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Understanding Multi-purpose Hybrid Voluntary Organizations: The Contributions of Theories on Civil Society, Social Movements and Non-profit Organizations

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ABSTRACT The paper offers a theoretical framework to study the conditions that lead to the emergence of multi-purpose hybrid voluntary organizations and the factors that influence their ability to mobilize resources and enlist commitment. These organizations are characterized by four interrelated attributes: (a) they set out as their mission to uphold and promote cultural values that are typically at variant with dominant and institutionalized values; (b) they offer services to members and the public that express their distinct values, using the services as a model and catalyst for social change; (c) in addition to their instrumental goals, they aim to meet the expressive and social identity needs of their members by promoting a collective identity; and (d) they evolve into hybrid organizations by having multiple purposes—combining to various degrees goals of value change, service provision and mutual-aid. Because they deliberately combine features of volunteer-run associations, social movements and non-profit service organizations, we articulate a theoretical framework that melds concepts and propositions from the various theoretical perspectives used to study each of these organizational forms. We argue that the expanded theoretical framework offers a more comprehensive and dynamic view of civil society and a better perspective to the study of third sector organizations.

KEY WORDS: Hybrid voluntary organizations, social movements, civil society, non-profit organizations

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Introduction

Traditionally, research on third sector organizations has been segmented into three distinct theoretical perspectives that can be roughly labeled ‘civil society’, ‘social movement’ and ‘non-profit sector’. Civil society scholars, such as Putnam (2000) and Smith (1997), focus primarily on autonomous volunteer-run associations characterized by citizen participation and horizontal network relations (e.g., social clubs, mutual aid associations). Students of social movements (e.g., McAdam et al., 1996) have concentrated on organizations that use protest and extra institutional means to achieve social change. Researchers on the non-profit sector, such as Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld (1998), Salamon (1995) and Gronjberg (1993), study formally structured and legally recognized non-profit service organizations that are tax-exempt and are prohibited from distributing profits. Therefore, each research tradition focuses on an organizational form that is dominant and characteristic of the class of organizations it studies, and this form drives much of the research enterprise.

Yet, it is becoming increasingly clear that many third sector organizations, as they evolve over time, incorporate multiple purposes and structural features from all three prevailing forms. Examples of such organizations include racial, ethnic and gender-based organizations (Minkoff, 1995), religious charitable organizations (Allahyari, 2000), women’s non-profit organizations (Bordt, 1998), peace and conflict resolution organizations (Gidron et al., 2002) and social influence organizations (Knoke & Wood, 1981).

These organizations are distinguished by four interrelated attributes. Firstly, they set out as their mission to uphold and promote cultural values that are typically at variant with dominant and institutionalized values (Goodwin et al., 2001). Secondly, they offer services to members and the public that express their distinct values, using the services as a model and catalyst for social change. Thirdly, in addition to their instrumental goals, they aim to meet the expressive and social identity needs of their members by promoting a collective identity (Gamson, 1991; Schmitt & Martin, 1999). Fourth, and most importantly, they evolve into hybrid organizations by having multiple purposes, combining to various degrees goals of value change, service provision and mutual-aid (Minkoff, 1995, 2002), and a deliberate mix of organizational forms borrowed from volunteer-run associations, social movements and non-profit service organizations. We denote these organizations as ‘multi-purpose hybrid organizations’. Our definition should not be confused with similar terms used (e.g., multiple-product) to describe non-profit organizations that pursue for-profit enterprises (see Weisbrod, 1998), or organizations with multiple service domains and clients (see D’Aunno et al., 1991).

What distinguishes these multi-purpose hybrid organizations from strictly social movement organizations, non-profit service organizations or volunteer-run associations is that they combine key features from all three: (a) they seek to bring about social change, though not necessarily through protest and other non-institutional means; (b) the services they provide, such as social and educational, are a strategy for social change; (c) their internal structure is a mix of collectivist and bureaucratic elements (Bordt, 1998). The importance of these organizations as purveyors of cultural values, as catalysts of social change and as providers of invaluable services to their members and the general public cannot be underestimated.

