Democracy and the Role of Associations

Political, organizational and social contexts

Edited by
Sigrid Roßteutscher

Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science

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Recently, civil society has been celebrated as a solution to political apathy and cynicism towards representative democracy. This book, however, argues that the role of associations in and for democracy is only properly understood if we take the context into account.

The authors collected in this volume critically examine the crucial link between the associative sector and the health of democracy. Focusing on the role of context and using diverse approaches and empirical material, they explore whether these associations in differing sociopolitical contexts can sometimes undermine rather than reinvigorate democracy.

The book features empirical and comparative studies on the effects of associative democracy focusing on Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Northern Ireland, European Union institutions and South America. It will interest students and researchers of social capital, civil society and associative democracy.

Sigrid Roßteutscher is a Reader at the University of Mannheim and project director at the Mannheim Centre of European Research (MZES). Her main interest is in participation, values, social inequality and associations' role in contemporary democracy and the re-construction of present-day welfare states.

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Edited by Thomas Poguntke

Keele University, UK and

Jan W.van Deth

University of Mannheim, Germany on behalf of the European Consortium for Political Research

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Series editor's preface

In his Address to the First German Sociologists' Conference in 1910, Max Weber pleaded firmly for a 'Sociology of Associational Life', mainly because the political consequences of voluntary engagement were evident. If people spend their time in skittle clubs and singing groups, they will become 'good citizens' easily. The appreciation and support of monarchs for voluntary associations is, according to Weber, directly related to the pacifying nature of their activities: 'Where people are singing, you can settle without reluctance'. Obviously, Weber's appeal echoed the observations and recommendations Alexis de Tocqueville had expressed in the 1830s about the relevance of associational life for American democracy. Both Tocqueville and Weber stressed the significance of engagement in non-political voluntary associations for the development of civic skills and attitudes among ordinary people.

With emerging problems and challenges of democratic decision-making processes in many countries in recent decades, a remarkable revival of Tocquevillian approaches can be observed. Social scientists, philosophers, journalists and politicians rediscovered the appeal of voluntary associations and volunteering as a cure for such different problems as the overload of welfare-state provisions, the weakening of social cohesion and solidarity, or the decline of civic engagement. In particular, the work of Robert Putnam on 'social capital' and democracy in Italy and the United States functioned as a catalyst for heated debates. These disputes concentrate mainly on the question of whether voluntary associations are indeed a prerequisite for democracy. Although certainly not overlooked, additional questions about the exact nature of these likely consequences are frequently neglected. Instead, the simple presumption that voluntary associations are benevolent for democratic decision-making processes is relied upon.

The contributors to this volume all critically examine the available approaches of the benevolent consequences of voluntary associations for democracy. They share the notion that categories such as 'the voluntary sector', 'civil society' or 'democratic decision-making' are too unspecific to be of much help. What is needed, then, are particular and precise con-ceptualizations that take specific circumstances and historical developments into account. The contributors differ clearly in their research interests, study designs, problem definitions, selected material, and the scope of the analyses presented, but they all cope with the social and political contexts of voluntary associations and volunteering on the one hand, and the chances for (continued) democratic decision-making on the other.

Before the various analyses are presented, Sigrid Roßteutscher summarizes the major questions and approaches in her introduction to this volume by elaborating the three contexts to be considered: the political regime; the features of associations; and the social conditions of daily life (Chapter 1). Her unambiguous expectation that the role of associations in and for democracy is properly understood only if we consider contextual

factors, is clearly corroborated by the other authors. The first three contributions are addressed to the relevance of politics and political institutions. E.Spencer Wellhofer studies the rise of Fascism in Italy and clearly shows that it was not a lack of civic organizations that favoured weak democracy or antidemocratic movements (Chapter 2). The dangers of neglecting the fact that civil society might have a 'dark side' are emphasized by Feargal Cochrane in his analysis of various groups in Northern Ireland (Chapter 3). Very different problems and challenges come up when we turn to the role of voluntary associations in the multi-level polity of the EU as described by Stijn Smismans (Chapter 4). The next part of the volume focuses on features of associations as the second set of contextual factors. In an extensive comparison of the voluntary sectors in Aberdeen and Mannheim, William Maloney and Sigrid Roßteutscher found astonishing structural similarities between organizational features and output in both cities (Chapter 5). The next contribution deals with interests groups in Eastern European democracies. Umut Korkut shows the impact of strong elite strata that dominate civil organizations and effectively frustrate more democratic politics (Chapter 6). The importance of paying attention to the attitudes and interests of group leaders is also demonstrated by Emma Clarence, Grant Jordan and William Maloney in their analyses of British campaign groups (Chapter 7). The last part of the volume concentrates on factors of a social and historical context. Nadia Molenaers disputes the idea that voluntary associations have similar consequences everywhere by presenting detailed case studies of informal networks in two Nicaraguan villages (Chapter 8). Ever since Tocqueville, churches have been considered a special category of voluntary associations. In an extensive study of churches in secularizing societies in Europe and especially in the Netherlands, Joep de Hart and Paul Dekker show that churches and church organizations still occupy a recognizable position (Chapter 9). Long-term social processes are also at the centre of the historical analyses of the role and position of women in Norwegian voluntary organizations (Chapter 10). Meindert Fennema and Jean Tillie return to the general questions about the impact of voluntary associations in their discussion of the role of such organizations in multicultural democracies (Chapter 11). Finally, Sigrid Roßteutscher discusses the main question of this volume—does context matter?—in her concluding chapter by showing that positive impacts of voluntary associations are most evident in situations where we do not really need them (that is, in well-established democracies), and much less clear or even destructive in situations where those positive consequences are urgently required (Chapter 12).

Max Weber was right at first sight: 'Where people are singing, you can settle without reluctance'. But the intriguing questions remain, first, why some people establish singing clubs and others do not, and, second, which political consequences can be expected from voluntary associations like singing clubs. The various contributions to this volume clearly show that contexts do matter and that not much is gained by using simple categories such as 'voluntary associations', 'civil society' or 'democracy'. Besides, voluntary associations and volunteering do not simply have benevolent consequences. You better have a careful look at skittle clubs and singing groups before you settle down.

