

The Role of Faith-based Organizations in Eldercare in Mexico and the United States

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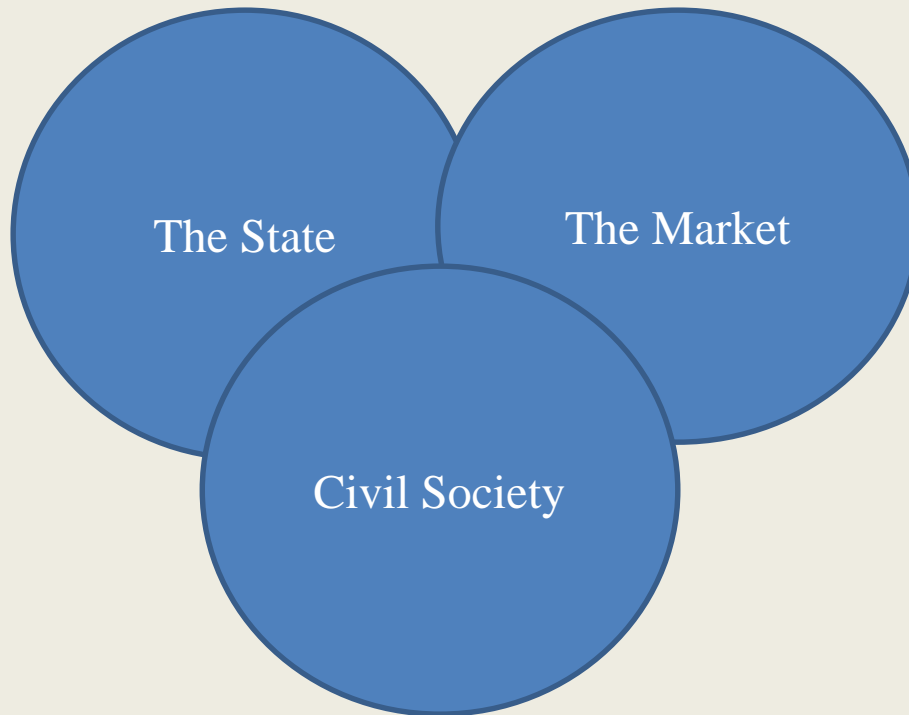
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What's in a Name?