Studies of multi-purpose hybrid organizations (see Hyde 1992; Bordt, 1998; Minkoff 2002), including our own comparative study of peace and conflict resolution organizations
(Gidron et al., 2002), grapple with three major research questions. Firstly, they try to understand the societal conditions that give rise to these organizations. Secondly, they want to understand how such organizations, despite their unconventional values, are able to mobilize resources to sustain themselves. Thirdly, they want to explain the ability of such organizations to enlist and maintain the commitment of their members. Such studies have tended to rely mostly on organizational theories such as population ecology, resource dependency and institutional theory. These theories are typically applied to analyze non-profit service organizations. Yet, in doing so, they are neither able to fully capture the complexity of the context that give rise to these organizations nor can they adequately address the distinctive issues they face in mobilizing resources and enlisting commitment.

We have encountered the same theoretical difficulties in our own study of peace and conflict resolution organizations (P/CROs) in Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine and South Africa. Briefly, the comparative study consists of a sample of ten P/CROs in each region. Extensive case data were collected on the founding, mission, leadership and membership, resources and structure of each organization. We initially conceptualized P/CROs as non-profit service organizations and applied a political-economy/institutional theory to explain their emergence, their capacity to mobilize resources and ability to sustain commitment of members. However, we quickly came to realize the inadequacy of such a theory to account for the unique features of these organizations and the complex environments in which they exist.

Therefore, our aim in this paper is threefold. First and foremost, we want to offer a more comprehensive theoretical perspective to explain emergence, resource mobilization and commitment. Secondly, we want to show that a synthesis of concepts and propositions from the three theoretical perspectives—civil society, social movement and non-profit service sector—can provide a better theoretical framework to address these issues. In doing so, we also rely on research findings and analytic insights gained from our comparative study. Thirdly, we want to suggest that the general field of third sector organizations, with its complex array of organizational forms, may benefit from a greater theoretical integration of the three perspectives.

An Expanded Conception of Civil Society

A first step in formulating a more comprehensive theoretical framework to study multi-purpose hybrid voluntary organizations is to recognize that they deliberately incorporate a mix of organizational features from volunteer-run associations, social movements and non-profit service organizations. Therefore, to better locate them among the organizational forms that constitute civil society, we start with the distinction that Foley and Edwards (1996) make between what they term ‘Civil Society I’ and ‘Civil Society II’. The first, exemplified by Berger et al. (1996) and Putnam (2000), refers to volunteer-run associations, networks of civic engagement and the production of social capital in fostering collective trust and in strengthening democracy. It purposefully excludes associations and networks that generate conflict or challenge the state. The second refers to groups that do challenge the state. These include not only movements that struggle against authoritarian regimes (Cohen & Arato, 1992; Bernhard, 1993), but also the new social movements that are concerned with social, cultural and quality-of-life issues, such as peace, human and citizenship rights, globalization and the environment (Kriesi et al., 1995).
Notably missing from their classification is the non-profit service sector which is also a vital aspect of civil society. Moreover, increasingly researchers point to social movement, advocacy and challenging organizations as significant constituents of the non-profit sector (Jenkins, 1987; McCarthy et al., 1991). Hybrid organizations that combine both non-profit service and protest or advocacy functions play a prominent role in meeting the needs and advancing the cause of marginalized groups (Hyde, 1992; Bordt, 1998; Minkoff, 2002). Indeed, it is quite common for these social movements to become incorporated as non-profit organizations (Cress, 1997). We should add that social protest and advocacy organizations can have many elements characteristic of Civil Society I. These include reliance on dense social networks and grassroots infrastructures, the accumulation of social capital by powerless groups, the creation of a collective identity and the expansion of the public sphere by promoting debates and dialogues (Minkoff, 1997).

To recognize that volunteer-run associations, social movements and non-profit service organizations actually represent different dimensions of civil society is to build on the insightful distinctions made by Foley and Edwards (1996) and add the non-profit service sector as a third dimension of civil society. Such an expansion enables us to locate multi-purpose hybrid organizations at the intersection of these three dimensions. As we show below, the expanded conception of civil society also directs us to theoretical constructs and findings from all three dimensions to better explain the emergence of multi-purpose hybrid organizations, their capacity to mobilize resources and ability to enlist commitment. Moreover, it also enables us address more adequately the dynamic changes that organizations may undergo as they traverse through the complex field of civil society.