<div align="right">Jan W.van Deth
Mannheim, August 2004</div>

Editor's acknowledgements

This book originated in a workshop entitled *Rescuing Democracy*? *The Lure of the Associative Elixir* held as part of the 2002 ECPR Joint Sessions at the University of Turin in Italy. The high number of applicants to this workshop confirmed my notion of an 'associative turn' currently taking place in larger parts of the political and social sciences. While it has not been easy to select the workshop papers, the selection of suitable papers to be included in this volume proved to be even more difficult. All papers presented in Turin were of high academic quality and the decision to include certain papers but not others was made purely in consideration of the volume's theme and coherence. Several of the original ECPR joint session papers had their origins in the social capital approach. It was therefore very fortunate that I was offered the opportunity to include these social capital papers in a special symposium of the ECPR's *European Political Science* journal. This symposium on social capital was published in the summer 2003 edition of *EPS,* and I would like to thank E.Spencer Well-hofer who helped establish the contact between *EPS's* editors and myself.

If a volume is written in a language which is not the editor's mother tongue, there are naturally and unavoidably some individuals who deserve cordial thanks for helping to produce a text which is accessible to native speakers as well. I would like to begin with my colleague and close collaborator William Maloney from Aberdeen University who has been so kind as to act as my English adviser from the very beginning, i.e. from the original pro posal to direct an ECPR workshop. Not a single official page left Mannheim without his explicit approval. The authors of this volume come from eight different countries, all with distinct parochial 'dialects' of the English language. I am very grateful for the thorough and reliable efforts of Antje Brown from Aberdeen University, who chapter by chapter turned diverse versions of Continental English into something which deserves to be called proper English. In this respect, I also want to express my gratitude towards the Mannheim Centre of European Research (MZES) for the generous support of the language editing. Finally, I would also like to thank Manuel Altenkirch for his timely and efficient help in producing the final typescript.

<div align="right">Sigrid Roßteutscher, Mannheim, May 2004</div>

Introduction

1
The lure of the associative elixir

Sigrid Roßteutscher

In theories of democracy there has been a long-standing concern with voluntary associations. Ever since Tocqueville and his seminal work on democracy in America, associations have been seen as crucial ingredients of truly democratic systems. Similarly, in the world of political practitioners the esteem of the art of association has a long record. The most famous example dates back to Madison and the birthdays of American democracy.

Since then, associations have been a standard and cherished brick in many democratic theories. Moreover, all liberal constitutions undertake an explicit effort to guarantee the freedom of association. Yet, both the worlds of politics and academic thinking have witnessed periods when the call for associations gained almost evangelical fervour. A prime example for such a shift from viewing associations as *one* important ingredient of democratic rule to *the* outstanding guarantee of democracy's survival was the pluralist turn in the 1940s and 1950s (e.g. Truman 1951; Kornhauser 1959; Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1948): associationalism was democracy's 'most important foundation' (Almond and Verba 1963:320). Triggered by the experiences of Fascism and communism and their (largely successful) attempts to suppress voluntary associations and abuse streamlined intermediary organizations to penetrate the life of their citizens, there was a loud call for the voluntary sector. Many stressed a direct link between the weakness of civil society, on the one hand, and the rise of totalitarian rule, on the other: 'lt was with calculated foresight that the Axis dictators insured their rise to power by repressing or abolishing political, religious, labour, and other voluntary groups' (Schlesinger 1944:25).

However, periods of enthusiastic praise were always accompanied (or followed) by more critical voices. This is most clearly evident in the case of Madison whose pro-association attitudes were fully based on an outspokenly negative judgement of associations' impact on democracy: 'Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none serves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction' (Madison 1788:79–80). Put simply, Madison's 'cure for factionalism is more factionalism' (Kaufman 1999:1339). Even Tocqueville observed that associations in autocratic and centralized France did very little in favour of democracy: While American associations 'allow for and encourage independent behavior', French associations 'are tyrannical within themselves thus producing passive and servile behavior' (Bell 1998:240–1). That there are many flaws in the 'pluralist heaven' (to modify Schattschneider's famous verdict, 1960:35) had been made obvious by several studies following the pluralist turn in the middle of the last century (e.g. Newton 1976). In short, throughout the centuries the view on associations alternated between outright enthusiasm and more sceptical visions.

In contemporary days we witness a shift in the urge for associative help comparable to the pluralist turn in the 1940s and 1950s. At present, the rise of violent anti-democratic regimes is not our main concern. On the contrary, after the fall of the iron curtain and the breakdown of communism in the late 1980s, democracy is no longer challenged by alternative conceptions of government. Democracy's problems do not originate from forceful external enemies, but (as some believe), they are a by-product of its victory: the democratic malaise comes from inside. There is widespread agreement that present-day representative democracy suffers from the pathology of citizen de-mobilization: there is a decline in voter turnout, while mass parties are troubled by shrinking membership size and surveys report growing cynicism towards politics and politicians. Moreover, politicians and academics alike diagnose bankrupt welfare states and faltering feelings of solidarity amongst citizens; many observe the incapacity of an over-burdened state to satisfy growing desires of its citizenry, and lament a decline in systems' ability to successfully integrate an increasingly heterogeneous population. Much of the diagnosis might rest on exaggeration and many of the alleged pathologies might turn out to be minor diseases, easily cured by the natural progress of time. This may be as it is. As so often, in the middle of a hotly debated crisis, no one really knows how deep the trouble is. However, it is clear that today, feelings of scepticism and insecurity loom large; pessimism grows, and at the same time many feel that something needs to be done. But what?

In such a situation, the associative elixir is tempting. The widespread diagnosis of a democratic malaise has prompted authors and experts from many different fields to suggest one specific cure: associationalism. In effect, the associative turn was successful, penetrating public and political discourses and having become part of many party programmes and official policy action, because cacophonous voices were singing from the same hymn sheet: associations provide the cure. Moreover, this manyvoiced choir corresponded perfectly with prominent organizational principles such as the economists' plea for more self-responsibility and the old Catholic idea of subsidiarity. In addition, the cure promised to be cost-neutral if not a direct saving device for empty public accounts.

There are four major voices, which contributed to associations' current prime position in both academic and public debates:

1 The originally predominantly American debate on *communitarianism,* which is a reflection on the presumed self-destroying capacities of both liberalism and an increasingly ego-centric attitude towards life. Looking for a revived feeling of community and shared values, communitarians stress the significant role of traditional family, functioning neighbourhoods, and, in particular, all intermediate volunteer, i.e. non-state, associations of social participation (e.g. Bellah *et al.* 1985; Etzioni 1996; MacIntyre 1982; Sandel 1998).

2 The concept of *civil society,* originally imported from research on Eastern Europe, promotes the democratic necessity of a strong net of social organizations supposed to mediate between the macro worlds of state agency and economy on the one hand and the micro world of anonymous individuals on the other (e.g. Cohen and Arato 1992; Gellner 1994; Keane 1998; Walzer 1995).

