drug use are not in a position to implement HIV prevention practices (Shaw, 1989; Worth, 1989).

It must be acknowledged that an organization working to empower any disadvantaged group will challenge established community power relationships and values. And herein lies the central issue of organizational legitimacy for NSO's engaged in HIV prevention among women. The ecological approach draws the circle wide by extending responsibility for illness and prevention beyond individuals construed at risk. It challenges social values which perpetuate a group's powerlessness. By placing responsibility at a societal level, the organization pursues social change and therefore acts outside of established social norms. The ecological approach moves from teaching women how to put a condom on a phallus to addressing the larger issue of why there is a drug epidemic in some communities, or why women don't have control over their sexual behavior. This perspective places the organization against the social currents in its quest for legitimacy.

Focal Population of the South Gale Women's Center (SGWC)

The focal population of the South Gale Women's Center (SGWC) is diverse, both racially and culturally, but their risks for contracting HIV are consonant with the experiences of women previously described. The boundaries of the SGWC's service area include a few pockets of the more affluent "regentrifying" neighborhoods near the city, as well as some remaining old world ethnic neighborhoods that once characterized the area. Small numbers of Middle Eastern and

Asian people are becoming visible in the region and are establishing small businesses. But the largest culturally defined group is Appalachian, and the majority of census tracts within the service area are lower-income.

Mean household income for families in the service area averaged \$17,850 in 1985; and the census tracts immediately surrounding the South Gale Women's Center show a poverty rate of 40% in 1988 (Thorp, 1988). Women in the area are predominantly lower-income and are characterized by social service agency data as socially isolated, with a high proportion of female headed households.

The 1980 and 1990 census data indicate that neighborhoods within the service area are becoming increasingly populated by Hispanics from Puerto Rico and Central America. The number of African-Americans remains a fraction (3%) of the total South Gale population. In 1980 Hispanics comprised roughly 9% of the population; by 1990, they were 32% (NODIS, 1991). By conservative estimates, as much as 25% of the Hispanic population speaks little, if any, English. The percentage of Hispanic women who are non-English speaking is even higher according to social service agency data. The focal population of Hispanic women is categorized as younger, on average, than Appalachian women, more likely to be married, and less likely to be employed. Hispanic women also averaged more children and the majority surveyed worked in the home (NODIS, 1990).

GENESIS OF THE SOUTH GALE WOMEN'S CENTER

The South Gale Women's Center began in the summer of 1983 when a group of social service providers in an industrialized, northeastern city came together to address the lack of a coordinated approach to the varying needs of women on the south side of the city. The founding members included personnel from eight established social service agencies in the city and on the near south side: the Rape Crisis Center, the Battered Women's Shelter, the South Side Community Mental Health Center, the Ecumenical Ministry-Child Development Program, WomenSpace, and Templum House and Merrick House, both community centers for young people.

The founding group was aware that although the near south side and the downtown region offered a variety of discrete services, women from the south side of town were underrepresented among the client base. One of the projected reasons for low use was the fact that services were dispersed over a large geographical area, making it difficult for women who relied on public transport. Also, women appeared to regard the downtown region as "unsafe and threatening" and were therefore reluctant to seek services there.

In the initial needs assessment, the founding agency members socially constructed the problems of women in the area as related to their victimization through battering and rape, their economic problems resulting from the rising number of

single female heads of households, high unemployment among the population of the region, and a high percentage of families on general relief. In addition, the needs assessment indicated that women's family and social roles were a disabling factor. Women were perceived to be rendered incapable by their socially constructed roles of acting in their interests or making decisions (Wood, 1986). The needs assessment concluded that:

Many "south side" women lack the self-sufficiency to control their economic well-being, to avoid the victimization process, and to have a sense of choice and ability in personal and social relationships (Wood, 1986).

Hence, women who would need the Center's services were seen as disabled by their gender roles within the family, and often victims of social and economic forces. The South Gale Women's Center was intended to help women move "beyond their crisis/survival orientation" through the provision of a safe and supportive environment where they could gather and help each other address the life issues they shared.

The strong social service provider orientation reflected the perspectives of key agency members from the Community Mental Health Center and various agencies that worked with women in crisis. The objectives of the South Gale Women's Center as defined by the founders were to:

- (1) promote a long term self-development orientation among women, as opposed to a crisis event/help-seeking orientation, and
- (2) to promote

more effective utilization of existing women's services by making them more accessible and increasing the ease of the initial contact (South Gale Women's Center initial proposal and mission statement, 1987).

The primary goal of the SGWC was to improve utilization of existing social service agencies by women on the south side of the city. Founders determined that effectiveness of the Center would be measured on the basis of visits. If people were using the services provided, the programs were assumed to be meeting their needs. Initial members of the Board of Directors were comprised of a core group of agency representatives from the Rape Crisis Center, the Battered Women's Shelter, and the South Side Mental Health Center, which offered a variety of drug and alcohol programs. A few well known women who were active in the community were included on the board as well.

The Gund Foundation offered an initial challenge grant to the Center in 1984, of \$25,000 annually for three years as start up funding. By early 1986, the original founders were able to meet the challenge through anonymous gifts, a few small trusts, and monies from the state alcohol and other drug prevention funds. In 1986, a coordinator for the various programs was hired, a building identified, and program delivery began. The coordinator selected by the founding board of the South Gale Women's Center had previously been the director of a mental health agency in the state capital and

had established a career as a direct service provider in alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs.

The coordinator and board assumed that women of the south side would most commonly seek services from the Center for relief from a crisis, e.g., alcohol abuse, marital problems, or difficulties with their children, rather than for "insight oriented psychotherapy," or to "find themselves" (Wood, 1986:17). In order to inform women about Center services and create a sense of comfort regarding the Center, the coordinator established a series of short courses in gardening, house repair, financial management, cooking and sewing. The Center also established a "Friday evening drop in" to encourage women to stop by and chat. Day care was routinely provided. The coordinator also worked to establish linkages with local churches and other social service organizations so that the Center would receive referrals of local women in personal crises.

Initial services offered by the South Gale Women's Center included peer counseling and support groups for rape and incest victims, community education on rape prevention, a post-shelter group for battered women, education and outreach group on domestic violence, and self defense training. In addition, the Center offered GED classes, career counseling, a workshop on budgeting and consumerism, a job search group, parenting skills groups, an ombudsman from the county welfare

office, sobriety groups, and individual and group counseling.

During the first two years of the South Gale Women's Center's existence, the Center functioned largely as intended: a satellite facility for extant programs conducted by the various social service providers who comprised the board and the participants, with a little involvement in neighborhood community building. Organizational legitimacy was extended to the SGWC by virtue of the established organizations that provided services through the SGWC. The fact that county and non-profit social service agencies in the vicinity referred clients to SGWC programs and support groups from its inception is evidence. However, this is not to infer that the South Gale Women's Center was an individuated organization with a distinct identity.

As the SGWC began to confront problems typical to new organizations, the establishment of stable sources of funding, a client base, and recognition of its competence around new service areas, the organization began to create a distinctive identity and seek legitimacy within that context. But the SGWC was blocked from taking this route initially because it found itself in competition with the participating agencies which were also founders and board members. In essence, the SGWC was seeking legitimacy from the very agencies that spawned it. Tensions developed between the South Gale Women's Center's coordinator and members of participating agencies who

comprised not only board members but staff of the SGWC when they were directing programs.

