

*Government, Advocacy and Civil  
Society: the Government-Nonprofit  
Partnership*

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# Content

- Roles and responsibilities of NPOs (NGOs)
- State – non-profit relations(hip)
- NPO, political advocacy and civic participation

# Nonprofit organizations purpose

What are the roles of non-profits?

AKA

Why do they exist?

- Nonprofits: organizations that are privately incorporated, but serve some public purpose (social responsibility)

Yes?

No?

Why?

# Why do NPOs exist?

- **Economic theories:** market failure, government failure, voluntary failure
- **History,** religious roots of charity, altruism
- **Communitarians:** precursors of government and the market, connect people and create communities
- **Political scientists:** providing avenues of civic participation and representation of interests
- **Civil society approach:** the role of nonprofits in generating the social capital that links people to their communities and to others

# What are the roles?

- *Social capital* (“the features of social organization, such as *networks, norms, and trusts*, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”)
- *Economic role*
- *Religious role*
- *Service*
- *Policy* (e.g. Implementing public policies)
- *Advocacy* (e.g. Building up civic/civil society. Central to prosperous and successful democracies?)
- ...Significant actors at global level (international perspective)

# NPO-gov't relations I

- Vast range and complexity
- What's in a relationship?
  - Differences based on: type of org. (large vs. small), field (social services vs. international development), levels of government involved (e.g. federal vs. state vs. county/city; or central, regional, local)
- Different aspects:
  - funding (grants, fee-for-service contracts, concessionary loans, etc.)
  - non-monetary support (facilities, expertise, goods and services in kind)
  - mandates (government required to involve nonprofit associations in implementing policy)
  - regulations and accountability
- Direct government support: direct payments, tax exemption, preferential regulatory treatment, deductibility of donations

# NPO-gov't relations II

- Societal problems cannot be solved by governments acting on their own
- Need for NPO involvement in governance?
- What is appropriate role of government in responding to social and economic needs? (ideological level – mutually excluding cooperation btw gov't and NPO)
  - *Limited*: NPO as alternative mechanism for responding to social ills, strict separation btw gov't and voluntary groups (partnership)
  - *Greater involvement*: downplaying importance of NPO, instead need for gov't action to cope with social and economic problems (separation and conflict)

# Where gov't and NPO interact

- Multiple arenas = gov't and nonprofit may be at odds in one, but cooperate in another (e.g. Planned parenthood)

Arena	Impact on NPO
Government funding for nonprofits	Affecting the need for NPO service (indirect) Determining the resources NPO have available to help meet the resulting needs (direct)
Government tax policy towards NPO	Exempt from taxation, or lower taxes, but may vary
Gov't regulation of NPO	Gov't affect which types of org. Are eligible for tax exempt, procedure to gain such status, etc.
Substantive gov't policy	Involvement of NPO in policy-making Policy advocacy: one of principal functions of NP sector, major contribution to society, Promoting common good Pressuring gov't to respond to disadvantaged groups Regulatory developments complicate NPO involvement in the policy arena