3 Currently most influential is the debate about *social capital*. Originally triggered by several contributions of Putnam, the debate highlights the role of trust and networks of

social interaction for the capacity of both democratic and economic systems to function efficiently (e.g. Putnam 2000; Fukuyama 1995; Couto and Guthrie 1999; Edwards and Foley 1997).

4 Most consequential from an institutional perspective is the debate on *associative democracy*. Protagonists claim that they found a convincing answer to the 'malaise' of both traditional welfare arrangements and representative party politics by giving more say and responsibility to volunteer associations and locally active intermediary organizations (e.g. Schmitter 1994; Hirst 1997; Hirst and Bader 2001; Cohen and Rogers 1992).

As a result, terms such as 'civil society', 'social capital', 'associative democracy', 'citizen engagement' and 'communitarianism' are in-vogue. However, these concepts have been developed in different academic and historical-geographical contexts, with relatively little exchange between protagonists of different approaches. Moreover, many concepts—social capital being both the most prominent and most influential—have American biases. However, and despite the lack of exchange, all these approaches have two common threads: i) that traditional representative democracies are in trouble; and ii) that an associative turn might provide the cure. Although all these 'cures' claim to be democratically efficacious, delivering 'goods' such as: identity; cohesion and a sense of belonging (communitarianism); trust and sociability (social capital); mediation and social embeddedness (civil society); efficiency and effectiveness of governance (associative democracy), their contribution to the health of democracy remains assertion, and requires more robust (and persuasive) theoretical and empirical substantiation. As Kaufman notes, 'these assertions stand in dire need of sound empirical analysis designed to examine normative claims about "civil society" in an objective light' (Kaufman 1999:1297). Indeed, very little is known about the actual mechanisms which translate goods such as 'trust' or 'belonging' into democratic virtues and habits both from an individual and a societal perspective. Moreover, different authors prefer very different types of associations, ranging from small units of face-toface contact, and semi-political grass-roots movements, to big professional welfare associations.

The void to fill: context matters

At present, critics raise their voices. Almost every single aspect of the associative cure is debated; whether there is an invariably beneficial impact of associations (e.g. Levi 1996); whether there is any impact of associations on government performance (e.g. Newton 1999); whether there is any causal link between the voluntary sector and democratic political culture (Roßteutscher 2002); whether participation in associations prompts civic behaviour and political engagement (e.g. Kaufmann 1999); whether there is a link between trust and civic participation (e.g. Uslaner 2002), etc. The list of potential 'cons' is very long. However, until recently, both arguments and counter-arguments were usually of a rather general nature. Protagonists struggled with the validity and credibility of the associative cure. Both sides had rather general answers: a promising cure, for one side, an attractive but useless lure, for the other.

This volume is not simply another contribution to the debate about the pros and cons of

the associative turn. The book addresses one major gap in the current debate: the associative cure is put into context. There is a striking lack in sensitivity to the impact of context in most writings about associationalism (although this may be because much of the debate and large parts of the empirical material originate from particular countries). It is the ambition of this volume to contribute to fill this void. It critically examines the underlying assumption of most scholarly work in the field of civil society, social capital and associative democracy: associations are either invariably and unconditionally good, or bad (or useless) for democracy. Accordingly, it is the aim of this book to examine whether the associative elixir is healthy under all circumstances and in all its ingredients. Or, are there social or political contexts and variants of associations where too high a dose of associationalism might undermine the health of demo– cracy? Whether associations are good for democracy significantly depends on the type of political system in which they exist, on the structure of social relations which dominate a given society, and, finally, the structural features of the associative sector itself. Moreover, specific problems and challenges which particular systems face might also impact on the effect of the associative elixir. Civil society does not flourish in a context-free space. The shape, density, health and democratic role of the associative sector is determined and influenced by a wide range of contextual conditions. This volume focuses on the most crucial aspects: the social and political embeddedness of civil society. The central hypothesis is that context matters. Context is specified three-fold:

1 The *political* system: its legal condition, political actors, type and strength of political institutions, i.e. the political macro context, in which the associative sector is embedded.
2 The *associational* features: associations' resources, their size, their internal structure, participation mechanisms etc., as the organizational context of individual participation in civil society.
3 The *social* fabric of daily life: the organization and equality of social relations, social roles, social and economic circumstances of daily life, i.e. the micro context, which is the fundament of any associative life.

These three elements or levels of context crucially affect the nature and health of the civil society sector. More importantly, by shaping and moulding civil society they crucially impact on civil society's role in and for democracy. The volume is organized around these three contextual themes. Each of the three themes has its own section, each consisting of several chapters, which examine the role of context from a variety of country and regime type perspectives. Figure 1.1 shows the basic outline of the volume. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I turn to these three major themes by way of a brief introduction to the single chapters.

Politics and institutions

Much of the current debate on associations has its origins in both US American theoretical traditions and empirical evidence. In particular, communitarian thinking and the thriving social capital debate have clear American roots. In many instances, single

country evidence has been used to make far-reaching claims about the shape and role of the associative sector, in general. This section demonstrates how different political
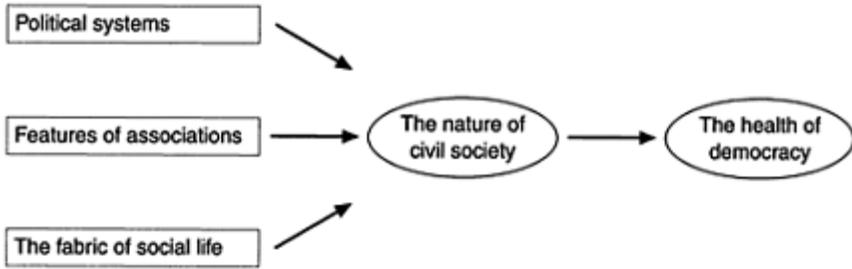
Figure 1.1 Contextualizing the associative elixir.

regime contexts impact greatly on the democratic value of civil society. It shows that the strength and health of associational life is strongly related to (and dependent upon) the strength and health of democracy at large (Roßteutscher 2002). Moreover, this section also demonstrates how political actors deliberately create and nourish civil society, thus fending off the illusion that civil society flourishes naturally and healthily only if left by itself and independent from state agents (Kaspersen 2002). The contributions in this first section (with some resonance to other sections as well) all respond to one crucial theme in the current debate: a thriving civil society sector is democracy's guarantee for survival.