EARLY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUGGLES

One of the central struggles for the SGWC from its inception was funding. The Center had hired a coordinator, a secretary and begun to offer programs as soon as it received a commitment from the Gund foundation for start-up funding and was able to generate matching funds. Matching funds came from the state drug and alcohol programs; two South Gale community churches made large contributions for hunger programs conducted by the Center and there were small individual grants and donations, as well. In addition, the participating social service agencies generated grants to pay for programs they offered at the SGWC. But the organization had begun with less money than the founders thought necessary. Solicitation of funding was complicated by a need to avoid competition with founding agencies by seeking funds **only** from donors that did not already support participating agencies. Avoidance of potentially competitive relationships became more of a problem as the organization's coordinator sought to develop the Center as an organization, in and of itself.

Board minutes indicate that concerns over the safety of the location were an issue from the beginning of the SGWC and continued to be a concern over the course of the organization's early years. Board members were not satisfied

with the building initially because of the difficulty of access to the upstairs for elderly and disabled individuals, the lack of space for child care, and the few areas suitable for private meetings.

The building was selected because it was located on a major avenue, it was accessible by public transportation, and the rent fell within the organization's limited budget. The few other options explored were not affordable. Throughout the first few years of the Center's existence there were ad hoc committees established to find a more suitable location. The committee would occasionally identify a particular house in a residential setting to rehabilitate but financial issues seem to have always precluded a move.

Notes from board meetings indicate that on occasion the SGWC staff and board looked into security systems when the safety issue was heightened by an threatening incident. The staff was concerned that clients feel safe, but did not want to bring undue attention to the question of safety or obstruct access to the Center. Expressions of concern over the safety of the building and location of the Center increased in frequency as the neighborhood became progressively Hispanic. In fact, while the SGWC did not directly address the growing Puerto Rican population in their client service area, the coordinator and staff's uneasiness appeared to surface in discussions of personal safety and the SGWC's location.

The third issue concerned the need to create a bridge between the SGWC and the focal population of women in the surrounding community. In order to succeed in establishing a clientele, the South Gale Women's Center needed to offer programs compatible with the values and needs of women in the community, if not families, as a whole. The coordinator's efforts to offer courses for women that were "role compatible," and build networks with local agencies for referrals were to that end. But the development of a client community presented a couple of challenges to the SGWC.

First, the organization was intended to serve the entire South Gale population, a disparate and potentially incompatible group. The focal population was predominantly lower-income whites of Appalachian origin (85%) but over the course of the 1980's, the area surrounding the Center was becoming increasingly Hispanic. In fact, Hispanics are presently identified as the fastest growing population in the immediate area (NODIS, 1990). The south side of the city had a long history of racial strife that continued through the beginning of busing and school segregation. In recent years there have been neighborhood tensions regarding the growing Puerto Rican population.

In light of the ethnic dissention, it was questionable whether the Center could serve the Appalachian population and the ever-growing Hispanic population without confronting some

of the thorny issues this presented to the organization's identity. But there was little recognition of the conflicts a diversified client community presented, at least on the surface. The board had yet to confront whether client diversity was beyond the "comfort zone" of either client group, or how the goal of a diversified client population conflated with the organization's construct of itself as offering "a safe place, where women feel comfortable to discuss their problems" (Woods, 1986:17). Would clients listen and support each other across boundaries of culture and ethnicity? Certainly there were issues of client comfort the organization would have to consider. Moreover, different client populations might express distinct needs. And what of the predominantly Anglo staff's sensitivity and comfort with Hispanic women? In short, the issue of organizational legitimacy, heretofore construed as value consonance with a organizational stakeholders, was complicated by the possibility of value differences and discomfort within a broadly defined client group, and between the client subgroups and staff.

A second conflict concerned the value orientation of the founders and that of the community they sought to serve. Typical of new organizations, the professional orientation of the founders establishes the values of the organization. In this case, the founding members imbued the organization with

a perspective of social service providers who work with women in crisis. Programs were intended to help women reach a greater level of self-sufficiency and personal strength. The subtext of programs constructed women as oppressed and abused people. But it is questionable whether women typically construed themselves as disabled by their relationships and their societies, or only in the context of a crisis situation like battering or rape, after which they might be referred to the Center.

Additionally, the SGWC challenged community values by encouraging women to bring private family issues such as physical violence, sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, and child rearing practices to a public forum for resolution and discussion. This perspective conflicted with strongly held beliefs in both the Appalachian and Hispanic communities of maintaining family integrity and stability by keeping family troubles within the home. This also implicitly challenged the control and authority of husbands over family matters.

The coordinator bridged value gaps between the Center's construction of women's circumstance and women's perceptions of the SGWC by offering educational programs that were congruent with women's traditional roles. As early as 1986, the Center offered short courses on: basic home repair, planning a garden, small appliance repair, cooking, and knitting and crocheting activities, in addition to the support

services and peer training workshops. Particularly controversial Center programs were selectively listed, depending upon the publication. For example, a lesbian support group which met weekly at the SGWC since the early years of the organization sometimes appeared in grants or neighborhood newspaper listings of organizational offerings. At other times it is not mentioned. In fact, members of the lesbian group noted that they occasionally felt "marginalized" by the Center because they were too radical for the organization.

While the Center made an effort to court women of the focal population by offering short courses that were within the spectrum of operant community values, the core of the organization's approach remained consonant with the organization's construct of women as victimized and in need of empowerment. The perspective of founding members, defined largely by their work with women in crises situations, continued to define the culture of the organization.

Organizational actors who presented perspectives or solutions outside of the "woman as victim" construct tended to be isolated or rejected. Board members from the community, as well as women of professional status who were outside of the social service orientation indicated that their ideas were not often well received in board meetings. For example, two women who were professionals of some standing in the city served on

the Center's board only briefly because they "did not feel their suggestions were politically correct," or they occasionally "disagreed with the particularly prominent members of the board." One former board member noted that while she was considered an extreme liberal in her circles, she felt like "a misfit," in part, because her affluence was unacceptable to board members. Neighborhood representatives who were members of the board also indicated the strong adherence of the board to the perspectives of founding members.

During the first two years of the SGWC's existence, more than one thousand women attended programs and classes. There were various support groups such as drug and alcohol abuse, incest and rape survivors, and parenting groups. The most popular programs were the peer leadership training programs and the GED courses. The peer leadership training courses were intended to increase women's self esteem and communication skills through a combination of what the director referred to as "plain old 1970's consciousness raising and Communication 101. The twelve week course included modules on: problem solving, assertiveness, active listening, responding, stereotypes and biases, leadership seminars, safer sex, and HIV prevention. Present day staffers have asserted that the GED courses and later, the English classes for Hispanic women, were the Center's most empowering

course offerings based on the way that they changed women's daily lives.

Inter-Organizational Struggles

During the initial years, there were tensions between the coordinator and other agency personnel due, in part, to ambiguous lines of authority in the organization's structure. For example, when staff from participating agencies conducted programs at the Center, it was unclear whether they were under the authority of the South Gale coordinator, or on equal footing and acting as representatives of their institution. This situation presented some stressful moments for staff, unsure of their obligations, and the coordinator, otherwise without a staff to direct.

An unhealthy dynamic also developed over the course of the first three years between the coordinator and the board. Unfortunately, board members represented the same agencies that would eventually compete with the Center for clients, funding, and program offerings, as it sought to individuate. Moreover, the board member's loyalties, in terms of time and resources, were directed primarily to the success of the particular agency they represented, rather than the Center. The relationship between the coordinator, Thelma Farmington, and board members progressively degenerated over the course of the first three years. Board members began to feel that Ms. Farmington could not be trusted to be forthright with them.

Nor did staff within the Center seem to have a trusting relationship with the coordinator. They were under strict orders not to peruse files or look at grants or funding sources, most probably due to the coordinator's fears that participating agencies would be alienated should funding sources be in competition, or perhaps, because the tenuous financial position of the organization would be exposed.

