

# The Changing Organizational Face of Environmental Justice: From Grassroots to 502c(3) Nonprofits

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*In the last decade, little research has focused on the organizational structure of environmental justice groups. Using an organizational life cycle approach, which categorizes organizations into stages (inception, growth, maturity, institutionalization), we investigated the structure, decision making process, budget process, resources, and sources of funding of environmental justice groups. The article argues that age and non-profit status of an environmental justice group determine its organizational life cycle stage. Data were gathered through online survey asking questions about the organizational goals, history, structure and administrative practices of environmental justice groups. The data analysis found that 77.8 percent of the groups did originate from the grassroots but are now nonprofit 501c(3) organizations. The results indicated that those groups with younger, non 501c(3) status fell within the inception stage while older, 501c(3) organizations appeared to have transitioned to the institutionalized stage. The article finds that age and nonprofit status of an environmental justice group determine its organizational life cycle stage.*

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Social movements tend to mobilize and emerge when an aggrieved population, usually disenfranchised groups, embrace beliefs that political activism can change their situation (Sztompka 1994; Brandewein 1985). The environmental justice movement emerged with the expressed purpose of battling the injustices of environmental racism (Bullard 1993; Bryant and Mohai 1992, Starkey 1994). Environment justice groups noted that poor people and people of color shouldered a disproportionate share of the cost of environmental damage. They also noted that they lacked a political voice and were not allowed effectively in participating in the policy making process by existing authorities (Hofrichter 1993). Early in the development of the environmental justice groups, Rios (2000) found that the tactics and strategies used by these groups resembled more institutionalized interest groups who perceived a lack of influence on public policy and whose organizational structure tended to be more formal. When compared with professional and mixed types of environment organizations, more voluntary environmental justice groups tend to be less formally organized. They also tend not to have applied for nonprofit status. More recently, there is some evidence that environmental justice groups have chosen to become nonprofits; however, little is known about the organizational capacity of these organizations (Andrews and Edwards 2005). Since little previous research exists on this topic, the current research investigates the organizational taxonomy of the environmental justice groups. For the environmental justice groups, the crux of the problem is that they do not adhere to the typical characteristics of traditional interest groups nor nonprofit organizations.

A review of the public administration literature on environmental justice indicates that there has been a lack of research that investigates the organizational capacity of the environmental justice groups. This paper investigates the organizational structure, decision making, budgeting, and funding processes of these groups. The article argues that age and non-profit status of an environmental justice group determine its organizational life cycle stage. The empirical evidence shows that environmental justice groups do follow the life cycle of organizations, making them more “typical” than they might otherwise appear. We also find that many of these groups have chosen to incorporate as nonprofit, which also aids the group’s viability, a point previously missing in the literature.

Using an organizational life cycle approach, which categorizes organizations into stages (inception, growth, maturity, institutionalization) we examine their structure, decision making process, budget process, resources, and sources of funding. First, the environmental justice and organizational life cycle literature is reviewed to illustrate the lack of organizational behavior and development studies. Second, the organizational life cycle framework will be introduced and presents specific characteristics and variables for a heuristic model. Third, empirical data for the environmental justice groups will be used to test the framework. Finally, the implications of these finding will be discussed as they apply to the environmental justice groups.

### **Environmental Justice Groups**

New social movement theory has been used to explain the non-traditional tactics, strategies and goals of feminists, gays and lesbians, the anti-nuclear movement, peace activists, certain ethnic groups, as well as environmentalists. Distinct from more traditional class-based movements that sought to directly influence the political system through pressure groups and po-

litical parties in more hierarchically patterned organizations and associations, new social movements rely on street action and protest, informal personal networks and neighborhood organizations that stress internal egalitarianism to build interest communities (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996). New social movements also sought to contest the constructions of class, gender, race, or the state. Faber and McCarthy (2003) argue that there are as many as six major goals for the environmental justice movement. Less expansive are the goals related to occupation and safety rights, indigenous land rights, or public health and safety rights (Perales 2008; Prindeville 2004; Lee 2005). More expansive goals are those related to more broadly expressed civil rights, the solidarity movement related to human rights, and the global movement for social and economic justice (Cole 2002; Lizarralde 2003; Peña 2002).