Accordingly, Spencer Wellhofer in Chapter 2, Feargal Cochrane in Chapter 3 and Stijn Smismans in Chapter 4 examine the role and functions of civil society under the condition of defect or weak democracy. Wellhofer's Chapter 2 focuses on post-war Italy of the early 1920s with its unstable democracy characterized by limited popular support, an on-going struggle with the Pope and the Catholic Church about its legitimacy, and an economic crisis coupled with high unemployment. He examines the usefulness of theories of civil society and social capital in explaining the rise of Fascism in Italy. Although civil society theories maintain that Fascism arises when civil society is weak and appeals to those in search of social cohesion, he concludes that Fascism found its popular base almost equally among associational members and non-members. Civic organizations had very limited effects in preventing the rise of Fascism. The chapter demonstrates that the salience of civil society declines as electoral volatility increases. In this situation Fascism could win the support of the most impoverished of the rural population who stood to gain most materially from Fascist agrarian programmes. Ironically, Fascism had its breakthrough in Putnam's 'good' Northern regions where civil society was highly developed.

Cochrane in Chapter 3 takes on another structural weakness by focusing on an established but conflict-ridden society: the case of Northern Ireland. In doing this, Cochrane responds to a further important assumption underlying much of the work conducted under the current associative frame: that beneath and beyond the multitude of different concerns and interests which nourish the associative sector, there is something like a common belief system, a canon of shared values, a collective identity that unites a nation of joiners. Unlike the society of Wellhofer (and Korkut and Molenaers in later

sections of this book), Cochrane's Northern Ireland is not troubled by institutional transition but is a culturally deeply divided society, experiencing continuous conflict along the religious cleavage. Cochrane argues that within a divided society, the normal gravitational forces that underpin civil society within more stable polities (a sense of community, desire for associational life, sense of civic duty, etc.) are sharpened to a degree that they can just as easily mutate into uncivil norms and values. In the divided society of Northern Ireland, people bowl together along a fractured and dichotomous community divide, thus fostering conflict and violence. Cochrane concludes that in such circumstances, 'bowling alone' would seem to be a reasonable conflict management strategy.

Stijn Smismans in Chapter 4 takes on some of the (implicit) claims of associationalists (most explicitly in Cohen and Rogers 1992:426): if civil society, and the 'right sorts of associations do not arise naturally', then some external actor, i.e. government, should 'supplement nature with artifice'. Smismans shows how and why certain actors introduced the concept into the EU setting as a means to improve the legitimacy of European governance. He also shows that the discourse on civil society has been especially attractive to the Commission, which hoped to counter the criticism concerning its democratic deficit with an integration of civil society actors. However, the possibility that the discourse will lead to changes in reality and to more legitimate European governance, as claimed, appears modest. The Commission uses the discourse on civil society as an element of legitimization of their activities and own institutional position. Through such participatory democracy the Commission, as a non-elected body, makes itself less dependent of the control by Parliament as the unique source of legitimacy. As a result, the European Parliament, the only EU institution with clear electoral legitimacy, is not very attracted by the new discourse on civil dialogue and civil society. In this way, civil society became part of an EU internal power struggle between different EU institutions.

Features of associations

Associations and their core organizational features are the major context of individuals' social engagement. This section assumes that different associations prompt different types of activity, of which not all contribute to the health of democracy in general. As Kaufman notes 'we might thus conclude that different types of associations have different effects on members' political behavior and civic engagement' (1999:1335). Recently, even rigid social capitalists began to acknowledge that there are significant structural differences between associations and that these differences might impact on associations' role in democracy. Still, much of the current debate assumes that associations in general provide rich opportunities to improve and stabilize modern societies' social and politic fabric. This undifferentiated and generalized celebration of associations has provoked harsh criticism. There is a 'dark side' to social capital and associative activity, manifest in associations such as the Italian Mafia or circles of terrorism (Fiorina 1999). Moreover, most approaches in this field make more or less implicit assumptions about type and nature of the 'good' association. Along these lines is Putnam's (2000) exclusion of

single-issue groups, self-help associations and so-called tertiary organizations, Barber's (1984) insistence on groups permitting face-to-face contact, and associative democracy protagonists' emphasis on relatively large and professionalized associations. Authors' preferences vary because all have different ideas about the groups' most important function within modern society. Putnam's focus is on trust and social togetherness, Barber's concern is civic virtue and participation, while theorists of associative democracy consider service delivery and broad mass mobilization as their most important issue (see Roßteutscher 2000:172–3). Warren (2001) argued that different organizational features may lead to very different outcomes and that associations who are masters of trust production may be very bad training schools for democracy. However, Warren's ambitious classification of associations' structural features and democratic outcomes has not been empirically tested. It is the aim of this section to examine how different structural features and their organizational design impact on associations' democratic outputs.

This section consists of three contributions. First, William Maloney and Sigrid Roßteutscher in Chapter 5 and Emma Clarence and her co-authors in Chapter 7, focus on a certain sub-species of the associative world: welfare associations in the case of Chapter 5 and campaign groups in the case of Chapter 7. Both chapters' story is a direct response to one facet o f the democratic malaise. Maloney and Roßteutscher explicitly link organizational output in terms of services to clients and the promotion of volunteering and activism, to the debate about bankrupt welfare states and the perceived need to refrain from state welfare and shift towards more self-responsibility and a strengthened position of the voluntary welfare sector. Clarence *et al.* pick up the decline of party thesis and discuss whether interest groups can (and should) fill the void left by traditional party platforms. Both chapters are similarly output-orientated, focusing on crucial democratic functions of associations and assessing organizational success in terms of organizations' capacity to fulfil these functions. Moreover, both chapters' main focus is on diverse organizational features and the role of these features concerning output: size and local embeddedness in the case of Chapter 7 and a full range of diverse associative characteristics in the case of Chapter 5.

Maloney and Roßteutscher demonstrate that different organizational features (such as size, level of staffing, level of income, sources of income, degree of internal democracy, issue range etc.) have very different impacts on organizations' capacity to deliver welfare and to encourage activism and volunteering. Moreover, this chapter shows that organizations that serve many welfare clients can be very inefficient in activating citizens to volunteer; and organizations that are champions of volunteering and activism are often very bad service deliverers. Finally, different and even contradictory organizational features inspire activism and volunteering on the one hand, and service delivery on the other. Factors that influence activism and volunteering are a disadvantage to service delivery, and organizational features that are a virtue in 'quantity production' can act as a barrier to efficiency. However, a second important result emerges: all organizational features considered impacted on welfare outputs: crucial organizational characteristics matter significantly. Maloney and Roßteutscher conclude that attempts to deliberately draft organizations must fail because an artificial creation or promotion of certain associative features will lead to very one-sided results in terms of welfare output.