Staff members later learned that Ms. Farmington had engaged in a practice not uncommon to NSO's of writing two or three grants for the same purpose and then using the grants to support one program, akin to double billing insurance companies. Moreover, Ms. Farmington had written the salaries of staff into the grants, but the staff found that they were paid less than grants provided.

Tensions culminated at end of 1989, three years into the life of the SGWC when the start-up funds provided by Gund were reaching an end. Although the coordinator was successful in her professional role directing the alcohol and drug counseling programs at the Center, she had not experienced success in establishing a distinctive identity for the SGWC. Nor had she identified a stable source of future funds. A large fundraiser was planned but achieved only lukewarm success, largely because the coordinator and board members had limited skills or experience in fundraising.

Anne Calabrese, the present director, offered

retrospectively that the particular orientation of the board and coordinator was out of step with the values of some of the donors and the business community they were courting. The board and coordinator tended to ground their actions in emotion-laden appeals which may have been consonant with the values of the immediate circle of social service providers. But as they attempted to move beyond this immediate interorganizational group into the business and public sector communities, they failed to justify their actions in a "rational/legal construct." As the SGWC coordinator and board were unable to speak in a language consonant with the values of the actors they was soliciting for support, they failed to gain the necessary financial backing to continue.

By the end of the third year, the SGWC was tattered by the perennial funding crises and internal struggles between the coordinator and the board, and between the coordinator and her small staff. Fortuitously, the original funding organization suggested a program that offered hope. The Gund foundation offered the SGWC a \$43,000 grant to conduct a program for women who were sex workers in the vicinity, a sum that equalled fully a third of the Center's previous year's budget. Unfortunately, in the interim, an embattled and exhausted coordinator turned in her resignation. Neither the board nor the coordinator wanted to inform the Gund Foundation program officer of the coordinator's resignation, no trifling

event in the life of a small NSO. When the Gund program officer inadvertently learned of the coordinator's resignation, the foundation withdrew the project funding. An embroglio ensued between angry board members and a miffed foundation, ultimately drawing in a local city councilwoman and resulting in considerable damage to the reputation of the SGWC within the interorganizational network of related and referring organizations.

A New Director and New Beginnings:

The South Gale Women's Center sat in limbo for a summer, as the board licked their wounds and considered new directors. In the fall the board took an unusual turn and hired Anne Calabrese, one of the first community representatives that had served the SGWC board. Anne Calabrese differed significantly from her predecessor and from board members in that she was not a social service agency provider, but an administrator with a masters in public administration. Anne also had appeal as a candidate because she was regarded as a community organizer. She was the former director of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and had served on the board of the women's shelter. Anne was regarded as someone who could draw on community contacts, both organizational and political.

When Anne assumed the position of executive director of the South Gale Women's Center, the organization was suffering the effects of the public battle between the board and one of

the primary funders. The SGWC's reputation among referral organizations was a bit tarnished. Moreover, the former coordinator had been functioning as a lame duck for four months, so there was little outreach occurring between the organization and the community. Client involvement was at an ebb and no brochures or materials were available to describe the organization or its services.

The change in directorship provided an opportunity for the organization to take account and set a new course among donors and within the interorganizational network, separating itself from founding member organizations. As Rock (1988) noted in his study of new organizations, founders can sometimes limit the growth ability in the way they circumscribe the organization's goals and objectives. In this case, the Center had to extend beyond vision of agency founders in order to become an organization in its own right - or else die on the vine, because the initial seed money from Gund had been spent and there were no more resources. Heretofore, the SGWC's legitimacy as a social service actor was based on the reputation of established organizations which participated in the Center. As such, the legitimacy of the Center was essentially borrowed rather than based on a distinctive competence specific to the SGWC.

When Anne assumed the directorship, she suggested to the board that the title of her position be changed from

coordinator to executive director. The board had originally regarded the position as one of coordinator in the interest of maintaining little structure to the administration in the tradition of collaborative, grass roots organizations. Anne argued that she required the title in order to interact effectively with donor organizations as it proffered accountability. The change in title implicitly granted the position more authority. Anne also requested that her name be placed on the organization's stationery. Heretofore, only the board members' names were listed. Both changes suggest the strong ownership of the founding board members vis the organizational director. The changes also indicates a turning point in that Anne was separating the organization from the board, seeking definition of her role and exercising authority as organizational director.

The new director took as her first project the reconstruction of relationships with the interorganizational network of public and nonprofit social service agencies that provided referrals and were essential for the success and survival of the Center. Anne also reestablished ties with donors and the creation of a different relationship between the SGWC board and the director. Her tool for reworking these internal and external organizational logjams was a strategic plan funded by the original donor, the Gund foundation.

Strategic planning emanates from contingency theory in

that it is commonly regarded as a short term plan of action to address the pressing organizational problems and take advantage of the most significant opportunities. At a procedural level, strategic planning is considered a vehicle for training the rising corps of institutional leaders in an organization, and redirecting their focus from efficiency - to larger choice issues that guide an organization's direction and institutionalization. At its best, the result of a strategic planning process is a clearer sense of organizational identity, individual roles, and a sense of the policy process.

The process of instituting a strategic plan for the SGWC created an infrastructure, clarified role expectations and set out future goals for the organization's staff and board. The new director felt it also exorcised organizational ghosts she struggled with in terms of distrust of the director's position on part of board and staff. The strategic plan also included some teambuilding - which some staff and board members have credited with building stronger working relationships among them. At the interorganizational level, the strategic plan gave donors and county agencies a new confidence in the organization's integrity and the new director's capabilities.

ORGANIZATIONAL INDIVIDUATION

While the strategic plan smoothed external relationships, it was not a panacea. Internal struggles continued for the

first year between the new director and the board as Calabrese pushed for new directions and contended with the original board's conceptions of the organization. The old issues of location and client population re-emerged as Anne extended the organization to the growing Hispanic population in her community outreach.

A New Service Clientele

At the time that Calabrese took over as director, the Center was beginning to cultivate a clientele of Hispanics through the work of a bilingual drug and alcohol counselor, Pilar Santiago. Pilar had been hired under the former director, Ms. Farnsleigh. She was a well known and respected member of the south side community because of her former position with the Spanish American Neighborhood Services Committee.

Pilar, who had originally been involved in the peer training programs, began working with the SGWC's state-funded drug and alcohol program in 1990. Her work in Center programs had fostered an increasing enrollment of Hispanic as well as Anglo clients. However, Hispanic women's participation and sense of belonging to the Center seemed contingent on the presence of Hispanic staff, Pilar, in particular.

Upon Anne's arrival, Pilar expressed a desire to extend the SGWC to Hispanic women who were not English speaking by directing a peer leadership training course in Spanish.

Calabrese agreed and in 1989, Pilar conducted the first peer training workshop exclusively in Spanish. As she pointed to the participants in a photograph taken at the end of the peer training program, she notes that fully a third were friends and relatives. But the Spanish speaking peer leadership training program has continued to grow from Pilar's immediate group of friends and relatives. Today, the course enrolls an average of twenty-five women every four months.

Pilar's community roots and skills in facilitating groups aided in the development of the Hispanic clientele. But it was Anne's efforts as director that created an environment where Hispanic women felt a sense of ownership and belonging to the organization. Hispanic women had tended to visit the Center only when they were certain Hispanic staff were available. Moreover, it became obvious to Anne Calabrese that some members of the staff had problems with Hispanic clients. They complained that the Hispanic women refused to speak English even when they could, and they were difficult to understand.

Anne addressed the differences between the staff and the Hispanic clients in a variety of ways. The director held a series of workshops for staff and volunteers which addressed stereotypes and biases between Hispanics and Anglo's. She instituted a session of basic Spanish classes for the staff and attended them, herself. She also indicated that she began

modeling the behavior she wanted from staff members. When Hispanic women entered the Center, she personally came forward to greet them. She made an effort to learn their names and speak with them upon future visits.