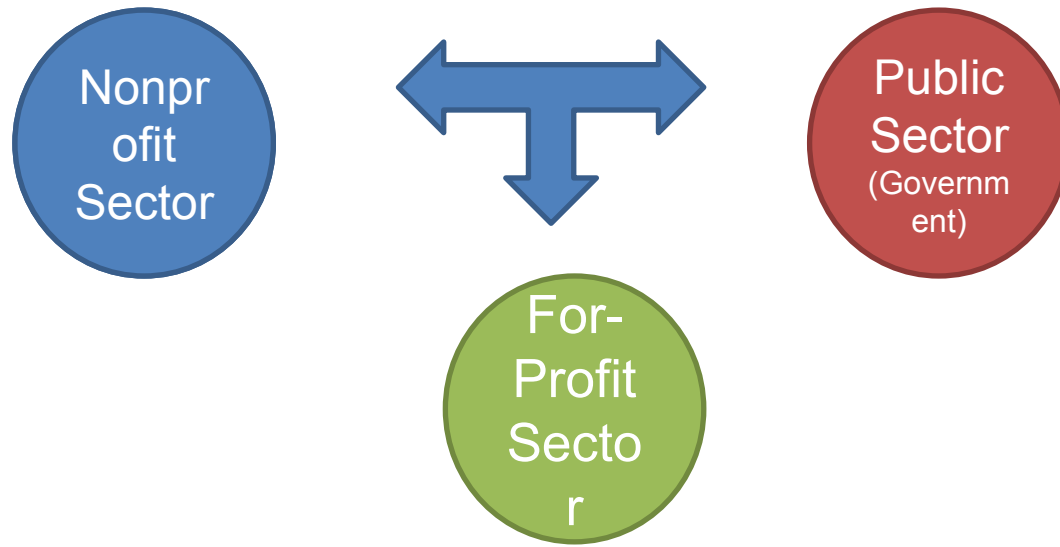
# Government funding for nonprofits

- General trends: retrenchment, shifts in the structure of government funding
  - Retrenchment
    - Reagan – reversal of government support, „to get gov't out of the way', signif decline in the real value of gov't support to NPO in the early 1980s
    - Bush – additional cuts
  - Shifts to consumer-side subsidies:
    - Discretionary programs – absorbed cuts – previously producer-side subsidies (benefits delivered in the form of grants and contracts to providers of services) – then shift to consumer-side subsidies (benefits delivered in the forms of vouchers directly to the consumers of services, who can then choose providers, something like market) – leads to uncertainty in NPO operations
  - Marketization (Pressures to market their services)

# Government regulation of NPO

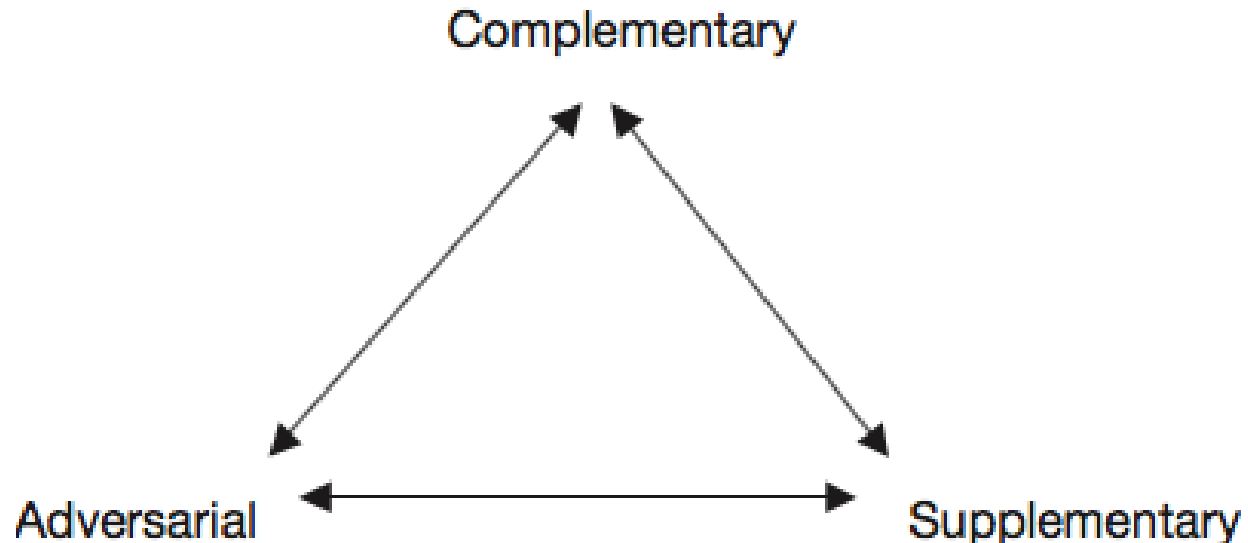
- In the US, substantial parts of the business sector deregulated, NPO have confronted an increase in regulation in certain crucial spheres, mostly in:
  - Charitable fundraising, advocacy (lobbying) and non-profit management practices (regulation of management)
  - Many obstacles in lobbying and advocacy for nonprofit (Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995)

# What is the character of relationship?



- Substitute and supplement (Weisbrod, 1988; Douglas, 1987)
- Complement (Salamon, 1995, 2002)
- Adversary

# A triangular model



Young (2000)

# Four Cs model of government–nonprofit relations

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		<b>Goals</b>	
		Similar	Dissimilar
<b>Means</b>	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

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Source: Najam 2000. © John Wiley & Sons Inc. Used with permission.