Umut Korkut in Chapter 6 (and partly also Clarence *et al.* in Chapter 7) focuses on a particular albeit highly significant component of the voluntary sector: its leaders. Korkut examines the role of interest organizations' elites in the 'new' democracies of Eastern Europe. Korkut argues that associational development has been seriously hampered by, among other reasons, the Communist legacy, in particular the atomizing effects of Communist rule. Empirically, he finds that elitist behaviour and vertical bonds of dependency characterize interest groups in Hungary, Poland and Romania. Moreover, associations' leaders seem to be more interested in using their leading position as a platform to enter politics than to represent the interests of their ordinary members. There is a remarkable democratic deficit within interest groups, characterized by sedimented oligarchies and leadership structures. Internal decision-making within interest groups is far from being transparent and participatory. In this sense, an undemocratic civil society functions as some form of 'Trojan horse' in consolidating the fragile democracies in Eastern European countries.

Similarly, Emma Clarence, William Maloney and Grant Jordan in Chapter 7 focus on the role (and self-perception) of leaders of campaign groups in the UK and—comparable to Chapter 5—their contribution to promoting participation. The authors demonstrate that associations which are commonly seen as pure cheque-book organizations can be internally democratic and present participatory vehicles and feedback mechanisms which permit members to control and influence leaders' policies. However, size and local embeddedness are crucial features that determine whether campaigning groups are pure cheque-book organizations or participatory vehicles. The large majority of campaigning groups are relatively small (less than 1,000 members), locally active, with major organizational features being comparable to associations in general. However, campaigning groups draw on passive support, with extremely low attendance rates. Interestingly, the organization of passive, i.e. purely financial, support is perceived by campaigning groups' leaders as a problem. Most groups offer wide participation channels because they seek an active membership; however, most members refuse to use these channels. Members find these organizations attractive precisely because they are only expected to donate money or pay membership fees.

The social fabric of daily life

Conventional approaches to civil society assume that associative life flourishes naturally if left alone by state agency. Part I of this volume (and Smismans in Chapter 4, in particular) tackles the first assumption in this proposition: civil society's independence from deliberate state action. This third section examines whether a second implicit assumption is true: the naturalness of civil society's growth from grass roots concerns. Accordingly, it is the aim of this section to demonstrate how the shape, density, functions and role of the associative sector depend on the fabric of social life, which is the fundament of any civil society development. The outlook and shape of civil society change with a change in society's social relations and dominant norms and values. Moreover, the character of informal relations, the depth of social integration and equality have a direct impact on the nature of a society's associative sector. As a consequence, an

unequal civil society sector will maintain or even strengthen the unequal distribution of power, thus dampening the prospects of political equality and democracy in general. Moreover, a change in the nature of civil society prompted by changes in the nature of the social fabric underlying civil society, will largely impact on civil society's role in and for democracy. This final section thus enters some unknown terrain. While there has been (little) research on the impact of political structures and there also has been some (theoretical) work on the associative context, there has been virtually no concern with the prominent theme of this concluding part: the relationship between the shape and role of civil society and the social relations inherent in a given context.

This section includes four contributions. Nadia Molenaers in Chapter 8 examines whether the explicit attempts of international actors (such as the World Bank, United Nations, and the EU) to strengthen civil society in the developing world are an effective instrument of poverty-reducing policies for promoting social change. Molenaers's Third World context resonates a theme already set by Wellhofer's sketch of pre-Fascist Italy (Chapter 2): the effectiveness of civil society organizations in a setting characterized by poverty, the dominance of agrarian production and an extremely skewed distribution of wealth. She demonstrates that objectives set by international actors are somewhat naïve, if not simply wrong, because the efficiency of donors' civil society approach depends upon the pre-existing structure of informal networks and the previous inclusion of the poor in these networks. If these networks are clientelistic and hierarchical, developmental action effectively institutionalizes verticalism and clientelism and reinforces the unchecked power position of the leaders. Moreover, the poor and vulnerable remain excluded from these 'new' civil society organizations.

In Chapters 9, 10 and 11, de Hart and Dekker, Wollebæk and Selle, and Fennema and Tillie respectively, take issue with different facets of the process of modernization typical for the contemporary Western world: secularization in Chapter 9 (i.e. declining importance of religion and church organizations), social change in Chapter 10 (i.e. shifts in gender roles), and migration in Chapter 11 (i.e. increasing heterogeneity in the ethnical composition of the population). None of the chapters' authors would claim that associations are no longer important because of these long-term processes (Fennema and Tillie in Chapter 11 even claim that the tensions inherent in increasing ethnical diversity can only be cured with a strong dose of associationalism). However, all authors agree that processes of social change greatly impacted on the voluntary sector. Moreover, all conclude that shifts within the voluntary sector subsequently altered its role in and for democracy.

In Chapter 9, Joep de Hart and Paul Dekker examine the role of churches as a public voice and as a mobilizing and facilitating force with regard to the general social and political activities of their members. Empirically, they can show that churchgoers are more often members of associations, and of more associations. They also do voluntary work considerably more often, and they do this more often within several sectors. In the eyes of the public, the Church also has a moral voice. Citizens expect the Church to make public statements on social issues such as poverty and discrimination, but less on religious matters or issues of private conduct. However, the question is whether churches still fulfil these functions in future European societies, in general, and in Dutch society, in particular, where rapid processes of secularization have taken place and continue to do

so. Fewer and fewer people are active in church groups or attend mass regularly. Secularization, silently but powerfully, undermines churches' most democratic impact, i.e. the provision of large numbers of committed volunteers and activists. Many individuals still expect the Church to make statements about social and political questions, not primarily as a religious institution, but above all as an institution that is concerned with the morality and values of society just like, for instance, Amnesty International or Greenpeace. In the course of secularization, the Church is increasingly perceived as only one type of organization among several others that give their viewpoint in societal matters.

In Chapter 10, Dag Wollebæk and Per Selle present changes in Norway's local organizational society, with reference to women's organizations, as a microcosm and example of social change. Traditionally, women's and men's organizations were largely based on complementary gender roles, with women constituting the majority of the members and volunteers and men often exercising the leadership positions. In the years after the Second World War, however, women's involvement in organizational life, gender roles and participation patterns has changed along with women's position in society. In Chapter 10, Wollebæk and Selle link the changes in women's organization to previous changes in the social fabric of Norwegian life: changing gender roles, shifting values, altered patterns of female labour market participation, etc. Those changes had a great impact on Norway's organizational society. Although the number of organizations and the multitude of activities have increased, activities have become more geared towards leisure interest, more inwardly directed and less ideological than before. The local level has become increasingly independent from the national, and organizations place less emphasis on socialization of individual members. Wollebæk and Selle conclude that the role of organizations as an intermediate democratic structure between the individual and the political system is diminishing.