In addition to the efforts Calabrese made to sensitize staff and volunteers to the Hispanic clientele, the Center became more inclusive by providing the basic services in both Spanish and English. The monthly newsletter was published in both languages, alternating pages; and messages on the SGWC's answering machine were recorded in both languages. These two mediums alone, represented most people's initial contact with the SGWC. In addition, the Center instituted English classes for Spanish speakers; the annual chili dinner was reconceived as the Chili/Spanish Rice dinner; and the annual fundraiser, "Run, Jane, Run," a long distance marathon, now includes a team of Hispanic girls.

The efforts of the SGWC to cultivate Hispanic clientele ultimately resulted in a different character and culture for the SGWC. It grounded the organization in the service community which surrounds it and gave them ownership over organizational processes and programs in significant respects. The present staff is less concerned about the location or personal safety although they would like to make some changes in the use of space. Most importantly, the development of Hispanic clientele has contributed to the organization's

distinctive identity in that it is now recognized city wide as the only community organization in the larger urban region that has linkages with the Hispanic community.

A New Service:

The director further developed the organizational identity when she began writing grant proposals to the state and to the Local Community AIDS Partnership (a collaborative group of local funders) to conduct AIDS education for Hispanic women. AIDS was becoming a problem within the Hispanic community, in particular, given the tendency of their HIV positive young people to return to their families during the latter stages of illness. Hence, women were having to care for sick children and relatives, in addition to confronting their personal risk. The director saw AIDS education as a natural extension of the Center's present services, given the relationship between HIV and substance abuse, (the SGWC's drug and alcohol programs) and HIV and powerlessness among women, which the Center's peer leadership training program addressed.

When the SGWC received state funding for AIDS education among Hispanic women, the Center was able to fund a full-time bilingual education coordinator, provide referral services for women who were HIV positive, and begin conducting support groups for women who were HIV positive in both Spanish and English. The Center incorporated an AIDS prevention component in the peer leadership training workshops, and a mini-session

for community organizations.

The SGWC used the funding to present workshops on HIV transmission and prevention to a number of community groups and churches - from the Pentacostal Holiness storefront down the block to the Hispanic Business Worker's Association. They encouraged women attending the AIDS mini-session to enroll in the peer leadership training program at the SGWC which was designed to foster behavior changes necessary for women to practice HIV prevention. The peer leadership program was intended to build women's communication skills and self esteem, to make them believe they were worth protecting. Much like the HIV prevention program, Sisterlove, in Atlanta, the SGWC recognized that changing risk behaviors among women was an issue of gaining power and control over their person. HIV prevention among women is only secondarily an issue of sexual transmission.

The SGWC's prevention was successful in outreach due to the extensive community ties developed through Anne, Pilar and program participants. There were a variety of community and organizational forums available to the SGWC. However, the modules of the peer leadership training that were directed to HIV transmission and safe sex are an example of how stakeholders can place conflicting expectations on the organization.

For example, the state-funded HIV prevention program

required that the SGWC administer a pre-program survey of sexual history intended to test women's understanding of risk and assess their risk behaviors. The survey included questions regarding participation in anal sex; oral sex; number of sexual partners in the past year; whether the individual had engaged in sex for money or drugs; had sexual contact with a member of the same sex; had sex with someone who was ever in jail; whether the individual had engaged IV drug use, or cocaine use, and with what frequency.

The state designed survey was a classic example of how the fulfillment of donor imposed objectives may thwart the organization's efforts with clients. The survey had to be first translated for non-English participants and the staff was divided over appropriate wording because clients were often unfamiliar with medically appropriate terms in their native language. Moreover, the questions included in the survey were offensive to ask or answer, making it difficult to conduct. Some participants could read the survey and fill it out; others who did not read had to complete it with the help of a peer group leader.

The administering of the survey presented a difficulty in that it required that women reveal highly personal information to a person who was more than likely an acquaintance, if not a friend or relative. The Center had fostered a strong sense of confidentiality which was essential to women's

participation in support group and training activities. But the data requested in the survey violated the individual's sense of dignity in a neighborhood community center where no one was anonymous and the information could be incriminating.

As a result, the staff administered the survey in compliance with state requirements but prefaced it with a disclaimer. They apologized for having to complete it, promised the participant anonymity, and plowed through it with little explanation. Participants were said to become quiet and quickly skip through the difficult portions of the survey answering everything categorically no. They seldom read it carefully, regardless of the assertions of confidentiality. They were clearly embarrassed by the questions and the staff felt that it created unnecessary distance between peer counselors and program attendees.

As it was, the staff made every effort to minimize the intrusion the survey presented to their efforts to establish an esteem-building program. It did, however, provide the state with the necessary data to validate continued funding of the HIV prevention program for Hispanic women by providing information on the number of women attending the program and some indication of their knowledge of risk and behavior change through the pre- and post-test. Information provided by clients to the state regarding risk behaviors is probably highly inaccurate, as is most survey data regarding socially

sensitive issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEGITIMACY OF THE SOUTH GALE WOMEN'S CENTER

The South Gale Women's Center has survived the early years when its existence was fragile and tenuous. Now in its sixth year, the SGWC has an established identity, clientele, and can be celebrated as a survivor. When the Center first delved into AIDS prevention and extended itself to the local Hispanic women, the SGWC developed a distinctive competence; a legitimacy derived from offering services that were highly valued by donors and clients, alike. The SGWC's legitimacy derives, in no small part, from being the only community based organization in the larger urban area that has successful ties with the Hispanic community.

It was these two efforts: HIV prevention and cultivating the local clientele of Hispanics, that gave the original board pause. They expressed misgivings that HIV prevention was beyond the central mission of the organization and fears that the organization was becoming "too Hispanic" in orientation. Board minutes reflect yet another ad hoc "moving task force" to discuss the possibility of moving the Center to a "safer" neighborhood in the suburbs. These efforts represented more than anything, a tension between remaining founders on the board and the director and staff's efforts to turn the organization over to the new neighborhood population and their issues.

Over the course of the past few years the original board members have all left, due to either fatigue, relief to see the SGWC now "on its feet" or discomfort with the changes occurring. As board members resigned, they were replaced by people who were able to make the Center a priority over other NGO's. New board members were also picked on the basis of much needed organizational skills. At the present time, every member has served for less than two years - which reflects the new start the organization has taken. The board now consists of a public relations person, one grant writer, one lawyer, two CPAs, and two community representatives. The board continues to be a working board in that members assume responsibilities for various components of the organization's happenings.

The organization continues to maintain a profile in local publications which list SGWC course offerings and activities. Moreover, staff and volunteers represent the organization at community events. The SGWC has proliferated contacts within a larger interorganizational network that extends beyond the urban region. Over time, the organization has become linked to national data banks and newsletters, increasing the ability of the organization to act as a resource for women coming into the area, particularly with respect to drug, alcohol, and HIV supportive services, as well as referrals for other available social services.

The director and board have more changes planned for the coming year - the SGWC will be dropping the South Gale component of its name. The director and board believe it imposes geographic boundaries, not only in terms of funding, but it also presents an idea of who has access to the Center's services.

Funding remains a challenge but the director has been highly innovative in diversifying sources. The state continues to function as a major donor for drug and alcohol programs and HIV prevention. There are also three local foundations that are presently providing funding. The annual fundraiser, "Run, Jane, Run" raised \$15,000 and although it is a rather labor-intensive project, it fulfills a multitude of purposes. It promotes women's health and fitness and legitimizes women's accomplishments in sports. "Run, Jane, Run" serves as a media event and a vehicle for giving the SGWC a high profile in the business community. Finally, it provides an opportunity for the SGWC director to engage in dialogue with for-profit businesses and make them aware of what the Center provides to the community, increasing opportunities for future linkages and funding opportunities.