One way to capture the variety of organizations that constitute civil society is to classify them along two axes that determine their purpose and organizational form (see also Kriesi, 1996, p. 153). The first axis is the relationship between the organization and the state. It influences not only the emergence of different organizations but, particularly, their capacity and strategies to mobilize resources. The second refers to the organization’s relationship to its constituents. It influences organizational efforts to enlist and maintain

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Table 1. Types of organization by relationship to state and constituencies
commitment (McCarthy & Walker, 2004). We propose that the purpose or institutional role of the organization is largely defined by its relationship to the state, which may be neutral, oppositional or cooperative. Relationship to constituents, which range on a continuum from total participation to token participation, defines the internal organizational structure (see also Kriesi, 1996; Galaskiewicz & Bielefeld, 1998). Table 1 presents the results of our classification.

Civil Society I consists of organizations that have a neutral relationship to the state. While they may view themselves as contributing to the ‘good society’, they generally focus on the well-being of their own members. If they interact with the state it is in order to obtain an appropriate legal status (e.g., tax exempt status). They assume a neutral or indifferent stance toward state political institutions and policies since these seldom concern their activities. They neither openly support nor oppose them. Social clubs and self-help groups are prime examples of such organizations.

Civil Society II consists of organizations that arise in direct opposition to state political institutions and policies with an explicit mandate to change them by using non-conventional political means (thus excluding strictly lobby organizations). These include various local and national social movement organizations such as civil rights, anti-abortion or anti-globalization movements. We distinguish between two types of social movement organizations—transforming and reforming (Lofland, 1996). Transforming social movements oppose state regimes and seek to replace them with alternative regimes. Examples may include pro-democracy or anti-global economy movements. In our study, almost all peace organizations in South Africa were transforming social movements that sought to overturn the Apartheid regime. In contrast, reforming social movements do not oppose state regimes per se but seek to alter their policies, as is the case with pro-choice, pro-life organizations or civil rights movements. All the peace organizations in Israel were reforming social movements, as they were careful not to challenge the legitimacy of the regime. Opposing state regimes or policies does not necessarily indicate that the challengers do not interact with state officials or representatives of political elites. However, the challengers typically operate outside the normally instituted political processes.3

Finally, Civil Society III consists of organizations that legitimate and reinforce state regimes and policies through their programs and activities. Indeed, they often depend on the state both for legitimacy and fiscal resources (Salamon, 1995). These organizations include mostly non-profit service organizations that receive a tax-exempt status and obtain from the state a significant portion of their resources. Examples are hospitals and social service agencies. They also include various lobby organizations and interest groups, such as trade and professional associations, that attempt to influence public policy to favors their constituencies (Laumann & Knoke, 1987). It is worth noting that organizations dependent on the state may also oppose certain state policies. For example, religious-based organizations may obtain public funding to assist poor families, but may still oppose state policies regarding abortion.

It is important to emphasize that the boundaries among the three dimensions of civil society are fluid. Throughout their life course, organizations may alter their relations to the state with concomitant changes in their institutional role. For example, self-help groups may expand and receive state support in order to offer services to a broader group of beneficiaries. Others may turn into counter-culture movements. Social movement organizations may succeed in changing state policies and become non-profit service
organizations and vice versa (Minkoff, 2002). Similarly, non-profit service organizations, such as churches, under particular political opportunities, may mobilize their resources for social movement activities (Kurzman, 1998). Indeed, there seems to be a typical life cycle trajectory of multi-purpose hybrid organizations. They often begin as volunteer-run associations, are transformed into social movement organizations and, if they are successful in mobilizing resources, become non-profit service organizations (see Hyde, 1992; Schmitt & Martin, 1999).

The state too may change its political institutions and polices, resulting in altered relations with various organizations. In South Africa, for example, organizations that were in opposition to the Apartheid regime found themselves in a co-operative and often dependent relationship with the post-Apartheid Government (Habib & Taylor, 1999). It is precisely the fluidity in the movement of organizations across the complex landscape of civil society and the periodic changes in the polity that generates many hybrid forms.