The environmental justice movement seeks to centrally include considerations of race and class where the environment is concerned, providing some important additional avenues of analysis for new social movement theory (Lester, Allen and Hill 2001). First and foremost, the environmental justice movement calls for the end of the disproportionate exposure of African, Native and Latin American peoples to industrial emissions (Bullard 2007, Wilson 2009). In 1983 the General Accounting Office conducted a study which concluded that low and minority income groups were more likely to live in environmentally degraded areas than whites (US GAO 1983). This report confirmed what local activists had known for some time. Another important study was conducted by the United Church of Christ at the same time. It noted the tight connections between race and class and the citing of industrial waste processing plants (United Church of Christ for Racial Justice 1987). Since these initial reports, numerous additional studies have provided further support for the claims of the environmental justice movement. One need only to look at the industrial corridor alongside the Mississippi River in Louisiana (Bullard 1990, 1993, 1994), to the South Central neighborhood in Los Angeles (Schwab 1994), to Gary, Indiana (Hurley 1995), to the struggle in Memphis over federal toxic waste storage sites (Simpson 2002) or to the brownfields of Boston (Layzer 2006). Environmental justice concerns are not just confined to urban areas, as the efforts of the Southwestern Chicanos to protest the widespread use of dangerous pesticides where they work (Pulido 1996), or of migrant farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley (Cole and Foster 2001). Overall, those who live in close proximity to harmful emissions are disproportionately people of color and low income, with race having been found to be the stronger indicator of the two (Cable, Mix and Hastings 2005, Ringquist 2005).

On the other hand, Noonan (2008) has offered a more critical assessment of the environmental injustice movement, following on other studies that have also questioned many of the movement's claims. Boerner and Lambert (1995) argue that little data were gathered on an area's demographics prior to the construction of the industrial plants or toxic waste sites. Been (1994) argues that employment opportunities, and the desire for economic development, may actually encourage minority support for bringing in a potentially harmful industrial plant. Lavelle and Coyle (1993) have noted that, as a result of sitting decisions which drop the value of housing, the poor and minorities may actually move into these neighborhoods.

Whether conceived locally, or more globally, environmental justice groups attempt to bring new issues onto the political agenda. But many of these groups are not seen as "le-

gitimate” political actors, and they often struggle to receive recognition (Schneider and Ingram 2005). This is exacerbated by the fact that environmental justice groups have participated in the political system in varying ways. Environmental justice groups often participated in politically “acceptable” ways, such as when they attend community meetings to more politically “unacceptable” ways, such as protesting before these very same meetings (Andrews and Edwards 2005; Bretting and Prindeville 1998). Environmental justice groups that tend to use more confrontational tactics also tend to be less formally institutionalized (Diani, McAdam and Klandermans 2003). As the environmental justice movement matured, it began the process of institutionalizing. In 1991, the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, which brought various groups involved in the movement together, was an important step toward consolidation (Lee 1993). The summit also generated broad goals for the environmental justice movement. One such goal was environmental equity, which required environmental justice groups to have procedural equity, which included influencing and redefining federal legislation and eradicating unequal environmental protection by federal agencies; geographic equity, defined by conducting research, gaining inclusion in decision making processes and bodies; and social equity, related to gaining representation (Miller 1993).

Schlosberg (2007) also argues that to effectively participate in the political process, environment justice groups must have access to information, especially community-based knowledge. In order to gather this knowledge, Faber and McCarthy (2003) have noted that one of the most important aspects of empowering environmental groups is through capacity building. This is echoed by Prindeville’s (2004) analysis of the environmental justice movement in New Mexico. She argues that American Indian and Hispanic women were mobilized by a sense of civic obligation and their racial/ethnic group identity, which made it relatively easy to build networks of contacts and to share information. Another way of capacity building is to seek nonprofit status. The advantage of acquiring 501c(3) status is that existing authorities see the group as “deserving” of recognition and “entitled” to representation, which makes it “easier” for environmental justice groups be included in the “traditional” policymaking processes (Schneider and Ingram 2005; Schlosberg, 2007).

### **Conceptual Framework for Life Cycle**

As noted above, much of the literature that attempts to explain the development of organizational capacity and resources within the environmental justice groups has its foundations in social movement theory (Diani 1992; Tilly 1978). Similar explanations for the development and change of organizations are also found in the theory of organizational life cycle stages, which began to receive considerable attention in the public administration literature in the late 1970s to the mid-1980s (Kaufman 1975; Cameron and Wheten 1981; Quinn and Cameron 1983; Kimberly 1980). More recently, nonprofit organizations have embraced this model as a heuristic tool for organizational development (Bess 1998).

Specifically, the model looks at the relatively “natural” development of organizational capacity and resources that come about through the maturity of an organization. Scholars (McAdam 1982; Werther and Berman 2001) have focused on distinct changes in organizations related to variables such as formalized organizational structure, typology of

planning and decision making, and the sufficiency and origin of resources. The life cycle model suggests that organizations develop in a predictable and sequential pattern (Kreitner and Linicki 1995). Every organization develops at its own pace where characteristics, more than age, define the stages of the cycle. The organizational life cycle is typically depicted as comprising inception, growth, maturity, and institutionalization, which can include decline or revival. There is no definitive "timeline" which dictates when an organization will transition from one stage to the next (Alder and Swiercz 1997).