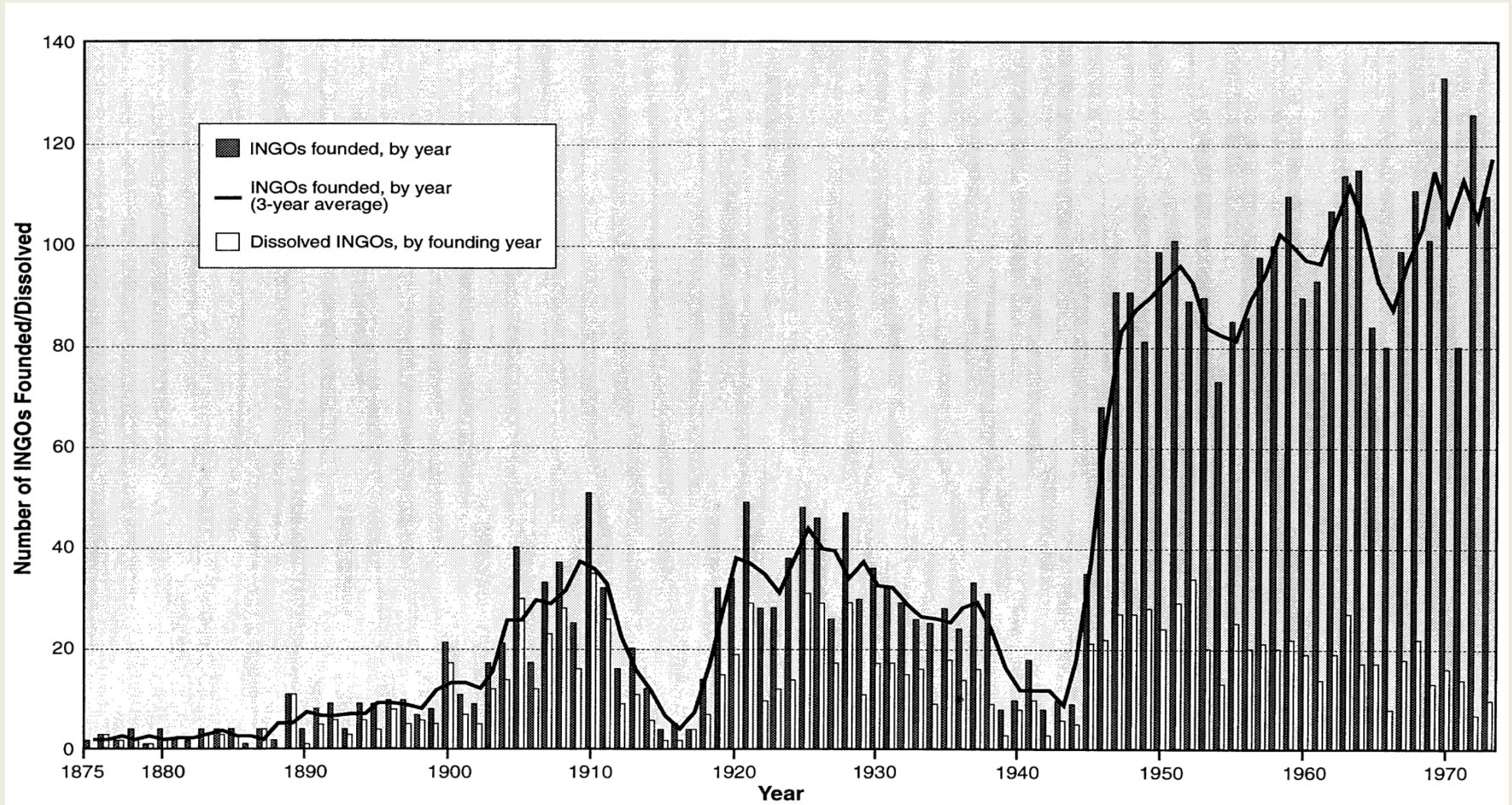
- Something that is defined negatively raises certain questions concerning the utility of the term and concept.
 - *Non-Governmental Organizations*
 - *Non-Profit Organizations*
 - These terms are applied to many different types of organizations including museums, universities, churches, professional organizations, voluntary association, and much more. The category even includes functions of for-profit corporations like Conoco or Freeport McMoRan when referring to their charitable or social activities.
 - The term *Civil Society Organizations* has been employed to emphasize the distinction between the State and the activities of these entities. Once again, though, it is not clear that the concept of non-profit applies.

Civil Society Organizations

- We might think of the major arenas within which individuals, families and local communities operate as consisting of



International Non-Governmental Organizations: INGOs Founding and Founding Dates of Dissolved INGOs, 1875 to 1973. *Yearbook of International Organizations* (UIA 1985, 1988)