By way of sharp counterpoint, Meindert Fennema and Jean Tillie in Chapter 11 provide a positive argument about associative democracy, which challenges many of the attacks formulated by Cochrane in Chapter 3. Fennema and Tillie demonstrate the necessity of civil society and ethnic networks of voluntary associations for multicultural democracy and the participation of ethnic minorities in the governance of local community. They argue in favour of a less idealistic perception of participation where ethnic communities can be fragmented and detached from the native environment as long as the elites of the different pillars communicate with each other and participate in negotiated decision-making. In all societies where representative democracy is the principle of governance, we find an elite that has its vertical relations with society at large through institutional structures. Ideally, this governing elite has many horizontal relations as well, turning it into an 'old boys' network. Fennema and Tillie demonstrate that in multi-cultural, or multi-ethnic societies, the cleavages in civil society are overcome because the ethnic elites form part of such an old boys network. In other words, if the connection among the ethnic community is institutionalized through a multi-ethnic governing elite that practises the politics of accommodation, democratic governance becomes feasible: independent from the social connectedness of individual members and from what happens in single associations concretely. Evidently, Fennema and Tillie formulate a counter-hypothesis to the arguments prevalent in Part I, demonstrating the

civic and democratically beneficial impact of civil society even in conflict ridden and divided communities. Moreover, the elitist (and pragmatic?) perspective of Fennema and Tillie stands in stark contrast to the more participatory (and idealist?) visions that influenced the judgements of both Korkut in Chapter 6 and Clarence *et al.* in Chapter 7.

Crosstalk

From the brief comments above it is already evident that the chapters in this volume are not confined to dealing with the sub-theme set by the section of the book in which they appear. All chapters address arguments or themes addressed by other sections and authors of the book. Thus, in many ways, chapters 'talk' to each other across and within sections. More-over, all chapters in the three parts of the volume basically focus on more than one contextual condition. Whilst one type of context—either political, associational or social—holds the prominent position in the argumentative structure (thus leading to the section affiliation of single chapters), there is always a second type of additional context considered. For example, authors of the two subsequent sections cannot ignore the political context that is the main frame of Part I. In terms of individual chapters, for example, Wellhofer's major concern in Chapter 2 is the political situation in pre-Fascist Italy; however, akin to Molenaer's issues of social inequality (Chapter 8), power relations and poverty assume a prominent position. Maloney and Roßteutscher are preoccupied with the associative context, yet, the impact of different welfare regimes on features of associations are discussed as well. Moreover, Fennema and Tillie in Chapter 11 provide clear counter-arguments to Cochrane's Northern Ireland scenario. Smismans and Molenaers in Chapter 4 and 8 respectively take on some of the (implicit) claims of associationalists (e.g. Cohen and Rogers 1992:426): if civil society, and the 'right sorts of associations do not arise naturally', then some external actor, i.e. government, should 'supplement nature with artifice'. This 'cross-talking' applies to all chapters of the book. In the final chapter of this volume I will return to these 'crosstalks' and offer some general conclusions about associations' role in and for democracy.

Given the highly topical state of the associative debate, and given the large number of far-reaching claims about the relationship between associations and the health of democracy, this book has a rather modest aim: to put the current debate into context. The shared belief of all authors is that too often particular lines of thought, particular theoretical traditions and evidence from particular settings have been used to formulate rather general and universal claims. The book was written with the assumption that there is no such thing as *the* civil society, or *the* association, let alone something such as *the* democracy. In contrast, the role of associations in and for democracy is properly understood only if we take into account that context matters. In ignorance of the political, associative or social context in which the associative dose is given, the cure might produce side effects, which were never intended by the physician. Associations operate under certain relevant conditions and such contextual conditions impact on associations' role in and for democracy. We hope this book can make its contribution in that spirit.

Part I
Politics and institutions

2
Democracy, Fascism and civil society

E.Spencer Wellhofer

Recent years have witnessed an intense interest in the recorded decline of democratic legitimacy across Europe and the United States. Study after study documented falling trust in government, governmental programmes, elections, and politicians. Scholars asked two questions: What caused this decline? And, what can be done to revive democracy and democratic legitimacy? Several possible answers were proposed, but one explanation caught the imagination and dominates the debate. Diminishing confidence in democracy and politics is rooted in the decline of civil society and revitalizing civil society is the elixir for reinvigorating democracy.

The reputed link between a vigorous civil society and democratic health is a long standing tenet of political theory and political science. This paper seeks to test that link by examining the obverse of the hypothesis. If a robust civil society forms the foundation of a healthy democracy, then an anaemic civil society should favour weak democracy and the rise of antidemocratic movements. The paper tests this proposition in Italy, 1919–21, a period of failed democratic transition that ended in Fascism.

Civil society and democracy

Since its rejuvenation about a decade ago, the analysis of civil society's link to democracy evolved in several directions (Skocpol and Fiorina 1999:13–16). The social capital interpretation, exemplified most by the work of Putnam (2000), stresses the importance of civic engagement for the socialization to and reproduction of values conducive to democratic politics. The rational-choice approach, represented by Olson's classic statement and his later elaborations (Olson 1965, 1993, 2000), emphasizes the centrality of institutional and organizational opportunities and incentives to engage in civic activity. Third, historical institutionalism, found in the work of Skocpol and others (Evans, Skocpol and Ruechmeyer 1985; Skocpol, Ganz and Munson 2000) places the struggles over the expansion of democratic rights centre stage. Civil society is partly a reflection of these struggles and resulting institutional structures.

Civil society and Fascism

Although today's civil society theory figures most prominently in explanations of contemporary democratic pathologies, previously its principal task was the explanation of the rise of Fascism. Analysts of Fascism drew heavily on the 'mass society thesis', the

obverse of the social capital thesis, that Fascism recruited its supporters from those not integrated into a network of civic organizations. Thus, Fascist supporters were characterized as socially marginal, alienated, isolated or rootless, particularly the newly enfranchised and the newly mobilized (Loomis and Beegle 1946; Bendix 1952; Kornhauser 1959; Arendt 1961).