Turning to the relationships of organizations with their constituents, total participation characterizes organizations in which constituents both control and run them, as in the case of self-help groups and the celebrated bowling leagues. The archetype is volunteer-run associations, which Smith (1997) terms as “grassroots associations”. Limited participation characterizes organizations in which constituents define and shape policies and approve programs but rely on paid staff to carry out daily operations, as in the case of labor unions or the National Organization for Women. Such organizations are characterized by a powerful elected board that represents their constituents. This was the modal pattern for P/CROs in all three regions. Token participation characterizes organizations that are controlled and run by paid staff, as in the case of most non-profit service organizations. While they may have constituents on their board of directors or as volunteers, they provide only token participation. Surprisingly, in our study about 40% of the P/CROs were controlled by paid staff, mostly in Northern Ireland and South Africa.

Relations with constituencies are also fluid and may change over time. Some theorists have argued that over time surviving organizations tend to move toward the professional model (see DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). Others have shown that a strong commitment to collectivist beliefs can sustain full participation by members (see Rothschild-Whitt, 1979; Bloomfield, 1994). In our own study, a few of the peace organizations were indeed able to retain their collectivist structure.

Finally, as we detail below, this expanded conception of civil society presupposes a social system in which (a) the power of the state is checked; (b) the public sphere is institutionalized; and (c) it comprises of networks of associations and organizations expressing diverse interests.

Explaining Emergence, Resource Mobilization and Commitment

To address these issues, we have reviewed the three theoretical perspectives with an eye to selecting what we consider to be their signal contributions in addressing these research questions. For example, like social movements, multi-purpose hybrid organizations espouse values that challenge established institutional rules. Therefore, research findings on the importance of the political context in facilitating or impeding the formation of social movements would be relevant to this set of organizations. Similarly, because these organizations also provide concrete services, research on non-profit service
organizations could shed light on how such organizations mobilize needed resources. Finally, since multi-purpose hybrid organizations also address the expressive needs of their members, we look toward findings on how volunteer-run associations use social networks to recruit members and sustain their commitment to the organization. Also, in this process we are guided by the theoretical and empirical challenges presented by our own comparative study. We have looked for the efficacy of each perspective in helping us explain how, in each region, the P/CROs emerged, mobilized resources and maintained commitment.

**Emergence**

There is a consensus among civil society researchers that third sector organizations can form when two interrelated societal conditions exist. The first refers to the existence of a public sphere. Somers (1993, p. 589) defines it as “a contested participatory site in which actors with overlapping identities as legal subjects, citizens, economic actors, and family and community members, form a political body and engage in negotiations and contestations over political and social life”. The second refers to the proliferation or richness of associational life (see Putnam et al., 1993).

That was clearly the case in our own study. In all three regions, the formation of the peace and conflict resolution organizations was correlated with the expansion of the public sphere and the non-profit service sector: The reforms instituted in the mid 1980s by P. W. Botha in South Africa that permitted multiracial parties and legalized the African trade unions; the new Law of Amutot (associations) enacted in Israel in 1980, facilitating the establishment of such entities; and the increasing encouragement by the UK Government, backed with financial subsidies, of the work of local inter-community organizations in Northern Ireland.

In other words, we argue that multi-purpose hybrid organizations cannot emerge in societies that lack these two pre-requisites—a public sphere and a proliferation of third sector organizations. Indeed, the very existence of a non-profit service sector with its diverse array of organizations that are relatively independent of the state is a clear manifestation of a viable public sphere. In contrast, third sector organizations formed or controlled by the state do not contribute to a viable public sphere. For example, different accounts on the non-profit sector in the former Soviet Bloc (see Fric et al., 1998; Saulean & Epure, 1998) suggest that existing organizations were few and heavily controlled by the state. In another account of volunteer-run associations during the Nazi regime (Bauer, 1990) a similar picture emerges. This is not surprising as totalitarian regimes tend to limit “personal choices and forms of human involvement” (Starr, 1990, p. 37). Starr adds that “a vital civil society requires more than a rich variety of voluntary associations and independent centers of power; it also needs a rich sphere of public discussion that engages society’s diverse classes and groups”.