At the inception stage, organizations have few formal rules and procedures in place. The prime organizational issues revolve around the struggle for survival and a commitment to "the cause" (Anheier 2005). The organizational structure is minimal, perhaps consisting of a leader and a few followers (Downs 1967). The leader uses creativity and charisma to keep the organization together. With no bureaucratic structure in place, there is an extensive overlapping of tasks among members. The decision making process is typically entrepreneurial, with the objective of survival being the driving force. With little to "sell" but its vision, activities are funded by the members, leaders, or other opportunistic funding sources (Quinn and Cameron 1983; Anheier 2005). The transition from the inception to the growth phase can be either the result of mission success or leadership crisis. In either case the organization will tend to survive and mature if it can create a more formalized structure, ensuring a more cohesive decision making process and resource flow (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005).

In the growth stage, the organizational structure begins to evolve toward a pre-bureaucratic state where formalization and specialization occur. They are typically characterized by increased administrative activity within the clerical and record keeping functions, and the development of standardized operating procedures (Quinn and Cameron 1983; Anheier 2005). The decision making process expands from one individual to perhaps two or more constituencies within the organization (Quinn and Cameron 1983). In an attempt to expand operations and services, planning moves from ad hoc format to a form of a crude management information system. To ensure organizational development for the fiscal stability, efforts are made to systematize the budgetary processes, and efforts are made to raise revenues (Quinn and Cameron 1983; Anheier 2005; Werther and Berman 2001). The primary mechanism for change from the growth stage of the organization life cycle to the mature stage is the creation of a larger professional staff, the management of additional resources and supporters, which can also entail the transformation of the organization's initial vision and mission (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005).

In an effort to control the larger staff, mature organizations clearly demonstrate a bureaucratic structure. The workforce becomes more professionalized and characterized by clearly defined ranks, policies, procedures, and salaries (Quinn and Cameron 1983; Anheier 2005). The decision making process becomes more formalized to include a board of directors that makes decisions to encourage the efficient use of resources and to provide policy guidance (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier, 2005). Maturity results in a formal budget process with control systems and the adoption of performance measurements. The funding streams for the organization become institutionalized, and the size of the budget increases to support the enlarged infrastructure and expanded operations of the organization (Quinn and Cameron 1983; Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005). Two issues that can

**Table 1. Environmental Justice Population by Nonprofit Status**

| Environmental Protection Agency Region | # .org     | % .org     | # .com/.net | % .com/.net | Total      |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Region 1                               | 23         | 52%        | 21          | 48%         | 44         |
| Region 2                               | 44         | 61%        | 28          | 39%         | 72         |
| Region 3                               | 25         | 74%        | 9           | 26%         | 34         |
| Region 4                               | 25         | 37%        | 42          | 63%         | 67         |
| Region 5                               | 24         | 80%        | 6           | 20%         | 30         |
| Region 6                               | 54         | 64%        | 30          | 36%         | 84         |
| Region 7                               | 0          | 0%         | 3           | 100%        | 3          |
| Region 8                               | 7          | 70%        | 3           | 30%         | 10         |
| Region 9                               | 72         | 60%        | 48          | 40%         | 120        |
| Region 10                              | 41         | 64%        | 23          | 36%         | 64         |
| <b>Totals</b>                          | <b>315</b> | <b>60%</b> | <b>213</b>  | <b>40%</b>  | <b>528</b> |

bring about change at the mature stage are crisis and the lack of self renewing mechanisms (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) noted that mature organizations can become rigid because of the structural and rational bonds of bureaucracy, which can lead to “permanently failing” organizations (Meyer and Zucker 1989) or even to collapse. Alternatively, mature organizations may experience a re-birth through re-conceptualization (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005).

The characteristics of organizations that reach the institutionalization stage are very similar to those of mature organizations. As it matures, an organization finds it more difficult to manage adaption and change. While some organizations may decline to the point of total dissolution (Heckscher 1994), Meyer and Zucker (1989) argue that still other organizations are able to “limp along.” However, once an organization begins to enter a decline phase, it is not inevitable that it will continue to plunge into mediocrity or ultimate failure. Organizations having a strong societal backing, especially financial, can persist even if they are low-performing. Furthermore, many organizations are able to reverse or delay decline if they successfully re-evaluate their mission and strategies (Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005).

This rebirth represents the triumph of organizational development and strategic planning through strategic reformulation. Rather than relying upon traditional organizational control mechanisms, such as acquiescence to authority and slaving to the organizational chart (Heckscher 1994), the “reborn” organization explores new approaches and problem solving strategies, such as decentralization, to create a revised mission. The revamped decision making process is issue specific and the “post-bureaucratic” organization is characterized by an on-going dialogue, new networks or personnel, and revised financial controls as mechanisms of organizational control (Heckscher 1994; Werther and Berman 2001; Anheier 2005).