The SGWC has a record of innovation in terms of interorganizational networking. SGWC referrals and networking not only draw clients and improve overall client services, but they have sustained the SGWC through selling organizational

expertise to other organizations. For example, Bellflower House for troubled children has written the SGWC into their grant to provide peer leadership training to teen mothers. The battered women's shelter has included the SGWC to train volunteers and staff, augmenting the organizations drug and alcohol screening of clients. Project Second Chance for sex workers pays SGWC for HIV prevention workshops and counseling.

Metro General, the largest hospital in the area has also paid the SGWC to conduct peer leadership training for its community volunteers in the maternity-infant health program. The hospital group was in dire need of learning how to work together as a team. SGWC stressed communication skills, particularly around biases and stereotypes, because the community volunteers were a highly diverse group ethnically and SGWC found that "everybody was bringing community-based survival stuff into jobs"² (Calabrese, 1993). The peer training was a strategy for finding some common ground - and giving community volunteers better skills for interacting with their service community.

In addition to offering services to other organizations and businesses as a means of augmenting income, the SGWC

²Calabrese's mention of "community-based survival stuff" is a reference to the very territorial and fractionated nature of ethnic relationships in the city and surrounding areas, particularly between lower-income white ethnics and Hispanics and African-Americans.

became a member of Community Shares in 1990, a no-frills fundraising coalition of twenty-three social action oriented NSO's which address issues such as civil rights, neighborhood groups and the environment. Community Shares provides member organizations with between \$10,000 - \$20,000 annually. Although there are requirements for organizational membership (an organization must be in existence for more than two years and Community Shares funding must not exceed 40% of the organization's total budget) the organization does not base funding on outcome measures. Finally, the SGWC director is cultivating a locally based donor list which she maintains through SGWC newsletters.

The diversification of funding sources has enabled the SGWC to circumvent the conventional pitfall of NGO's -- falling under donor hegemony. The SGWC has diminished the amount of donor control over organizational processes and been able to follow a path set by the staff and volunteers with fewer strings attached. Furthermore, the common pattern of NSO's driven to construct organizational hierarchies in order to maintain accountability to donor organizations (Milofsky, 1981) has been somewhat mitigated, enabling the organization to maintain a representative character.

Although, the strategic plan and Anne's efforts to change the title of executive director are indications that role clarification and structure served both internal as well as

external objectives. Clearly the development of a formal plan and lines of accountability led to stronger relationships with donor agencies and certainly made the organization look more appealing to state agencies which later funded their grants.

Anne noted that organizational objectives have shifted with donor imposed structure in some instances. The state pre- and post-test survey for the HIV prevention program is an immediately identifiable example. Another example concerns the SGWC drug and alcohol counseling programs, which are state-funded have been running at an ebb for the past few months. Counselors have been busy producing a policies and procedures manual to verify their compliance with the State Drug and Alcohol Board regulations (150 pages at last count). The generation of agreed upon rules and regulations has taken so much time that it has virtually precluded client meetings.

Legitimation Strategies at the Interorganizational Level:

The wide ranging organizational linkages that represent an organizational safety net for the SGWC are the result of a tremendous amount of work on the part of the director and staff. They are the result of strategic efforts on the part of the organization and would be categorized as a combination of acquiescence, concealment, compromise, and manipulation. For example, when the director solicits support for the annual fundraiser from the private sector, the organizational image conveyed is polished and professional -- "We're great, we're

happening, and here's what you would gain by being involved in our downtown event." In contrast, when the director and staff speak with public and community organizations who refer women to the SGWC, they "speak in the name of" all south side women, using anecdotes that enlarge the perception relevant others hold of the client base. This is what Scheid-Cook (1989) referred to this as a "mediatory myth" in that organizational actors perpetuate an image of the organization that holds appeal either internally, or externally, and obfuscates significant changes that have occurred. In this case, the director works to maintain an image of the SGWC as serving a "diverse" clientele, as opposed to touting the SGWC as a predominantly Hispanic organization.

The director of the SGWC projects a far more tempered message of organizational objectives to some of the original founding agencies and donors than is internally projected. For example, the director once talked about the use of politically correct language of "women as victimized" and its appeal to particular donor agencies. The director objected,

. . .I am utterly exhausted with the word "empower" in grant proposals. But if I were to use language of helping women grab onto or latch onto power, it would be too strong. Women don't grab or latch on to power because that infers that they've gotten control -- which is socially unacceptable. So, instead, we use a safer language which infers that **the organization** is in control and we talk about women as helpless and in need of "empowerment."

But the director and staff insist that as they use this

language to gain dollars, they dance near a slippery slope. While the story of the innocent victim holds great psychological appeal with donors, staff note that the construct of "women as victimized" is a disabling approach to clients and works against their objective of helping women reconstruct themselves as having power.

Another mediatory myth that I found intriguing was the often repeated statement in brochures and speeches that would commence with the mission statement.

"The purpose of the SGWC is to nurture women's growth and self-determination and provide a safe and empowering environment which involves a diverse community of women. We believe each woman is the best judge of her needs . . ."

Undeniably, the organization has a laudable purpose and goes a long way toward achieving it, but the last phrase belies the fact that the organization has an agenda for clients. The language of self determination and individual choice casts the organization's agenda in terms of a larger cultural ideology of individualism, inferring consonance between organizational values and the existing order. But the organization has identified the problem and the solution for clients, which is operationalized in their program offerings -- they lack control over their lives and they need support and consciousness raising to be whole and happy.

The director and staff thus, continue tempering the organization's messages to donors and agencies, sometimes

consciously, at other times unaware, in an effort to project and maintain perceptions that the organization's values are consonant with the environment.

The Client Community:

One of the central issues in establishing a relationship with the client community was finding the connecting points between organizational objectives and community values. The organization sought this initially in their short course offerings which they described as consistent with their traditional roles. But the core of the Center's services were a challenge to established values. As a result, there were men who expressed opposition when their wives attended Center programs. Moreover, many of the women attending the Center have been acculturated to place their families, and often, husbands, at the center of their lives. The Center had to find a means of accommodating clients' perspective (however the director and staff assert that women must learn to put themselves front and center, for the good of their families.) Therefore the director and staff made efforts to construct a less threatening image of the Center - building on the idea of the SGWC as a family resource in order to minimize resistance to women's involvement.

The director and staff established a "family oriented" graduation ceremony for women who complete the peer training workshops. Women invite their families to attend and the

staff makes every effort for families to feel welcome and learn about the Center when they are there. The staff also discussed the women's graduation as a family-wide achievement. In addition, the annual chili/spanish rice dinner is a well attended family event with a talent show and a pinata for children.

The client community of the SGWC is now as diverse in practice as the founders construed it to be in theory. The lesbian contingency continues to hold meetings which are advertized at the feminist bookstore downtown. Women of the Hispanic community are now a majority of the active members of the organization, although particular programs may be predominantly Anglo or Hispanic. Anglo women who seek SGWC services are more inclined to be referred to the SGWC than Hispanic clients, who often hear of the Center from a friend. The extent to which the populations overlap in Center programs depends on the program offering, which in turn, defines common ground.

Staff and volunteers are representative of the various factions and they work together smoothly with little regard for hierarchy. They lunch together, either at one of the Puerto Rican restaurants on the corner, or order out and violate the non-smoking signs in unison while they talk about their personal lives. Much as one would expect, the boundaries of personal and professional are blurred, as are

organizational boundaries of client and employee. I recognized this recently while listening to the staff and a few volunteers plan to help a volunteer and her children move from an abusive situation.