Najam's Four Cs model (2000)

# Social movement theory argument

- Two sectors are deeply intertwined, conflictual relationship with gov't
- 1) first with private concerns, private action (informal, no legal status)
- 2) As momentum builds, the movement may evolve into formal organizations (become more institutionalized)
- 3) Ultimately, successful SMOs may influence government policy – by translating private concerns into public issues

# SMOs and government

- Basically a cycle:
  - initial social movement translate public concerns via formal legal entities
  - NPO influence government policy
  - government responds:
    - by directly addressing the issue
    - or funds nonprofits
  - Nonprofits in turn address these public concerns
  - And nonprofits adjust their behavior to reflect public policy and government priorities
  - Tries to influence again
- Examples of such successful movements?

# Civic participation and advocacy

- not only important service providers, vehicles for advocacy and civic participation
- 1) NPOs mediate/facilitate civic participation – by providing structures and networks
- 2) NPOs engage in public-interest advocacy activities
- Aim: to mobilize information to educate and inform the public, both to influence attitudes and to change behaviour
- a variety of different forms and approaches



# Civic participation

- Activities by individuals who attempt to affect governance at a variety of levels (such as voting, but also other forms)
- NPOs - direct/indirect activation and facilitation of civic participation
- Civic membership groups
- Goal: usually to strengthen democracy

# Advocacy

- a wide range of activities that influence decision makers
- encompasses activities and communications designed to influence public policy
- NPO's crucial civic function
- seeks to influence government policy, but not to govern
- to “correct imbalanced political representation by ensuring that a broader set of interests are voiced” (Jenkins, 2006)
- Goal: To influence government decisions; to shape the policies of private institutions and corporations; or to encourage community and political participation

Why should NPO participate in policies and policy-making?

# Reasons to advocate

- **Focusing public attention** on key social problems and solutions
- Increasing the **base of knowledge** on which innovative policy is formed
- Policymakers need expertise
- Ensuring access for new and unheard voices
- **Fostering governmental accountability** to citizens
- **Promoting democratic values** (freedom of expression, pluralism, ...)
- Giving citizens a personal sense of **civic skills** in the democratic process (can make a difference, can change laws)
- increasing citizens' sense of attachment to community
- helps find real solutions
- The views of local nonprofits are important
- Lobbying advances your cause and builds public trust

# Targets of advocacy activities

- Government agencies
- Courts
- Legislative bodies
- Corporations
- The media
- The public
- Other nonprofit groups

# What affects advocacy

- Declining Civic Engagement
- Government regulation
- Growing business competition
- External factor in cooperation: Further work influenced by key people leaving the Government's Office for Co-operation with CSO's

# Nonprofit responses

- have had to become more sophisticated
- created more complex organizational structures
- take advantage of new technologies – Internet activism fundamentally altered civic participation and advocacy
- invested in effective research
- increasingly turned to collaborations, including some with business organizations

# Forms: How to advocate?

- Issue identification, research, and analysis
- Education of the public on crucial issues
- Lobbying (direct, grassroots, administrative, for/against): reinfluence a specifiers to activities that are intended to a piece of legislation
- Voter registration and education
- Litigation, legal advocacy in the courts
- Media advocacy
- Public events and direct action (calls for boycotts and demonstrations)
- Judicial advocacy
- Coalition building
- Expert testimony (testifying before governmental bodies)
- Talks with governments
- Monitoring of government programs
- Drawing up of petition letters, participation in referenda or initiative campaigns
- Grassroots organizing and communication with local leaders