Current civil society, particularly social capital, theorists called upon this literature to bolster their arguments for the link between civil society and democracy. Putnam, for example, stated that,

> When people lack connections to others, they are unable to test the veracity of their own views, whether in the give-and-take of causal conversation or in more formal deliberation. Without such an opportunity, people are more likely swayed by their worst impulses.
>
> (Putnam 2000:288–9)

Scholars of European politics disputed the application of the social capital thesis to the rise of Fascism. Historical institutionalism highlighted the importance of political institutions in the incorporation of the new citizens and effective resolution of their demands and grievances. Berman (1997a:369–70, 1997b:402) countered that a robust civil society divorced from political life might heighten political mobilization, but coupled to low political trust and institutionalization, contributed to the collapse of democracy. In the converse of the social capital thesis, Tarrow (1996) argued the civil society theorists may have inverted the causal arrow or at least ignored reciprocal causality and endogeneity. Similarly, rational choice theorists argued that the rise of Fascism could be at least equally well explained by the opportunities and incentives offered by the Fascists. In Italy and Germany, Brustein (1991, 1996) found support for the hypothesis that the Fascists offered material and organizational opportunities and incentives in exchange for support.

The purpose of this research is to examine these propositions in accounting for the rise of Italian Fascism, 1919–21.

The crisis of democracy in inter-war Europe

The First World War left a legacy of turmoil and spawned political challenges to European liberal democracies; Fascism proved to be the most successful, however, its success varied across Europe. Several conditions were associated with Fascism's success: the economic dislocations of the war and its aftermath, the expansion of electorate, the crisis of national identity, and the gridlock of liberal democratic politics. Both the mobilization for war and the subsequent demobilization resulted in massive economic dislocations; coupled to economic contraction following the war, unemployment became a major problem.

Military mobilization and service fostered demands for full political participation in the national polity leading to major suffrage extensions in most countries and particularly significant expansions in Italy, Germany, and Britain. Moreover, full incorporation of the newly enfranchised occurred during a period of great political turmoil.

Although debates over national identity reverberated across Europe, they resonated most deeply where national identity was least defined: more recently unified states like Italy and Germany, long standing states with weak senses of national cohesion like Spain and Portugal, and newly created states from the residues of old empires. The debates became inflamed where internationalist ideologies—socialism and communism—contended with nationalist ones: Italy, Germany, and Spain among others.

Finally, Fascism succeeded where liberal democratic politics was stalemated, corrupt or inept. The inability of liberal democratic governments to respond to Fascism's challenge was greatest where governments lacked widespread legitimacy, particularly in Italy and Germany.

The Fascist response

Although Fascism was a response to the democratic crisis of the inter-war period, its intellectual and organizational precursors emerged before and during the First World War. In contrast to atomistic bourgeois liberalism and class-based socialism, Fascism, under a new doctrine of 'society as factory', sought a harmonious, hierarchically integrated, functionally dependent, and efficient order (Maier 1987:19–69). Fascism, however, encountered a congested political landscape. Following the war, nineteenth-century liberal and socialist rhetoric continued to dominate the 'language of class anxiety', pre-empting the ideological space and limiting entry points for newcomers. Moreover, not only was the ideological space occupied, the existing parties claimed much of the political landscape as well. Yet the advantages of the 'latecomer' ensured that Fascism had few initial claimants and, hence, was freer to experiment with its language and appeals. In other words, the same organizational density that underlay th existing political parties also limited their manoeuvrability (Linz 1980:155–6).

Under these conditions, Fascism defined its place by incorporating and synthesizing both new and existing political ideas, while claiming new organizational principles. Fascism's protean form generated a long-standing debate on its character. No single rigid definition predominates, but most agree that Fascism embodied a unique mix of ideology, tactics, and organizational forms. Ideologically, Fascism relied on extreme nationalism, secular idealism, and vitalism. It propagated a myth of national rejuvenation and rejected rationalism, materialism, and egalitarianism. Tactically, Fascism emphasized the use of violence and rejected parliamentary democracy. Organizationally, it drew on organic and corporatist notions espousing ideals of harmony, hierarchy, and national efficiency (Bosworth 1998; Linz 1976:12–13). Fascism's 'anti' character, its newness, and experimentation made it attractive to a variety of groups, consequently, its sources of support shifted across time.

Democracy in post First World War Italy

The failure of reform amidst massive political mobilization defined Italy's experience with democracy following the First World War (Tarrow 1995:210–16; Farneti 1978).

From its inception in 1861, Liberal Italy laboured under a democratic deficit. The Italian *Risorgimento* resulted from a series of regional elite bargains which united Italy under the limited democracy of the *Statuto Albertino,* and with additional Prussian military assistance in 1866. Not only did the new regime have limited popular support, but its contest with the Church over legitimacy and land led to the Vatican's *non-expedit* forbidding Catholics to participate in political life either as citizens or leaders. Only with the expansion of the franchise in 1913 and a heightened possibility of Socialist electoral success did the Church accept the State and directly enter electoral politics in 1914 with the Catholic party, the *Populare*. Class relations were equally antagonistic. Not only were rural-urban producers the source of economic conflicts and tariff struggles, but labour was fragmented by rural-urban divisions and split among Catholic, Socialist and Syndicalist tendencies. The pre-war regime could operate only under a strategy of *tranformismo*—the highly personalized, non-ideological, trading of economic favours— and limited franchise.

The First World War disrupted these arrangements. The debate over intervention during the war polarized and fragmented the Socialists. The conscription and mobilization of peasant-soldiers introduced them to worlds beyond their small towns, while the mismanagement of the war effort and the government's post-war refusal to honour its promises of reform in the fields and factories embittered the ex-servicemen. Finally, the first elections following the war in 1919 took place under a new suffrage regime: universal equal male suffrage for citizens of 21 years and older, direct elections with a secret ballot, and proportional representation in multi-member constituencies.

Franchise expansion, electoral volatility

How does the Italian experience described above compare with other European cases? A comparison with Germany and Britain shows that in all three cases franchise expansion and the mobilization show a similar pattern. [1]

Where the cases differ, however, are in the effects of franchise expansion on electoral volatility and party alignments. In all cases franchise expansion increased electoral volatility and political polarization, but only Italy experienced high levels of polarization and realignment on both class and religious electoral cleavages immediately following the war (see Table 2.1). Class-electoral volatility is a measure of the shift of vote across blocs of class-based parties. Religious-electoral volatility is a similar measure across blocs of religious-based parties. These measures capture the entry of working class parties in Britain (Labour) and Italy (Socialists) and religious parties in Germany (Centre) and Italy (Popular) into electoral politics. The second post-war election indicates a dampening down of electoral volatility.