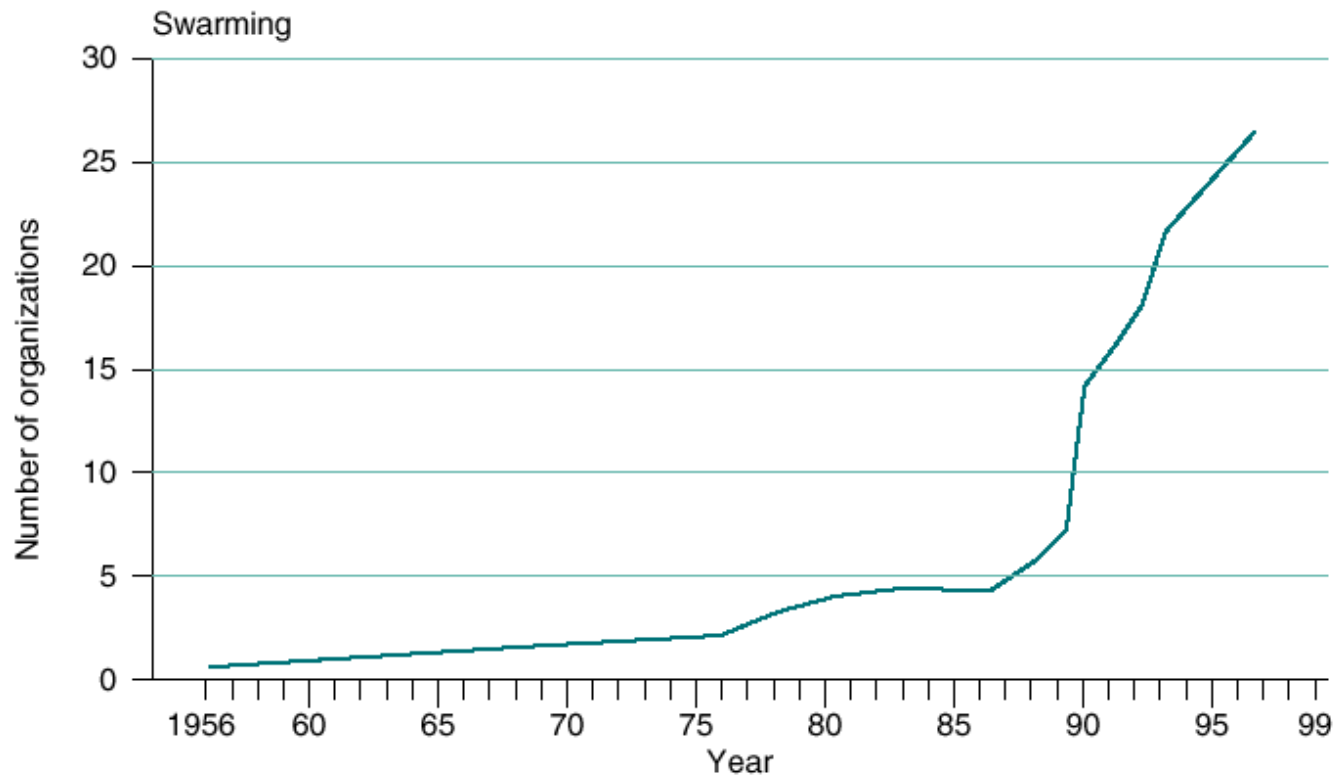
John Boli and George M. Thomas. 1997. World Culture in the World Polity: A Century of International Non-Governmental Organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 62:171-190