The next section of this paper will operationalize the organizational life cycle model looking at a previously understudied subset of organizations, environmental justice groups, and specifically those that have nonprofit status. Berry and Arons (2005) note that there is little information about how these groups manage their staff, make decisions, and structure their budget. They also note that little analysis has been done specifically tracking nonprofits organizational life cycle, from inception, to growth, to maturity, to institutionalization/decline.

**Research Design**

To examine the salient factors that predict/influence the life cycle stage of environmental

justice groups, an online survey of readily identified environmental justice groups was conducted in the summer of 2006. Using SurveyMonkey.com, each identified environmental justice group was contacted via email. The survey asked questions about (1) the goals of the organization, (2) organizational history, (3) current organizational structure, and (4) administrative practices and took about 20 minutes to complete. If there was no response from the organization after two weeks, a second attempt via email was made. Those organizations that completed surveys were acknowledged and thanked via email.

### **Sample**

The Environmental Justice Resource Center's People of Color Environmental Groups Directory 2000 and a general web-based search of environmental justice groups provided the sample for the study since the Directory was somewhat outdated. The intent of the web-based search for additional groups was to stratify by subpopulation based on race and ethnicity so that no one group would be overrepresented. These groups were categorized by EPA region. Groups that had an email address were sent the survey link. Only 25 addresses bounced indicating that the email address, and presumably the organization, was no longer functional. In addition, those who participated in the survey were asked to indicate any groups to which they gave, or from which they received, services. In all, 503 emails were sent to identifiable environmental justice groups and 86 surveys were completed yielding a response rate of 17%. This response rate, while typically lower than a direct-mail response rate, as are most e-mail surveys, falls within an acceptable response rate for web-based surveys (Kaplowitz et al. 2004).

While compiling the population for the study, the organizational typology was an unknown variable for the environmental justice groups. Rios (2000) found that the tactics and strategies for these groups more closely resembled interest group activity while their structure might have been more indicative of a nonprofit. For this reason, the respondents were asked if their group was a nonprofit, as defined by the U.S. tax code. For this study, we used the URL's domain as an indirect measure of the organizational typology. Specifically, if a group had an .org as a designation/address, it was categorized as a nonprofit while those using a .com or .net would be classified as group. Table 1 reflects that sixty percent of the groups surveyed used the .org domain indicating that they were most probably nonprofits. The use of this designation could also reflect the type of server used by the group. However, an unexpected finding was that 87.3 percent of the respondents claimed a nonprofit status regardless of their domain.

### **Measures**

As Table 2 demonstrates, the questions asked on the survey pertained to the organizational structure, decision making process, budget process, resources (annual budget), funding sources, non-profit status and age or years in existence for each environmental justice group. As Table 3 shows, the variables were transformed for analyses purposes.

Conceptually, the age of the organization and non-profit status serve as the independent/control variables. The responses to the original age question are recoded into GROUPAGE, where 1 = 10 years or less and 2 = 11 years of age or more to reflect the mode of 10 years. NONPROFIT STATUS is defined as having a 501c (3) status = 1.

**Table 2. Environmental Justice Nonprofit Organizations Life Cycle Model**

| Variable  | Inception                                 | Growth  | Maturity   | Institutionalization<br>Decline/Rebirth  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Organizational Structure<br>(ADMINSTR)  | Volunteer Director<br>and volunteer staff | Paid Director, 1 – 3<br>paid staff; volunteers                | Paid Director, over 3<br>paid staff, volunteers                                    | Paid director, all paid<br>staff   |
| Decision making Process<br>(DECMAKE)  | No formal decision<br>making process      | Informal face-to-face<br>meetings                             | Moderately formal<br>meetings on a regular<br>basis                                | Executive-level<br>decision making,<br>approval by Board of<br>Directors         |
| Budget Process<br>(BUDGDEC)   | No formal budget                          | Informal planning<br>process (face-to-face<br>meetings)       | Moderately formal<br>process (planned<br>meetings)                                 | Very formal process<br>(Planned meetings,<br>oversight by Board of<br>Directors) |
| Resources (Annual<br>Budget) (BUDTOTAL)   | <\$50,000                                 | \$50,000 - \$149,999  | \$150,000 - \$249,999  | >\$250,000   |
| Sources of Funding<br>(MONEY)<br><br>(FOUNDATIONS<br>CHURCH\$<br>GOVAGENCY\$<br>MEMBDUES\$<br>INDVCONTS<br>OTHERGRPS) | Churches, member<br>dues                  | Private foundations,<br>fundraising, churches,<br>member dues | Government agencies,<br>private foundations,<br>member dues, other<br>associations | Government agencies  |