Hispanic women on the south side are part of a strong community and this has resulted in a stronger manifestation of their community within. They are a more cohesive and interdependent group than the Anglo clientele, perhaps because of their "otherness" and a greater need to rely on each other. As a result, Hispanic staff and volunteers have embraced opportunities for community outreach and have been more dedicated to community activity than Anglo women. The Director offered that Anglo women who come to the Center have lacked the support networks and resources that Hispanic women have enjoyed. However, the strong community ties have been a limitation in that Hispanic women have been more reticent to come to HIV support groups or reveal "stigmatizing" information because of the lack of anonymity within this community. As a result, they have not always sought out services they have needed.

The Hispanic women's degree of involvement and sense of belonging to the SGWC has been reinforcing; as they have contributed to the organization, they have shaped the SGWC and increased its client base. As the SGWC became an organizational property of clients, the organization's

distinctive identity blossomed and the organization survived.

Pettigrew noted that organizational culture infuses people with a sense of purpose, energy and commitment to the organization (1979). But in order to infuse people with purpose, or commitment to organizational goals, the language, ideology, rituals, and all other sundry trappings of organizational culture must reflect the social construct of the group. This is particularly pertinent to NSO's where the boundaries between the organization and the environment are so blurred: clients are often the employees - first volunteers, and then later staff members. An organization dependent on clients to "feel a need" for their services, and a labor force which contributes because they feel commitment to the goals must be grounded in the culture of the client base to motivate people.

Unfortunately, the literature indicates that NSO's have most often had to emulate the organizational norms of the institutional environment in order to maintain support and funding (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Meyer and Scott 1983). But we must then ask, "Who is the organization?" Community-based organizations fail to be such if organizational objectives and goals are not the property of the clients, as well. In the case of the SGWC, the organization worked with community members and fostered their efforts to infuse the organization with the client community's values, while also maintaining

some of the founder's orientation.

Distinctive Identity: An Hispanic Women's Organization or an AIDS Organization?

The SGWC continues with several of the original programs as initiated, most particularly the alcohol and drug abuse counseling and support groups, the lesbian support group, the incest survivors and rape counseling groups, the GED courses, the Spanish-English classes, and the AIDS support groups for women who are living with HIV. But the peer leadership training workshops offered in Spanish and English remain the centerpiece.

That the SGWC is recognized city-wide as the only community-based organization with ties into the Hispanic population is no small feat. But the SGWC still suffers a lack of recognition for its work around women and HIV. It has been repeatedly left "out of the loop" with respect to city-wide fundraisers for HIV prevention and it received no mention in a recent city manual developed by the Federation for Community Planning that listed AIDS service organizations in the urban area.

Anne notes that she has put a tremendous amount of energy into communicating and networking with other city AIDS service programs for client referrals and to augment the services they can make available to women who are HIV positive. The SGWC

does not do case management³ of HIV positive women, so they rely on other organizations and work to maintain a good understanding of what services are available to SGWC clients.

On a positive note, the director recognizes that no one organization is providing all that women need, so the NSO's need to work together for the wellbeing of clients. However, the reality of NSO survival is that competition for funding is at the core. The one organization in the city directed solely to HIV prevention and support services continues to hold the corner and has given little space to other NSO's to date.

The Walter Bruce Free Clinic (WBFC) was the first AIDS service organization in the area, founded ten years ago by gay men as the virus was devastating their population. As the demographics of HIV infection have shifted, the composition of the Walter Bruce Free Clinic's clientele has become more Black, Hispanic, heterosexual, poor and female, than before. And, in recent years, the WBFC has been reconstructing itself as an organization directed to all populations affected by the virus. In fact, at a recent public forum, the director and staff repeatedly emphasized that the Walter Bruce Free Clinic has, from the beginning, served all of the city's population. It does not however, publicize or acknowledge that in its

³ Case management extends beyond referring clients to available services in the community to the actual provision of a variety of services by licensed social workers.

original by-laws and mission statement, it was constructed as "to serve the gay and lesbian community."

The present director, a gay male, and his predominantly gay and lesbian staff of various ethnic affiliations, espouse the sensitivity of the organization to all client needs. But the cold reality is that gay founded NSO's been not been able to diversify services or organizational character commensurate with the changing needs of the HIV infected population. Minority women who pass through the doors of WBFC do not seem to feel well served, in part, because they are treated by a harried, overworked staff who are usually "others" to them.

The SGWC has been asked and was able to provide support to the WBFC when AIDS fundraisers were held, but it finds the WBFC does not respond in kind. The Walter Bruce Free Clinic does not refer clients to the SGWC, nor does it recognize the SGWC as a support source for women who are HIV positive, even WBFC clients who are Hispanic. When interviewed, the director of the WBFC noted that his organization worked closely with several organizations to augment WBFC services for women, but then faltered as he was unable to think of one.

City health agencies and other social service organizations have long accepted the legitimacy of WBFC as an AIDS service organization. That the WBFC's clientele now requires services beyond the organization's capacity is not common knowledge at the interorganizational level. The new

clients have fewer resources to bring to the organization, and fewer avenues of complaint. At a recent WBFC board meeting, the one African American woman who was a member resigned in protest over the organization's treatment of African American women. Until the WBFC publicly falters, the SGWC will probably remain on the periphery of the city's consciousness as an AIDS service organization, because AIDS is still regarded as a disease of gays and IVDU's and is less recognized as an affliction of women. In the meanwhile, the SGWC will continue to educate Hispanic women about the virus and provide the support that is invaluable to HIV prevention in practice.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study was begun to explore how nonprofit organizations confront the problem of organizational legitimacy. Nonprofits, long celebrated for their unique strengths, have proliferated at a such a tremendous rate that they now comprise the backbone to social service delivery for the United States government (Salamon, 1987). They are a preferred organizational form for international development efforts, as well (Drabek, 1987; Yudelman, 1987). The unique attributes of nonprofits include their innovative abilities or change orientation (Drucker, 1991). NGO's are known for presenting solutions at odds with established norms and for challenging established values and ideologies. NSO's routinely gain their impetus from crisis situations to which neither the private or public sector has effectively responded (Garilao, 1987).

In spite of the ever increasing role NSO's assume in the process of governance, there has been little attention to their organizational processes. The question of organizational legitimacy among community-based organizations is intriguing because political and economic power are seldom attributes of the organization or the community which founded it. Moreover, the organization must justify that it is a

valid institutional form to those segments of the environment which provide economic resources and clients: donors and related actors in the interorganizational network. As noted throughout this work, NSO's confront the arduous and perplexing task of pursuing left-of-center objectives as they rely on the more powerful, conservative, and legitimated elements of the environment. The intent of this study, then, was to examine how NSO's resolve the conflicting demands of stakeholders. Survival requires that they maintain strong relationships within the interorganizational networks of donors while grounding themselves in the world of client stakeholders. This balance of acting within what are divergent value structures imposes conflicting demands on the organization and may require that it develop legitimacy multidimensionally.

In this dissertation, Selznick's definition of legitimacy was applied, a distinctive competence recognized by relevant organizational actors, or stakeholders. Distinctive competence is what Selznick referred to as "those specific capabilities and proficiencies that are morally acceptable" (1949:14). The question of legitimacy, widely recognized as integral to the survival and success of any organization, has been largely unexplored in the literature to date because of the difficulty of conforming it to the rigors of empirical research. Although there is no overriding theory of

legitimacy, there are identifiable attributes to the concept.

First, it was apparent that legitimacy is inherently conservative. That is, organizations must justify their actions and existence in the context of the existing order. Even organizations which seek social change, or operate on the periphery of social propriety by virtue of their clientele or mission, must justify their actions and existence within the bounds of established norms, as that is the common fabric upon which a new organization depends for survival.