The Number of NGOs increased rapidly during the second half of the 20th Century

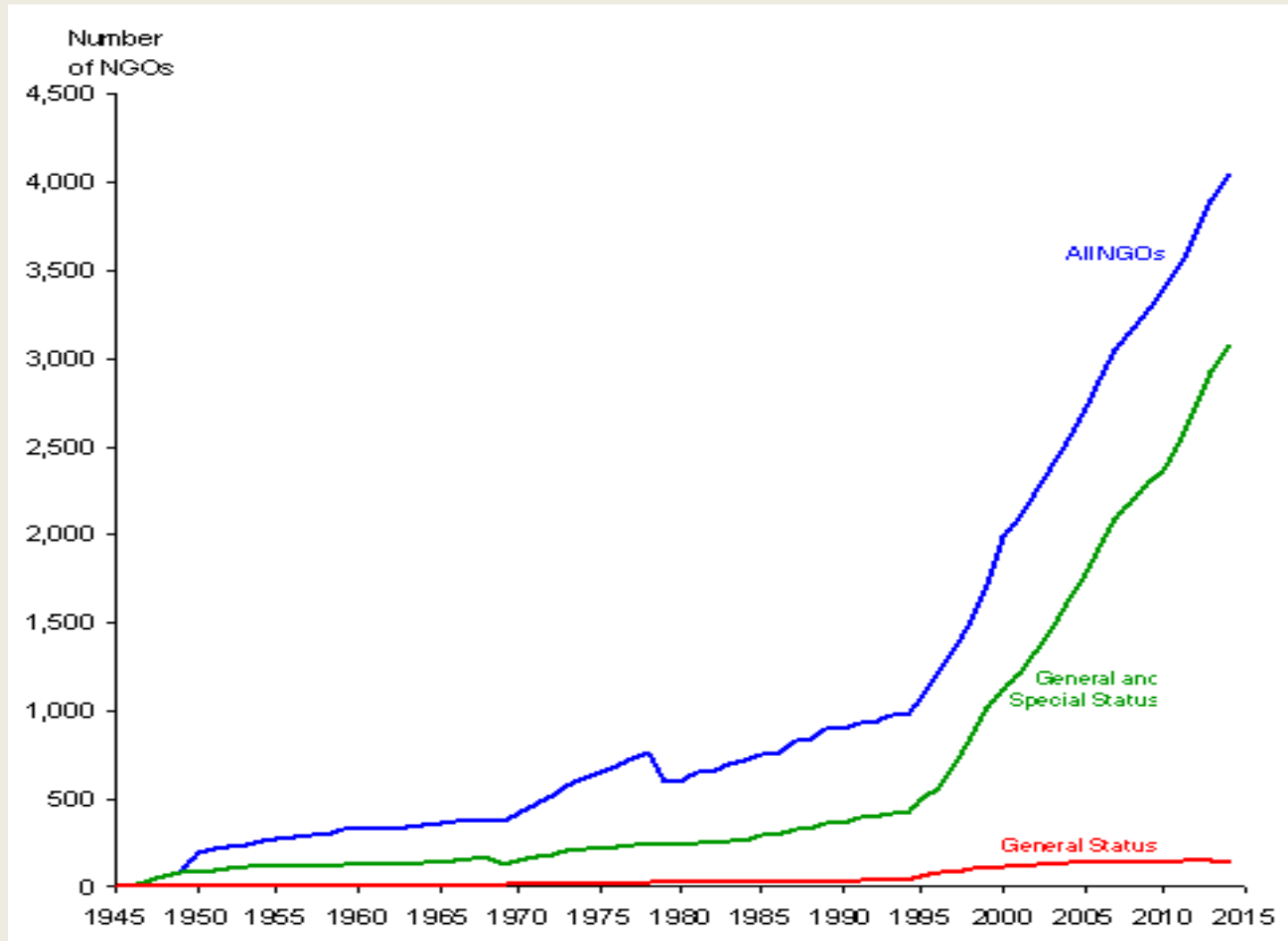
FIGURE 6.1

Graph of the Growth of NGOs (1956–1999).

SOURCE: Union of International Associations as quoted in "Swarming: Non-governmental International Organizations," *The Economist*, December 11, 1999, p. 20.