The dependent variables originally were designed to reflect the life cycle framework depicted in Table 2. As Table 3 shows, for the administrative structure variable (ADMINSTR), the respondents were asked to indicate the staffing patterns of their organization, a direct measure found in organizational theory literature. The budget planning process (BUDSDEC) and decision making process (DECMAKE) also are direct measures of qualitative characteristics within the developmental stages of the organizational life cycle. The organization's annual budget (BUDTOTAL) and sources of funding (MONEY) serve as indicators of the organizational economic resources. MONEY is an additive index of the number of funding sources received by the organization to include: churches, government agencies, membership dues, contributions from individuals and/or fundraising, and other groups or associations but excludes in-kind funding. Crosstabulations and the Chi-square test of significance were used to examine the relationships between the age and nonprofit status of the organization by each dependent variable representing a dimension of the life cycle.

To measure the life cycle stage, an index, LIFCYCL, was created by summing all the ordinal dependent variables (ADMINSTR, BUDSDEC, DECMAKE, BUDTOTAL) and the interval measure, MONEY. The interval level LIFCYCL index scores range from 6 to 30 with a mean of 14.925. The Cronbach's  $\alpha = .824$  for the index reflects a solid measure of reliability.

To test the hypothesis that there are no differences between environmental justice group stages in the organizational life cycle by age or nonprofit status, a t-test of significance was performed.

## Findings

Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for the organizational life cycle variables as presented

**Table 3. Variables List for Organizational Life Cycle**

| Variable                                  | Description   |
|---|---|
| ADMINSTR<br>(Administrative Structure)    | 1 = volunteer director and staff<br>2 = paid director and volunteer staff<br>3 = paid director and 1-3 staff; rest are volunteers<br>4 = paid director, over 3 paid staff                   |
| BUDGDEC<br>(Budget Planning Process)      | 1 = no formal budget<br>2 = informal planning (face-to-face meetings)<br>3 = moderately formal (planned meetings)<br>4 = very formal (approval by oversight body)                           |
| BUDTOTAL<br>(Organization’s total budget) | 1 = less than \$50,000<br>2 = \$50, 000 - \$149, 999<br>3 = \$150,000 - \$249,999<br>4 = \$250,000 or more  |
| MONEY<br>(Sources of funding)             | Additive scale of number of funding sources   |
| DECMAKE<br>(Decision making process)      | 1 = no formal process<br>2 = informal face-to-face meetings<br>3 = moderately formal meetings on a regular basis<br>4 = decisions made at executive level with board of directors’ approval |
| NONPROFIT<br>(501c(3) status)             | 0 = no<br>1 = yes   |
| GROUPAGE<br>(Age of organization)         | 1 = 10 years or less<br>2 = 11 years or more  |
| LIFCYCL<br>(Life Cycle Scale)             | Additive scale of ADMINSTR+BUDGDEC+BUDTOTAL+MONEY+DECMAKE   |

in Table 2. Crosstabulations were conducted for GROUPAGE (age of the organization) by the stages of the organizational life cycle (inception, growth, maturity, institutionalization). The variable GROUPAGE was collapsed and dichotomized to reflect the mode (10 years). Due to the small cell values, inferential statistical techniques could not be used without violating the assumptions of chi-square. For the administrative structure variable (ADMINSTR), the groups claiming 10 years or less reflect the characteristics of the maturity stage (31.6 percent) while the older groups tend to be more institutionalized (38.6 percent). For the budget planning process and decision making (BUDGDEC), both categories indicated a formal process including approval by some type of oversight body, specifically 31.6 percent for those organizations of 10 years or less; 55.6 percent for those claiming 11 years or more. The total operating budget (BUDTOTAL) for these organizations reflected two polar extremes: the younger organizations fell within the inception stage (44.4 percent) with smaller budgets (< \$50,000) while the older organizations reported much larger budgets (54.8 percent) characterized by the institutionalized stage (>\$250,000). For the decision making process (DECMAKE) both categories of organizations indicated moderately formal meetings on a regular basis or situating within the maturity stage with the younger organizations reflecting 47.4 percent and the older organizations with 48.8 percent. This decision making variable reflected little difference within the development stages. This finding might reflect a weak measure or inadequate question wording.