The asymmetrical nature of legitimacy was identified in the literature and affirmed in both case studies. Berger and Luckman (1967) noted, those with power hold greater sway over interpretations and constructions of reality. The quandary this presents for legitimacy concerns the imperative for NSO's to hold authority in the context of clients and the focal population, which is based on acting within a shared value system. Organizations which are inclined to emulate the structure and norms of donors in order to survive may find their character has been defined by an interorganizational network that holds a different construct of the issues than does the client population. Accordingly, the organization may then lack the ability to achieve legitimacy with these less powerful but equally important stakeholders.

Third, the process of establishing legitimacy for a new organization is one of establishing relationships with key

stakeholders rather than dominance. Most literature that has addressed the organizational environment is constructed in terms of either seeking control over the task environment (Thompson, 1967) or acquiescence to power (Dowling and Pfeffer, 1975). The assumption of control, either in terms of the environment over the organization, or organization over key aspects of the environment, is woven into the dialogue and may have precluded a recognition that there are instances in which an organization requires authority to achieve its goals; that is, power exercised on the basis of a shared reasoning. Legitimacy is generated from shared values, first and foremost, and may be more accurately characterized as an organizational attribute that is earned, not through dominion, but through interaction.

The role of values as the guiding force of legitimacy:

From a review of the literature and the two case studies, the primacy of values in determining legitimacy was evident. The purpose of the organization must be recognized as having merit because effectiveness in achieving organizational goals is irrelevant if the existing order does not value the objectives. COSA, the peer outreach program for sex workers, struggled with this very issue. The prevention of HIV was an organizational goal beyond the purview of what the govt or social order would support. So, COSA's effectiveness was inconsequential.

Certainly, addressing the problem of HIV by directing attention to sex workers did not challenge the larger social order because it focused responsibility for a deadly sexual epidemic on a group of women who are socially constructed as evil, and inappropriately sexual. Nor did women who participated in COSA challenge the basic structure of gender relations. Sex workers did not seek powerful roles in the organization, but instead preferred low visibility, volunteer or peer outreach positions. Moreover, they embraced the opportunity to change the course of the epidemic by playing a public health role. But COSA did challenge the order in the sense that there were very limited resources available to the government and public health was not a priority, least of all a sexually transmitted disease that ravaged gays and prostitutes.

One of the problems of incorporating women in development over the course of the past decade has been that "projects which benefit women also increase women's access to resources, such as education and training, credit and land" (Yudelman, 1987:179). As Yudelman notes, they ultimately pose competition to men who are vying for these same resources (1987:179). Thus, COSA was a challenge to the government and to gay men, in that it directed resources to women.

Most of all, COSA challenged the social order of the sex industry. The focal population of sex workers is not easily

transformed into a community - these young women are highly transitory, young, isolated and uneducated. Men in the industry seek to limit the resources and support available to them in order to maintain control. COSA challenged the norms of the sex industry and was successful to the extent that the power of the state was used to enforce the values it espoused.

COSA did achieve legitimacy in a meaningful sense with sex workers, the least powerful stakeholders in the organizational environment. The program established value congruence with sex workers but they were not powerful enough to sustain the organization when donors lost interest. COSA ran against the current of the social mores, the mores of the sex industry, and the indigenous government. As a result, it was unable to establish a sustainable niche necessary to become an independent organization. COSA survived as long as international donors, the most powerful actors in the environment, chose to pursue the goals of HIV prevention.

In contrast, the SGWC began as a part of a small but established interorganizational network. As it matured and individuated, the organization branched beyond the conceptions of the original founders, although the core of providing a supportive environment for women so that they can become self-determined individuals remains in effect. The organization earned the respect and support of donors as it conformed to their construct of an organization as a rational instrument

with structure -- through the process of a strategic plan. Notwithstanding, these were the same donors that already supported the organization's objectives but lost faith as the organization faltered.

The SGWC, an organization educating Hispanic women in a U.S. city about HIV was able to establish its distinctive competence with the focal population of the south side by working within their value structure. The SGWC became more family oriented, and more inclusive of Hispanic clientele through bilingual programs and bicultural celebrations. So, SGWC has become a community resource and its goals a community property. Organizations within the interorganizational network now recognize the organization's abilities in supporting women, particularly the growing Hispanic population. But recognition for the organization's expertise in HIV prevention and support for HIV positive women is shadowed by another organization which maintains this turf to date.

The legitimacy of SGWC was due, in part, to the fact that the organization's goals became a property of the community as stakeholders. In comparison, COSA's goals were immutable. They did not become the property of the environmental stakeholders. Thus, adaptive changes occurred, not in pursuit of its original objectives, but in terms of the organization's structure and location in the interorganizational environment.

COSA was dependent upon financial resources external to the environment and so evolved in relation to the organizational norms and processes set by international donor agencies.

Effectiveness as an attribute of organizational legitimacy:

Cameron defined effectiveness as "the extent to which all of an organization's strategic constituencies are at least minimally satisfied" (1980:68) and here commences the difficulty because, "goals are formed and displaced over the course of interaction with the environment because the ultimate criteria for effectiveness is survival" (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967).

The effectiveness for NGO's, as for all social service organizations, is difficult to assert for a variety of reasons. First, goals evolve through interaction with stakeholders and they are strategically crafted and presented, as was seen in both case studies. Moreover, as Wilson noted, social service organizations are difficult to evaluate because of the complexity of defining as well as measuring inputs and outputs. In the case of HIV prevention, it is virtually impossible to verify program effectiveness. Therefore, organizations in the case studies relied on indirect measures, such as attitude surveys and perceptions of risk among clients.

Staff of COSA and SGWC have asserted that their effectiveness centers on client empowerment. Ongoing

education and support for behavior change are the keys to HIV prevention among women. The values of trust, confidentiality, safety, and support prevail in organization-client interactions. But the issue of empowerment is resistant to measurement. Moreover, it is not the variable major donors identify as integral to HIV prevention. So, COSA surveyed knowledge, attitudes and practices of sex workers to assess differences after two years of peer outreach work. The SGWC administered the pre- and post-test survey of risk practices and perceptions to verify that the program had an impact on women's attitudes. Both surveys indicated that the programs influenced women's perceptions and self-reported behaviors.

Yet neither survey assessed the most critical variables identified by programs in this study: women's control over their sexual behavior and their self esteem. This points to the fact that measures of effectiveness for NGO's are value laden and that assertions of effectiveness reflect the dimensions of legitimacy. For example, when the organizational director is speaking to donor organizations, public and private, the language will reflect rational/legal assertions of efficiency and effectiveness, and most probably, an active client base. In client community gatherings, the language is more attuned to the values of safety, compassion, and emotional support.

In fact, just as effectiveness is socially constructed

for NGO's, so ineffectiveness is, as well. For example, a resident director in the Dominican Republic said,

While we accept a certain level of bureaucratic muddling, overlap and fragmentation of power in the interest of democratic government in the U.S. - which leads to inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and a hell of a paper trail down here, we do not accept a thirty percent skim, paternalism or cacique.

The question of multidimensional legitimacy:

Both of the organizations struggled with the need to garner support from divergent stakeholders, as evidenced by the extensive buffering efforts necessary to sustain the organizations. In the study of COSA, the organization was sustained and protected the resident directors of international donor agencies. But they coopted the Sisters Adoratrices in an effort to minimize opposition to COSA's organizational goals and objectives. Resident directors alternately engaged in acquiescence and compromise with the government as they withstood the graft, corruption, and irregularities under the Ministry of Health, knowing the government's endorsement was necessary to continue. Ultimately, the resident directors engaged in the most extreme buffering strategy of escape when they severed their relationship with the donor-government constructed PROSAM. The strategy of escape to protect COSA's organizational goals and objectives from further government cooptation was an indication of the power of donor agencies vis the government,

and indirectly, the impotence of COSA.