# How to advocate? Tweeting social change



**Figure 1.** A pyramid model of social media-based advocacy.

Guo and Saxton, 2014



**Table 4.** Advocacy Tactics present in 750 Random Tweets, April 2012.

Advocacy tactic	Example	Frequency	(%)
<i>Public education</i>	<i>CCHR: Psychiatrist and former DSM chairman Allen Frances admits: There are no objective tests in psychiatry <a href="http://t.co/axCUxsSJ">http://t.co/axCUxsSJ</a></i>	303	40.4
<i>Grassroots lobbying</i>	<i>FreedomWorks: Over 200,000 have signed the petition to end #Obamacare. <a href="http://t.co/O9nkLbelHaveyou?#tlot">http://t.co/O9nkLbelHaveyou?#tlot</a></i>	18	2.4
<i>Public events &amp; direct action</i>	<i>GoAffirmations: Join us in Lansing tomorrow at 10:30-we're announcing 50+ electeds' support for our work! <a href="http://t.co/5dcswrS4#mipolitics">http://t.co/5dcswrS4#mipolitics</a></i>	15	2
<i>Voter registration &amp; education</i>	<i>MaketheRoadNY: Great work everybody! MT @ LICivicEngage Tks for pledging to reg. voters this year! @naacp_ldf, #local1102, @32bj_seiu, #liia, #carecen</i>	10	1.33
<i>Research</i>	<i>OpenSecretsDC: Funders behind anti-Obama energy ads remain hidden: @NewYorker cites our data in a post <a href="http://t.co/5RzKjExT">http://t.co/5RzKjExT</a></i>	3	0.4
<i>Multiple advocacy tactics</i>	<i>NCJW: Check out <a href="http://t.co/iEb4Gz604statement">http://t.co/iEb4Gz604statement</a> sfromursens&amp;articlesinurstateaboutfedjudnoms. #courtsmatters</i>	3	0.4

<i>Coalition building</i>	<i>southerncenter</i> : Thrilled to be part of the coalition! RT @bartoncenter Small Victories For Juvenile Justice <a href="http://t.co/VFSsScMP">http://t.co/VFSsScMP</a> . Thanks, @southerncenter!	2	0.27
<i>Media advocacy</i>	<i>MaketheRoadNY</i> : On Tues tenants will lead press tour showing how Brooklyn Housing Court is overcrowded/inadequate. Advisory: <a href="http://t.co/d6ooERDH">http://t.co/d6ooERDH</a>	1	0.13
<i>Administrative lobbying</i>	<i>americansunited</i> : Catholic shrine declines \$750 “tourism” grant from NY county thanks to a complaint from Americans United. <a href="http://t.co/xBALU3jO">http://t.co/xBALU3jO</a>	1	0.13
<i>Direct lobbying</i>	<i>WithoutViolence</i> : Thank-you to Senator Crapo for your overall leadership on the #realVAWA #reauthorizeVAWA #VAWA	1	0.13
<i>Expert testimony</i>	None	0	0
<i>No advocacy tactic</i>	<i>FreedomWorks</i> : “The Constitution is certain and fixed; it contains the permanent will of the people, and is the supreme law of the land”—William Paterson	391	52.13



# Public Funding and Its Impact on Nonprofit Advocacy

- relationship between public funding and nonprofit engagement in advocacy (Neumayr et al. 2015)
- two main lines of argument:
  - resource dependence theory: NPOs that receive public funding will eventually reduce their advocacy activities or even refrain from them altogether for fear of losing their funding
  - the nonprofits who receive public funding will increase their engagement in advocacy

# So does it affect...?

- Empirical studies: mixed results, mostly on US
- Austria (Neumayr et al. 2015):
  - no significant relationship between advocacy and the receipt of public funding or the proportion of an organization's total revenue coming from public funding
  - the degree to which nonprofits engage in advocacy is influenced by the geographic range of operation and field of activity

# Successful advocacy campaigns?

- – My sme les (Slovakia, only in Slovak language)
- <https://www.mysmeles.sk/>



# Campaigns during migration crisis

- E.g. :
- Refugees welcome movement
- Výzva k ľudskosti (Slovakia)
- Global Migration Journey: #sharethejourney

- **Citizen Lobbying: How Your Skills Can Fix Democracy**
- By Alberto Alemanno (at TEDxBrussels)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNf20Pdu8c>



- **Going the Digital Route**
- By Marci Harris, a former congressional staffer, founded Popvox, a non-partisan platform to engage digitally with Congress  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aKyYR-iWpc>

- **Advocacy Through Social Media: Why Trending Topics Matter**
- By Karen McAlister (at TEDxUTA)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4sGLLaLq-Q>

Thank you for participation