**Proposition 1. The larger the public sphere and the greater the richness of associational life, the greater the emergence of multi-purpose hybrid organizations**

Still, for multi-purpose hybrid organizations to arise also requires a particular political milieu, or what researchers of social movements call a ‘political opportunity structure’ (Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, 1996; Rucht, 1996). Because these organizations engage in advocacy and social movement activities, their capacity to do so presupposes a political
milieu with certain characteristics. Accordingly, research on social movements (see Tarrow, 1994; Della Porta & Rucht, 1995) shows that they are more likely to emerge when: (a) the political system is open and competitive; (b) political elites are divided; (c) use of threats and coercive means by the regime is checked; and (d) the organizations have access to elite allies. Jenkins et al. (2003) find that African-American protest increased when Government was divided, when the political strength of Northern Democrats increased, and when Republican Presidents were pressured to take a pro-civil rights stance because of the Cold War. Interestingly, increase in Black representatives in Congress lowered protest.

Our own study reaffirms the importance of political opportunities and threat. While most of the P/CROs, in all three regions, emerged as the conflict intensified, their emergence signaled elite political realignments. In Israel, it was a change in the ruling Government coalition that gave greater voice to peace advocates. In Northern Ireland, under its direct rule, the UK Government increased its involvement by funding bridging community associations. In South Africa, the Apartheid regime initiated in the 1980s several liberalization reforms, such as allowing colored and Indian political representation, encouraging the creation of a Black middle class, and easing the restrictions on voluntary associations. In all three regions, these political changes also led to curbs on state use of coercive power, although in South Africa, the increase in protest brought a backlash in the form of a declaration of a state emergency (Gidron et al., 2002, pp. 42–46).

**Proposition 2.** Multi-purpose hybrid organizations are more likely to emerge when the political system is more competitive, political elites are divided, the state repressive power is checked, and the organizations have access to elite allies

**Resource Mobilization**

For organizations to survive they have to mobilize members, financial resources and legitimacy. Theories on volunteer-run associations and social movement organizations stress the importance of social networks in the mobilization of members. Undoubtedly, one of the lasting contributions of civil society theories is in highlighting the importance of social networks and the resulting social capital both as the sustenance of volunteer-run associations and as a mobilizing force for new associations. It is the glue that keeps associations together, and it is a powerful resource social movements use to mobilize members for collective action. Putnam (2000) distinguishes between bonding and bridging social networks, the first promotes single identity and ethnic associations, and the second encourages the formation of broad-based associations. Relevant to our study, there is significant evidence to suggest that associations formed by bridging social networks are more effective in reducing conflict and promoting peace (Varshney, 2002).

Research on social movement mobilization also points to social networks, including networks density, frequency of contact and shared ideologies as key to mobilizing members (see McAdam, 1988; McCarthy et al., 1991). In our own study we find evidence that members were recruited through extensive reliance on friendship and professional networks and the use of social capital. This resulted in a high degree of social homogeneity of the membership. Israeli peace organizations were comprised primarily of Jews from the middle and upper classes and those of Ashkenazi/European origin. South African organizations consisted primarily of White middle class
English-speaking staff and members. Only in Northern Ireland did the peace organizations display a significant degree of cross-ethnic membership drawn from working and middle class backgrounds.

Proposition 3. The greater the access of multi-purpose hybrid organizations to social networks the greater their ability to mobilize members and garner support

Civil society scholars also emphasize the importance of ‘civic skills’ as a mobilizing resource. As articulated by Brady et al., (1995, p. 273) “Citizens who can speak and write well or who are comfortable organizing and taking part in meetings are likely to be more effective when they get involved in politics”. These skills can be honed through participation in the workplace and various third sector organizations. Hence, the availability of potential members with high civic skills provides the leadership stock needed for effective organization building. Indeed, in our study, in all three regions, leaders were recruited with strong ‘civic skills’. In Northern Ireland, leaders were experienced union activists or local community organizers. In Israel, many were former military officers and active members of political parties. In South Africa, a number of the leaders were intellectuals connected to the academic and research institutions as well as members of established third sector organizations.

Proposition 4. The greater the ability of multi-purpose hybrid organizations to recruit leaders with extensive civic skills the greater their chances to survive

Analogous to social networks, the embeddedness of the organization in an inter-organizational network is a major determinant of its capacity to mobilize economic and political resources. Minkoff (2002) has shown that the ability of identity-based advocacy organizations to survive depends on adopting organizational forms that are institutionalized in their organizational ecology. Others have suggested that the ability of social movement organizations to secure legitimacy and stable fiscal seems to depend on the development of formal internal structures (Zald & McCarthy, 1987; Kriesi, 1996).