COSA was buffered constantly by donor organizations because it was impossible to reconcile its existence with the existing order, the government, or social mores. The differences were never reconciled. The government as a stakeholder attempted to coopt, and compromise organizational goals but donors were able to resist their efforts. The participation of brothel owners and men in the sex industry, necessary for program goals, was secured only through the power of the state.

In short, COSA's goals did not become a property of any stakeholders in the indigenous environment. The program was tailored to the realities of the women's experiences, and it was immeasurably successful in engaging their commitment. But sex workers had no leverage in terms of political clout, economic or social power outside of the program that they could bring to the program to eventually sustain it. In addition, sex workers were brought into the **process** of achieving already established goals, not setting the goals, themselves. Therefore the organization did not individuate or develop the ability to stand on its own.

The SGWC, which did individuate, has been quite strategic in projecting different facets of the organization to different stakeholders. The most common strategy of acquiescence has been employed in the interorganizational

network of donors in that the staff and directors couch their appeals in the "rhetorical attire best calculated to earn approval" (Rock, 1988:380). For example, Calabrese has adhered to the language of "empowerment" and the construction of women as victims for donor agencies when necessary, soft pedaling her more radical perspectives and those of the staff. When soliciting support from private sector organizations for the annual fundraiser, Run, Jane, Run, she talked the hard hitting language of "We're hot, we're winning, and you'd love to be a part of this winning team;" when speaking to the South Side community organizations, she spoke of the SGWC's achievements in a language consonant with the traditional values of family and community; the feminist edge a prudently woven subtext. Finally, when speaking to the board and south side social service organizations that refer women, she carefully guards the image of the organization as diverse in clientele.

Thus, both organizations balanced the conflicting demands of key stakeholders by establishing their key commitment to clients and then buffering that relationship when necessary in interaction with other stakeholders. Legitimacy was multi-dimensional to the extent that the values the organizations project at varying levels of interaction differ. As previously noted, the values of support, safety and acceptance were central to the client-organization relationship. At the interorganizational level, most dialogue was formalized and

directed to objectives, and managing perceptions of the organization as a rational instrument directed to carrying out goals agreed upon by the organization and other actors.

However, it appears that a core organizational character is consistent at all levels and while it may be somewhat vague at the inception, it is distinguishable before any semblance of a Weberian structure is nailed down to achieve organizational ends. Founders set the course and the organization begins its quest for survival and legitimacy by confirming its contribution with relevant actors. The original character then appears to circumscribe the extent to which the organization can change course over time. (Note, for example, the SGWC's recognition as a woman empowering organization as opposed to an HIV prevention organization.)

The unique nature of how NSO's are founded contributes to their strong value orientation from the beginning: these organizations tend to form from small, homogenous groups that share a dedication to some particular cause. As NSO's travel a path from the neighborhood community organization with little structure, to a professionalized organization that functions as a rational tool with hierarchy and task differentiation, the organization conserves an element of the original character. That NSO's are initially formed with a purpose that is value laden; the need for high visibility; and the informal networks that exist among community members

dedicated to working on NSO's, results in an organizational character early on. All efforts to establish legitimacy branch from this core into the various interorganizational environments. Thus, legitimacy may be more accurately described as existing along a spectrum of the organization's identity, rather than along dimensions.

The organization's identity which is first cast by the founders and then individuates through maturation has been aided in the case of the SGWC by the diversity of funding sources it now draws upon. The organization has been able to circumvent the more familiar pattern of a few strong vertical ties which shape the organization's structure and then confine individuation. On the other hand, COSA was unable to establish other sources of financial support because of the strong vertical ties with international donors.

Implications for future research

The literature has construed organizations as rational tools which then become imbued with values, institutionalized over time (Selznick). But nonprofit organizations which are founded by a community of people committed to a given issue may travel the other direction. They appear to become imbued with value and then work toward some rational structure over time. But it appears that NSO's more commonly begin with a strong value orientation and then develop the Weberian structure as they mature under the influence of donor

organizations (Shaw, 1989; Antrobus, 1989; Kobia, 1985).

COSA began not as a community movement, but as a rational tool foisted onto the sex industry and sex workers by international donor organizations. It was purposefully grounded in the social reality of sex workers under the direction of the resident directors and staff, and thus, infused with value, but the overriding organizational objectives were donor agency boilerplate.

In contrast, the SGWC began more typically of grass roots organizations, in that it was founded by professionals who were strongly committed to certain goals and perspectives, but with little formal structure. SGWC has gained greater depth as it has adapted the community in which it is located and branched to new objectives, such as HIV prevention. But the organization as a rational tool has evolved from pursuit of the values, rather than the values from the sterile organization.

The linkages between both COSA and the SGWC and their client communities reflect Habermas' construct of legitimacy as a jointly constructed social reality. It was necessary for the organizations to become "imbued with the values" of the clients to be effective in their goals. Dalton (1989) once stated that the public health care system in the United States was unsuccessful in confronting HIV with gays until they began working from the gay community's construct of the problem;

with considerable attention to discrimination, protection for civil rights, and the need for anonymity in testing and reporting. So NSO's must recognize and maintain contact with the values of their respective client groups to be effective.

Finally, the literature in organization theory has presented the organization and environment as distinct, which the experience of NSO's brings to question. The experience of NSO's that are successful with clients indicates that boundaries between the organization and the environment become blurred as environmental actors also assume roles within the organization. Clients act as the volunteer labor force, staff are often former clients, and board members include a client or two. As such, the organization lose the ability to distinguish itself so neatly from the client community as stakeholders.

This is a critical point with respect to organizational culture. The organization which has not established legitimacy with clients will not motivate peer outreach workers, in the case of COSA, or peer group leaders in the case of SGWC, if it professes goals or objectives that are not within what I would call the client's "zone of significance." Like Barnard's "zone of indifference," the organization that acts beyond the bounds of the client/volunteer's value set, or construct of reality, will not survive.

Relevance of this study to public administration:

Our political system, like many others, renders the underclass invisible, and ultimately unrepresented in the larger political arena. Nonprofits that have a strong community base with marginalized populations bridge a gap in the American political system not only because they address unmet needs, but in their role as advocates. Community-based organizations connect people and their values with the ends of the state. CBOs have the opportunity to create a direct link between administration and the popular will when they serve a public interest.

CBO's meet public needs in communities where government has been unsuccessful. This in itself, is a powerful political act, because in the process of addressing people's needs from their social construct, the client's experience is legitimated. This simple act is why community-based organizations throughout the world are known for spearheading movements of social change (Yudelman, 1988). Friere (1972) defined this process as the essence of liberation - the praxis of action and reflection of people on their world with the intent to transform it. Perhaps the study of these intriguing and fragile organizations will contribute to a dialogue of how to better build connections between the myriad publics that administrators confront and the process of governance. In doing so, we may learn how to ground our public administration

in the values of people, and ultimately contribute to the flowering of an authentic democratic community.

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APPENDIX A

List of Acronyms

AIDSFAM: Family Prevention of AIDS

AIDSIN: AIDS International

ASO: AIDS Service Organization

COSA: Centro de Orientacion e Investigacion Integral

CSW: Commercial sex worker

PFH: Pro-Family Health

FSW: Female sex worker

MESPA: Ministry of Public Health and Social Services

NGO: Non-governmental organization

NSO: Non-governmental social service organization

PAHO: Pan American Health Organization

PROSAM: Program for the Prevention of Sexually Transmitted
Diseases

PVO: Private Voluntary Organization

STD: Sexually transmitted disease

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WHO: World Health Organization

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