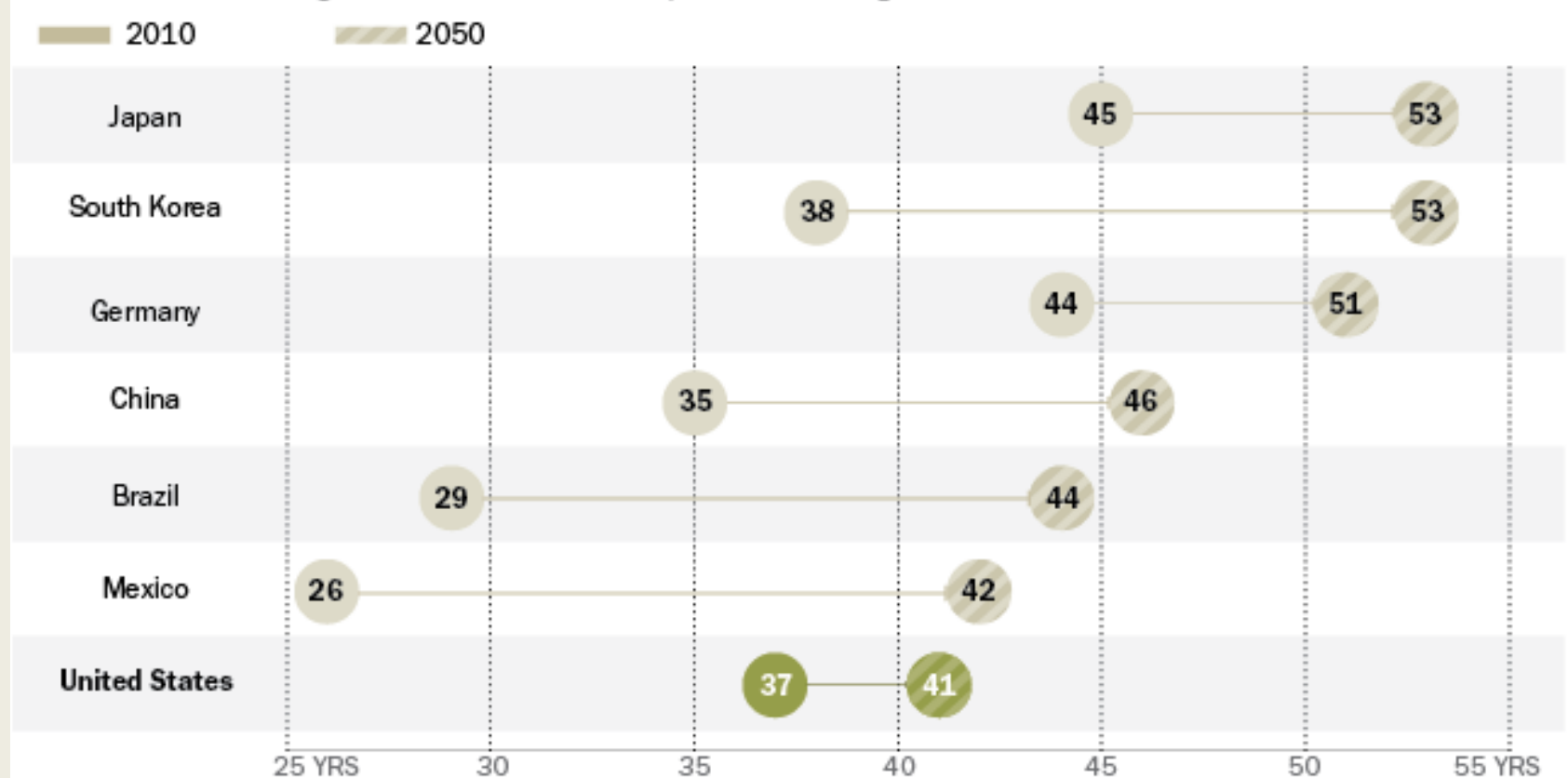


Growth in the Number of NGOs in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations



Motivations for Investigating the Potential role of FBOs

Estimated median age in selected countries, 2010 and 2050



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: 2012 Revision*, June 2013, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

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Faith-based Organizations (FBOs)

- One major segment of *Civil Society* consists of churches, congregations, and organizations established or sponsored by religious entities.
- Major FBOs
 - Catholic Charities
 - Jewish Federation
 - Lutheran Services of America
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Cáritas Mexicana
 - Misioneros Oblatos de María Imaculada

FBO Information from Administration on Aging

- **The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN)** The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN) offers informational resources and networking opportunities to faith-based practitioners, private philanthropies, and public administrators who seek to collaborate effectively to renew urban communities.
<http://www.fastennetwork.org/>
- **The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy** The Roundtable is a source of expert, unbiased information on policy and legal developments concerning the involvement of faith-based organizations in social services.
<http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/>