In our own study, almost all the P/CROs in the three regions developed a formal structure. While many began as loosely and informally organized associations, at the time of our study almost all had paid staff and acquired a legal status of a non-profit organization (Meyer, 1999). Undoubtedly, the peace organizations that survived beyond their founding stage were those whose structure became more formalized and professionalized. Still, in keeping with their collectivist ideology (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979), three of the organizations, all in Israel, adopted a collectivist structure and five (three in Northern Ireland) adopted both formal and collectivist features.

These findings are replicated in studies of non-profit service organizations whose survival and capacity to obtain resources depends on (a) interorganizational linkages with major sources of legitimacy and funding (Baum & Oliver, 1991); and (b) embeddedness of dominant institutional norms in their structure (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). One interesting finding from our own study was the dependence of the P/CROs on funding sources that were not indigenous to the societies in which they operated. In both South Africa and Israel, where the stance of these organizations had been primarily oppositional to the state or its policies, the major sources of funding were foreign—whether governments, private foundations or religious organizations. In Northern Ireland, where many of the groups studied had worked to establish inter-community relations in order to contain the violence of paramilitary groups, they were fiscally supported by the UK Government, which
promoted such projects. Dependence on such funding sources also increased the need to formalize and professionalize the organization. Clearly, the advantage of reliance on external funding networks for the P/CROs was to buffer them from local retributions.

Researchers who study hybrid organizations emphasize the process of institutionalization as a key determinant of their survival (Hyde, 1992; Minkoff, 2002). By institutionalization they mean the processes by which the organization conforms to dominant cultural values by giving them expression in their organizational structure (Scott, 1995). Institutionalization poses a dilemma to multi-purpose hybrid organizations because their values are at variant with dominant cultural belief systems. Hence, they attempt to legitimize their values by linking them and appealing to commonly accepted cultural symbols such as personal liberty and citizenship rights. For example, in the US, pro-abortion organizations rationalize their values by appeal to personal liberty and freedom from state interference. In Germany, in contrast, they appeal to the state responsibility to protect the well-being of women (Ferree, 2003). In other words, these organizations frame their particular values in ways that resonate with dominant cultural beliefs (Snow & Benford, 1988). As we show below, this was particularly evident in our study where most of the P/CROs adopted values that resonated with institutionalized cultural beliefs.

Proposition 5(a). The greater the connectedness of multi-purpose hybrid organizations to other organizations that control important resources (e.g., members, funds, legitimacy, and technical expertise) the greater their chances of survival.

Proposition 5(b). The survival of multi-purpose hybrid organizations depends on their ability to develop a formal structure.

Proposition 5(c). The survival of multi-purpose hybrid organizations depends on their embracing mainstream cultural symbols.

Commitment

Since the issue of commitment is central to both volunteer-run associations and social movement organizations, there has been considerable cross-fertilization between the two research traditions. Borrowing from social psychological studies on organizational commitment (see Meyer & Allen, 1997), researchers have examined the incentives that motivate individuals to join and participate in these organizations (Klandermans, 1997). At the social psychological level, commitment is a consequence of the accumulation of social capital and the trust that it promotes (Anheier & Kendall, 2002). It is also reinforced by personal fulfillment that comes from participation. As Gamson (1992, p. 56) notes “Participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfillment and realization of the self”. This is particularly the case in multi-purpose hybrid organizations because they explicitly aim to respond to the expressive needs of their members and to foster a collective identity. In her study of women’s health centers, Hyde (1992) notes the conscientious efforts of these organizations to forge a collective feminist identity that responded to the expressive needs of the members.

Researchers on social movement organizations also emphasize the importance of a shared set of symbols or “frames”. According to Snow and Benford (1988, p. 198), frames “assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize
potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists”. Frames typically consist of a definition of the problem, prognosis and a call for action. Snow and Benford (1988) propose that the more these frames resonate with the belief systems held by potential and actual members, the more these frames will be incorporated into their own social networks and ‘lifeworld’, and the greater will be their commitment to the social movement.

Similarly, studies of non-profit service organizations point to the importance of organizational ideologies and culture in maintaining the commitment of staff members to the organization (Weick, 1995; Glisson & James, 2002). In particular, the ideologies promote a collective rationale for the existence and importance of the organization, and provide a shared set of beliefs that justify its activities. Karabanow (1999), for example, recounts how a youth shelter had developed a ‘pro-kid’ culture that directed and controlled the emotional work between workers and clients. Because most of the workers perceived their work as an extension of their own personal and intrinsic being, their values resonated with the organizational culture thus reinforcing each other.