**Table 4. Crosstabs of Group Age by Organizational Life Cycle Variables**

| Variable                        | Inception  | Growth     | Maturity   | Institutionalization |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>Administrative Structure</b> |            |            |            |                      |
| 10 years or less                | 7 (36.8%)  | 2 (10.5%)  | 6 (31.6%)  | 4 (21.1%)            |
| 11 years or more                | 7 (15.9%)  | 6 (13.6%)  | 14 (31.8%) | 17 (38.6%)           |
| Total                           | 14 (22.2%) | 8 (12.7%)  | 20 (31.7%) | 21 (33.3%)           |
| <b>Budget Decision Making</b>   |            |            |            |                      |
| 10 years or less                | 4 (21.1%)  | 5 (26.3%)  | 4 (21.1%)  | 6 (31.6%)            |
| 11 years or more                | 2 (4.4%)   | 9 (20.0%)  | 9 (20.0%)  | 25 (55.6%)           |
| Total                           | 6 (9.4%)   | 14 (21.9%) | 13 (20.3%) | 31 (48.4%)           |
| <b>Total Budget</b>             |            |            |            |                      |
| 10 years or less                | 8 (44.4%)  | 5 (27.8%)  | 0 (0%)     | 5 (27.8%)            |
| 11 years or more                | 5 (11.9%)  | 7 (16.7%)  | 7 (16.7%)  | 23 (54.8%)           |
| Total                           | 13 (21.7%) | 12 (20.0%) | 7 (11.7%)  | 28 (46.7%)           |
| <b>Decision making</b>          |            |            |            |                      |
| 10 years or less                | 0 (0%)     | 7 (36.8%)  | 9 (47.4%)  | 3 (15.8%)            |
| 11 years or more                | 1 (2.3%)   | 7 (16.3%)  | 21 (48.8%) | 14 (32.6%)           |
| Total                           | 1 (1.8%)   | 14 (22.6%) | 30 (48.4%) | 17 (27.4%)           |

Table 5 depicts the number of funding sources for the MONEY variable. No clear pattern emerged for the younger and non 501c(3) status organizations while the older 501c(3) organizations indicated that their money was received from three funding sources. The funding sources for the organizations in this study included: private foundation grants (52.6 percent), churches (10.2 percent), government agencies (27.4 percent), membership dues (19.1 percent), contributions from individuals and fundraising (26.1 percent), other groups or organizations (11.6 percent).

Table 6 depicts the descriptive statistics for the organizational life cycle variables. The nonprofit status organizations were more likely to mirror the life cycle stages presented for the organization's age analysis than the non 501c(3) groups. For the administrative structure (ADMINSTR) variable, six (66.7 percent) of the non 501c(3) organizations were found at the inception stage while 20 (38.5 percent) of the 501c(3) organizations were reported at the institutionalization stage. For the budget decision making (BUDGDEC) variable, the non 501c(3) organizations were spread along the maturity (33.3 percent) and institutional (33.3 percent) stages while 28 (52.8 percent) of the 501c(3) organizations were found at the institutionalization stage. For the annual budget (BUDTOTAL) variable, the non 501c(3) organizations fell within the inception stage (62.5 percent) while almost half of the 501c(3) organization were found in the institutionalization stage (48.0 percent). For the decision making (DECMAKE) variable, about half of both types of organizations fell into the maturity stage with the non 501c(3) organizations at 50 percent and the 501c(3) organizations at 47.2 percent.

In order to test the differences between organizations, an additive life cycle scale (LIFCYSCL) was created, as was described in Table 3. A scale measures numerous items that contribute to an underlying dimension and provides a score for the dimension. A difference in means t-test was conducted for the control variable of age of organization to test the hypothesis that a timeline does not define the stages of development for the organiza-

**Table 5. Crosstabs of Money Sources by Group Age and Nonprofit Status**

| Variable                | 1 Funding Source | 2 Funding Sources | 3 Funding Sources | 4 Funding Sources | 5 Funding Sources |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Group Age</b>        |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| 10 years or less        | 5 (29.4%)        | 5 (29.4%)         | 2 (11.8%)         | 5 (29.4%)         | 0 (0%)            |
| 11 years or more        | 2 (5.1%)         | 7 (17.9%)         | 15 (38.5%)        | 10 (25.6%)        | 5 (12.8%)         |
| Total                   | 7 (12.5%)        | 12 (21.4%)        | 17 (30.4%)        | 15 (26.85)        | 5 (8.9%)          |
| <b>Nonprofit Status</b> |                  |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Non 501c(3) status      | 3 (37.5%)        | 1 (12.5%)         | 1 (12.5%)         | 3 (37.5%)         | 0 (0%)            |
| 501c(3) status          | 4 (8.5%)         | 10 (21.3%)        | 16 (34.0%)        | 12 (25.5%)        | 5 (10.6%)         |
| Total                   | 7 (12.7%)        | 11 (20.0%)        | 17 (30.9%)        | 15 (27.3%)        | 5 (9.1%)          |

tional life cycle (Alder and Sweircz 1997). Table 7 presents the findings of the difference in means analyses. When controlling for GROUPAGE, the mean score for younger environmental justice organizations was 13.625 and 15.919 for the older group with a mean difference of -3.294 which was statistically significant ( $p = .005$ ) indicating that the organizational variables for organizations in existence for ten years or less are not as formalized as those existing eleven years or more. The importance for this finding is that the environmental justice groups emerged as grassroots groups and transitioned to nonprofits instead of interest groups. This finding also coincides with the Chi-square analyses, but more importantly, rejects the hypothesis that age of the organization does not define the developmental stages of the environmental justice organizations.