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

- In the U.S. FBOs have been allowed to apply for and receive government funding to provide social services to individuals in need. The Office's web pages notes that it
 - forms partnerships between government and non-profit organizations, both secular and faith-based, to more effectively serve Americans in need. The Office does so in ways that are consistent with the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution and other laws.
 - Allows faith-based organizations to apply for funding to engage in major public services like training and workforce development and more.
 - The President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships makes recommendations on how the Federal Government can more effectively partner with faith-based and neighborhood organizations.
 - Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/about>

Subsidiarity and Devolution

- The Catholic principle of *subsidiarity* holds that all decisions and activities that affect individuals should be carried out at the lowest level of government or formal organization.
- Since the Regan and Thatcher years the devolution of social services has been the reigning policy goal.
- This philosophy is compatible with the neoliberal approach that minimizes the role of the State and maximizes the role of the market.

Basic Ethical and Political Questions

- In societies that adhere to the principle of the *separation of church and state*, as is the case in Mexico and the U.S., does government sponsorship of FBOs violate basic principles, or are there circumstances in which government sponsorship of FBOs does not violate that basic principle?
 - Prior to the welfare reform act of 1996 FBOs were able to apply for federal support if they adhered to federal hiring practices, did not have extensive religious symbolism where services were rendered, and more.
 - Since 1996 FBOs are allowed to receive government grants
 - without segregating the funds from private sources.
 - They are allowed to provide services in spaces with religious symbols, and
 - they can discriminate in hiring practices in favor of coreligionists.
- Source: https://www.secular.org/issues/faith_based/position

Advocacy vs. Services

- Changing policy vs. Solely providing services
- Role of advocate vs. Subcontractor to the State
- La Organización de Comunidades basadas en la Fe difiere drásticamente de las “iniciativas basadas en la Fe”, que enfatizan la compasión y el servicio, pero evitan cualquier compromiso político con las fuerzas e instituciones, dejando a grandes grupos de personas sin alimento, sin atención médica, sin vivienda y sin empleo. Las Congregaciones que participan en la OCBF han descubierto el poder de los valores y visiones que comparten en común y trabajan tanto en su propia transformación, como en la de sus instituciones y comunidades.
 - <http://omiusajpic.org/espanol/temas/dignidad-humana/org-de-comunidades-basadas/que-es-la-org-de-com-basad/>

Inherent State Limitations

- Even with programs such as Pension para Adultos Mayores and Seguro Popular federal and state governments in Mexico will never be able to provide all of what a rapidly aging population requires. Nor will the U.S.
- Ethnic, gender, regional, and social class differences remain and will be difficult to eliminate.
- Economic crises, such as the current drastic drop in oil prices, impose limits on state expenditures.
- Other needs compete with those of a low-income frail elderly population.

Potential NGO/FBO Strengths

- Ministering to the poor and needy is an historical role of religious denominations. They were among the earliest social service agencies.
- Many of the needs of the elderly are routine and involve frequent interaction, e.g.,
 - Companionship
 - Assistance with ADLs
 - Assistance with IADLs
 - Transportation
- Co-religionists or members of one's congregation know the older individual and can be in close contact, whereas formal service providers are more distant and can be more insensitive.

Potential Weaknesses of FBOs

- A perceived or real unwillingness to separate a religious agenda from social functions, i.e., proselytizing.
- Especially for small local FBOs, limitations in resources and fund raising.
- Again, especially for small local FBOs, limitations in organizational and administrative capacity.
- Since there are so many, a major weakness is the lack of coordination among service providers who are competing for the same funding and clientele.

The Basic Questions

- What activities are FBOs engaged in related to advocacy for or service delivery to vulnerable elderly in Mexico and the U.S.?
- What differences are there among religious groups in the extent to which they engage in advocacy or purely service delivery?
- How does the general public perceive the role of FBOs. Does the receipt of public funding affect voluntary contributions?
- In what ways are FBOs employed by the State as service providers to the elderly and their families?
- How does the effectiveness of FBOs compare to that of non-sectarian or secular NGOs in advocating for or providing services to vulnerable elderly?