In our own study, the frames selected by the P/CROs varied by region, echoing the nature of the conflict, the political context in which it was embedded, and the available cultural tool kits. In South Africa, most of organizations framed the problem as the very nature of the Apartheid regime. The solution was seen in the establishment of a new political regime based on democratic, just and non-racial principles. The call for action was to de-legitimize the regime. Commitment of members was based on that shared vision of a non-racial, just and democratic society. It was a vision that was consonant with the personal values of many of the members who were highly educated and from an English-speaking background. In Israel, for most of the peace organizations the diagnosis was the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its danger to the Israeli social and moral order. The prognosis was to end the occupation and the call for action was to recognize the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. Individual commitment was sustained because the principle of self-determination and human rights, coupled with an affirmation of loyalty to the state and the Zionist ideology, resonated well with the liberal cultural values and identities of the members. In Northern Ireland, a majority of the organizations defined the problem as attitudinal and interpersonal prejudice. The prognosis was interpersonal tolerance of religious and ethnic differences. The call for action was to promote dialogue and mutual understanding between members of the two communities. Many Catholics and Protestants could support the peace organizations because these frames confirmed their own daily experiences of living together, and because they abhorred the violence perpetrated by the paramilitaries.

Proposition 6(a). The greater the ability of the multi-purpose hybrid organizations to respond to the expressive and social identity needs of their members and forge a collective identity, the greater the commitment and trust of members in the organization

Proposition 6(b). The greater the resonance of the frames adopted by the multi-purpose hybrid organizations with the personal beliefs of their members and supporters, the greater their commitment to the organization

In Table 2 we summarize the contributions of each theoretical perspective in identifying and explaining the factors that influence the emergence of multi-purpose hybrid organizations, their capacity to mobilize resources and their ability to generate commitment.
We wish to stress that integrating the theoretical and empirical insights from all three perspectives not only enriches research on multi-purpose hybrid organizations, but more broadly the study of third sector organizations. As noted earlier, many non-profit service organizations evolve over time from either a volunteer-run association or a social movement. These early organizational forms and the values they embody leave an indelible mark on subsequent organizational developments and transformations. Therefore, a fuller explanation of the mission, inter-organizational relations, services and structures of non-profit service organizations often requires the incorporation and integration of theoretical and empirical constructs from these other research traditions.

In our own study, we first began with an analytic framework typically used to study non-profit service organizations. Yet, as we had collected more data about the P/CROs, we came to recognize that they share many features with social movement organizations. We also noted that several started as volunteer-run associations. We realized that we were unable to adequately explain the conditions leading to the emergence of the P/CROs, their strategies to mobilize resources and members, their internal structure and their choices of actions lest we turn to the other theories. For example, we used concepts such as public sphere and political opportunity structure to explain the emergence of the P/CROs. Similarly, we employed concepts such as social networks, inter-organizational relations and institutionalization to explain how they mobilized resources and attained legitimacy. Finally, we relied heavily on notions of personal fulfillment, cultural frames and organizational ideologies to understand the commitment of members and the choices of action strategies.

It is also clear from our analysis that whether one studies volunteer-run associations, social movement organizations or non-profit service organizations, the researcher quickly encounters a broadly diverse and heterogeneous set of organizations. Therefore, no single theoretical perspective can hope to fully explain the evolution, survival, structure and membership patterns. Indeed, adherence to a single perspective may cause the researcher to ignore important findings that could enrich the analysis. Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards (2004) make a similar argument regarding the study of advocacy organizations. They also call for the need to integrate theories on socials movement, interest groups and non-profits. As they point out “the compartmentalization of research within sub-fields and disciplines means that core ideas and findings go unnoticed by scholars studying similar phenomena” (Andrews & Edward, 2004, p. 500). We could not agree more.