Another difference in means t-test was conducted to test the assertion that nonprofit status does not drive the development stages of an organization (McAdam 1982, Werther and Berman 2001). The mean score for non 501c(3) organizations was 12.250 and for 501c(3) organizations the mean score was 15.477 with statistical significance ( $p = .036$ ). This finding rejects the null hypothesis that nonprofit status does not play a role in the organizational life cycle development. While not the focus of this manuscript, an area for further research is to investigate the extent of the similarities or differences in the goals, tactics, and strategies used by each typology to determine if “environmental justice” has been successful or captured. Specifically, has institutionalization fundamentally changed focus of the environmental justice movement?

**Discussion and Conclusion**

A web-based survey of environmental justice groups was conducted in 2006 to evaluate their organization. The results of this survey found that 77.8 percent of respondents did indeed originate from the grassroots or social movements. The normal trajectory for social movements is to transform into political movements or interest groups. However, the environmental justice groups chose the path of incorporating into nonprofit organizations. Using an organizational life cycle approach, this research provides a descriptive depiction of these organizations. Further investigation identified two factors (age of the organization and nonprofit status) that may lead to transition or development within the organizational life cycle model.

The crosstabs analyses for the organizational variables identified in Table 3 (AD-

**Table 6. Crosstabs of Nonprofit Organizations by Organizational Life Cycle Variables**

| Variable                        | Inception  | Growth     | Maturity   | Institutionalization |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>Administrative Structure</b> |            |            |            |                      |
| Non 501c(3) status              | 6 (66.7%)  | 0 (0%)     | 2 (22.2%)  | 1 (11.1%)            |
| 501c(3) status                  | 8 (15.4%)  | 8 (15.4%)  | 16 (30.5%) | 20 (38.5%)           |
| Total                           | 14 (23.0%) | 8 (13.1%)  | 18 (29.5%) | 21 (34.4%)           |
| <b>Budget Decision Making</b>   |            |            |            |                      |
| Non 501c(3) status              | 2 (22.2%)  | 1 (11.1%)  | 3 (33.3%)  | 3 (33.3%)            |
| 501c(3) status                  | 4 (7.5%)   | 11 (20.8%) | 10 (18.9%) | 28 (52.8%)           |
| Total                           | 6 (9.7%)   | 12 (19.4%) | 13 (21.0%) | 31 (50.0%)           |
| <b>Total Budget</b>             |            |            |            |                      |
| Non 501c(3) status              | 5 (62.5%)  | 0 (0%)     | 0 (0%)     | 3 (33.3%)            |
| 501c(3) status                  | 8 (16.0%)  | 11 (22.0%) | 7 (14.0%)  | 24 (48.0%)           |
| Total                           | 13 (22.4%) | 11 (19.0%) | 7 (21.1%)  | 27 (46.6%)           |
| <b>Decision Making</b>          |            |            |            |                      |
| Non 501c(3) status              | 0 (0%)     | 2 (25.0%)  | 4 (50.0%)  | 2 (25.0%)            |
| 501c(3) status                  | 1 (1.9%)   | 12 (22.6%) | 25 (47.2%) | 15 (28.9%)           |
| Total                           | 1 (1.6%)   | 14 (23.0%) | 29 (47.5%) | 17 (27.9%)           |

MINSTR, BUDGDEC, BUDTOTAL, MONEY, DECMAKE) by GROUPAGE and NON-PROFIT status found the presence of polar extremes. The results indicated that those organizations with younger, non 501c(3) organizations fell within the inception stage while older, 501c(3) organizations appeared to have transitioned to the institutionalization stage. This finding concurs with Rios’ (2000) study asserting that there are two group typologies operating under the umbrella of the environmental justice movement. The younger, non 501c(3) groups appeared to mirror the characteristics of social movements in terms of outsider tactics and strategies such as the politics of protest, informal organizational structure and modest resources. Older 501c(3) groups resembled more traditional interest groups by their use of insider tactics and strategies, a more formal organizational structure, and greater institutional capacity (Rios 2000). Moreover, 74.2 percent of the respondents reported that they received assistance from another organization to create an administrative or organizational structure. In terms of funding, no clear pattern emerged. The older, nonprofit organizations, however, seemed to be more likely to receive funding from multiple sources.