| Table 2. Conceptual contributions of civil society, social movement and non-profit service sector research |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Civil society   | Social movement | Non-profit sector |
| Emergence       | Public sphere;  | Political opportunity structure (POS) | Infrastructure of non-profits |
| Resources       | Civic culture   | Social network; | Interorganizational linkages; Institutionalization |
| mobilization    | Social network; | Interorganizational linkages; Formalization of structure |
|                 | Social capital; |               | |
|                 | Civic skills    |               | |
| Commitment      | Personal        | Shared frame   | Organizational ideologies |
|                 | fulfillment     |               | |

We wish to stress that integrating the theoretical and empirical insights from all three perspectives not only enriches research on multi-purpose hybrid organizations, but more broadly the study of third sector organizations. As noted earlier, many non-profit service organizations evolve over time from either a volunteer-run association or a social movement. These early organizational forms and the values they embody leave an indelible mark on subsequent organizational developments and transformations. Therefore, a fuller explanation of the mission, inter-organizational relations, services and structures of non-profit service organizations often requires the incorporation and integration of theoretical and empirical constructs from these other research traditions.

In our own study, we first began with an analytic framework typically used to study non-profit service organizations. Yet, as we had collected more data about the P/CROs, we came to recognize that they share many features with social movement organizations. We also noted that several started as volunteer-run associations. We realized that we were unable to adequately explain the conditions leading to the emergence of the P/CROs, their strategies to mobilize resources and members, their internal structure and their choices of actions lest we turn to the other theories. For example, we used concepts such as public sphere and political opportunity structure to explain the emergence of the P/CROs. Similarly, we employed concepts such as social networks, inter-organizational relations and institutionalization to explain how they mobilized resources and attained legitimacy. Finally, we relied heavily on notions of personal fulfillment, cultural frames and organizational ideologies to understand the commitment of members and the choices of action strategies.

It is also clear from our analysis that whether one studies volunteer-run associations, social movement organizations or non-profit service organizations, the researcher quickly encounters a broadly diverse and heterogeneous set of organizations. Therefore, no single theoretical perspective can hope to fully explain the evolution, survival, structure and membership patterns. Indeed, adherence to a single perspective may cause the researcher to ignore important findings that could enrich the analysis. Kenneth Andrews and Bob Edwards (2004) make a similar argument regarding the study of advocacy organizations. They also call for the need to integrate theories on socials movement, interest groups and non-profits. As they point out “the compartmentalization of research within sub-fields and disciplines means that core ideas and findings go unnoticed by scholars studying similar phenomena” (Andrews & Edward, 2004, p. 500). We could not agree more.
Conclusion

We have shown that the study of the emergence of multi-purpose hybrid organizations and their strategies to mobilize resources and enlist commitment can benefit from the integration of concepts, theoretical insights and findings from each of the three research traditions on civil society, social movements and the non-profit service sector. Indeed, we argue that the three perspectives complement each other, and that studies of volunteer-run associations, social movements and non-profit service organizations can be greatly enriched from such integration. However, to do so requires, first and foremost, that we adopt a broader conception of civil society, as we have proposed in this paper. In particular, the dynamic relationship between the dimensions of civil society and the transformation paths that third sector organizations may undergo as they move from one dimension to another requires that we also broaden our theoretical boundaries.

As this paper suggests, it is time for the intellectual walls that separate civil society, social movement and non-profit service sector theories to come down. Several studies, including our own, have shown that the terrains covered by each of the three research traditions often overlap and have many similar features. Indeed, one of our main arguments is that third sector organizations are dynamic entities. Throughout their life cycle, they move back and forth through the different configurations of civil society, especially as they respond to macro-social, political and cultural forces that affect the balance and relations among its constituent elements. Each theoretical perspective may be particularly useful in explaining a specific phase in the evolution of these organizations. We propose that melding the unique contributions of each research tradition in explaining the three major organizational issues addressed in this paper—emergence, resource mobilization and commitment—is an important step toward their theoretical cross-fertilization.

Notes

1. The literature on this category of organizations uses various terms such as ‘non-profit organizations’, ‘voluntary associations’ and ‘civil society organizations’ among others. The idea in all cases is that these organizations are neither a constituent of the public sector nor a part of the profit-making sector.
2. For complete details on the methodology and findings see Gidron et al. (2004).
3. That was the case for most of the peace organizations in Israel, which used back channels to interact with political elites.
4. We are also cognizant of the fact that rich associational life may be exploited by totalitarian political parties to gain hegemony (see Kwon, 2004).

References