The difference in means analysis showed that the age of the organization and incorporation states may drive the development of the organizational life cycle. One explanation for this finding is that while the age variable does not define the stages of development for either organizations or social movement maturation, the significance of age may support the argument for the presence of grassroots or social movement groups within the study population. At the indigenous organizational strength stage of social movement development (McAdam 1982), groups may quickly emerge to deal with an issue and dissipate, or become dormant, depending on their perceived success. The indigenous organizational stage follows a sense of collective attribution or cognition that a problem has affected a particular population. At this point, the organizational structure of a social movement is more informal and can be juxtaposed with the inception stage of the organizational life cycle model.

**Table 7. Difference in Means of Organizational Life Cycle Scale of Environmental Justice Organizations for GROUPAGE and NONPROFIT STATUS**

| Variable         | Means            |                  | Means     |         | Difference | t-value | p-value |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|---------|
|                  | 10 years or less | 11 years or more | No Status | 501c(3) |            |         |         |
| GROUPAGE         | 12.625           | 15.919           |           |         | -3.294     | -2.937  | .005*   |
| NONPROFIT STATUS |                  |                  | 12.250    | 15.477  | -3.227     | -2.156  | .036*   |

N=53; \*\*Significance level p<.05

The need for resources is fundamental for the development of organizational capacity. While no pattern emerged for the study population, it is clear that these organizations are receiving funding primarily from private foundations. There is ample experiential evidence that funding sources are currently being funneled through the nonprofits (Berry and Arons 2003). This may provide an explanation for the decision for many environmental justice groups to incorporate as 501c(3) organizations. The ability to garner funding can be considered a success for these organizations because it indicates that they are competitive either through their own means or in partnership with government agencies or academia.

The transition mechanism for stage development may be attributed to organizational mission success (Werther and Berman 2001). In this study 47 percent of respondents indicated a great deal of success in meeting the goal of the group’s primary purpose. The respondents in this study also identified other areas of success, such as education and training (27.1 percent) provided to other organizations (81.8 percent), helping identify problems (53.8 percent), and sitting on boards and commissions (40.9 percent). The perceived successes for this population diverges from Rios’ (2000) study (conducted in 1994) where the environmental justice groups, in the aggregate, distinguished little success in attaining their goals.

One of the most salient issues in this research is related to the propensity of these environmental justice groups to incorporate as 501c(3) nonprofit organizations. The traditional trajectory for social movements is to transform to political movements or interest groups. The defining characteristics for the latter involve the orthodox tactics and strategies, increased organizational capacity and resources. In effect, interest group activity may reflect those of nonprofits with the exception of their ability to lobby for legislation and programs. The nonprofit, tax-exempt status organizations, such as those found in this study, restrict lobbying activity (Berry and Arons 2003). However, the 501c(3) status for these groups has enabled them to participate in the regulatory process primarily by sitting on boards and commissions, helping identify problems and providing solutions.

This study attempts to fill a void in the environmental justice literature in terms of the organizational structures of the 501c(3) nonprofits. This research empirically tested this model using environmental justice organizations and found that, for these groups, the vari-

ables of age and nonprofit status may be a function of stage development. While these organizations have perceived successes in some initial goals such as a voice at the table, the measurable successes remain undocumented. Berry and Arons (2003) argue that nonprofits are most successful when working through an established program. While there are numerous environmental laws such as air, water and soil, legislation for environmental justice has never been enacted. The most common policy issue area cited in the study population was environmental health which also lacks legislation. The tenets of the post-bureaucratic model might be useful for these nonprofits if they established matrices, team structures, or networks to include researchers to identify the underlying causes and target the appropriate programs. The subsequent step would be to lobby politicians for new legislation. Berry and Arons (2003) indicate that 501c(3) nonprofit organizations can retain their ability to lobby by opting for the "H" election when they incorporate. These organizations might benefit from re-evaluating their missions and goals in order to experience a rebirth.

There is some evidence to suggest that the heavy reliance on the nonprofit status can lead to the insularity of environmental justice groups, as they tend to cooperate with very similar groups, but not with a broader array of other groups. This isolation may endanger the environmental justice movement by cutting them out of the larger policy making process and what Miller (1993) describes as procedural equity. This may be exacerbated by the activities of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ), which warrants future investigation. The goals of OEJ are primarily the coordination of federal initiatives and regional environmental justice programs, building external and internal networks, outreach, and administration and resource management. This program proposes a top-down structure and encourages nonprofit incorporation as evidenced by the EPA website (<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/about/offiices/oej.html>). The OEJ initiatives appear to have assisted these groups in goal attainment for inclusion. While it may be preferable for environmental justice groups to work within the political system, which is a necessary and essential step for eventually having input into legislation, this may also be a way for the EPA, through the OEJ, to co-opt parts of the environmental justice movement. This co-optation could potentially mute the movement and prevent it from achieving all three of its equity goals, as laid out at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

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