Electoral volatility and civil society

Mobilization and volatility may not generate political instability if absorbed into a robust civil society. What was the link between civic associations and electoral politics? During

this period in Europe, mass-based parties, the Socialists and the Catholics, pursued a strategy designed to incorporate supporters into party-affiliated organizations. Across Europe the pattern was similar. Typically, party-affiliated organizations included a wide range of associations: housing, consumer, producer, and labour cooperatives, savings banks, mutual aid societies, and particularly, trade unions. Trade union organizational density is one of the few measures available cross-nationally, and Table 2.1 indicates the overall weakness of trade unions in Italy in contrast to Germany and Britain.

 Civil society theorists stress the linkage between civic organizations and political life. A civil society divorced from political life maybe a source of instability rather than stability. How successful were trade unions in mobilizing the vote for political parties? Italian unions were one-tenth as effective as those in Germany and Britain. In sum, Italy differs from Germany and Britain in two respects. While Italy shared similar magnitudes of reform with Germany and Britain, these reforms proceeded in a more highly-charged context and in a weaker civil society.

Civil society and the rise of Fascism in Italy

Does a weak civil society overwhelmed by mobilization explain Fascism in Italy? Commentators from de Tocqueville (1827) to Putnam (1993) have noted civil society has a long and varied history across Italy. This territorial variation in the robustness of civil society and civic traditions provides an excellent case for examining the relationship between civil society and politics.

Table 2.1 Electoral volatility and organizational density

Country	Cross-national class electoral volatility			Cross-national religious electoral volatility			Cross-national trade union organizational density	
	Mean CV pre-war [a]	CV pre to post-war [b]	CV first to second election [b]	Mean RV pre-war [b]	RV pre to post-war [b]	RV first to second election [b]	Soc TU mem/ Left vote [d]	TU mem density 1910 [d]
Italy	4.1	16.9	5.5	2.0	18.4	1.2	3.8	3.2[e]
Germany	3.5	5.4	3.5[c]	2.6	5.4	2.7	42.7	35.1
UK	1.6	19.5	7.3[c]	1.4	0.8	1.7	35.4	31.1

Notes

a Bartolini and Mair, 1990:111.

b Unless otherwise noted, computed from data in Flora, 1983:119–20, 129, 151.

c Bartolini and Mair, 1990: Appendix 2.

d Bartolini and Mair, 1990:234. For Italy, trade union data are for 1910, electoral data for 1919, and Socialist affiliated unions only,

e Includes Socialist and Catholic trade unions.

Thus the question above leads to several subsidiary questions. Where did Fascism arise in Italy? What contexts generated support for Fascism? Did Fascism arise where civil society was weaker? Did civic organizational membership constrain support for Fascism? What types of voters were most attracted to its appeals? What was the relationship between civil society and politics in Italy? Comparative analysis within Italy examines these and other concerns. The data available for this research permit in-depth probing for answers.

The first stage of the research establishes the contextual factors associated with the rise of Italian Fascism. In this portion of the analysis, I use hierarchical linear modelling (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992) to capture those contextual variables most predictive of Fascism. The second stage of the research estimates individual electoral behaviour in 1919 and 1921 by use of ecological inference (King 1997). The data analysed here are ecolo gical and nested or hierarchical, i.e. the data are available for different, but not the individual, levels of observation. Some variables are available only at the parliamentary electoral district level (N=54), while others exist at the administrative district level (N=214) and still others at the local or municipal level (N=6,110). Hierarchical linear modelling is appropriate for multi-level data.

Concepts and measures

The dependent variables are electoral support for pre-Fascist and Fascist parties leading up to the electoral breakthrough of Fascism in 1921. Thus, electoral dynamics among the contending political parties and shifts of support across levels, time, and parties rest at the centre of the analysis.

In Italy, Fascist success meant triumphs in the rural sector (DeFelice 1966:6ff; Lyttelton 1987:54–76). Because the research focuses on civil society explanations, the robustness of civil society in the rural sector is the central explanatory variable. Civil society is measured by the density of a broad range of associational memberships, e.g. trade unions, charitable associations, co-operative movements, and mutual benefit societies.[2] In addition, control variables rule out confounding influences and alternative explanations. Control variables include economic class measured by property holdings, rural lower-class mobilization as measured by agrarian strike activity, and intimidation as measured by Fascist violence.

Data and data treatment

Hierarchical or nested data structure

Although the data are nested at several levels, two-level models generate the best-fitting HLM results. Fifty-four electoral districts constitute the Level Two units and the 6,110 local municipalities form the Level One units with all units constant across time.[3] Level Two variables consist of three general categories: land tenure arrangements, rural strike activity, and violence. Land tenure and cultivator arrangements derive from the 1921 and

1930 census materials. [4] *Family farmers* were small proprietors who farmed their own land usually relying on family labour, although some employed part-time or full-time labour. *Sharecroppers* and *tenants* laboured under various in-kind rental arrangements, generally lived on the land they worked, and usually lived in a house supplied by the employer. *Renters* were similar to croppers, but cash payments formed the basis for the use of land and the sale of produce.

Labourers worked for hourly or daily cash wages, occupied the least secure tenure, and constituted the lowest rung in the rural hierarchy. They were either *contract labourers* or *day labourers*. Contract labourers were 'under contract to work for a specific employer whenever required, the employer being bound, in turn, to give them first chance of work' (Schmidt 1966:11). With widespread unemployment, contract labourers had the promise of steady work, but were generally paid a lower hourly wage than casual day labourers. At the very bottom of rural life were the day labourers who formed the majority of agricultural wageworkers. Again regional variations were great. In the Po Valley, a centre for Fascism in Central Italy, day labourers outnumbered contract labourers by a ratio of 15:1. Day labourers generally were paid hourly or daily, or sometimes by piece-work, and they accepted employment wherever available, often at great distances from their homes, and sometimes worked in non-agricultural activities.

Agrarian strike activity engaged 2.2 per cent of the rural population in 1919 and 4.6 per cent in 1920 during the 'Biennio Rosso'. The variables are *1919 agrarian strike density* and *1920 agrarian strike density*. Several possible measures capture Fascist violence, but the most effective measure is the number of deaths and injuries in political clashes between January 1920 and May 1921, *1920–21 Violence* (Gentile 1989:472–4) . [5]

Level One (municipal) variables include rural organizational density in 1910 and electoral data for the parliamentary elections of 1919 and 1921. Rural organizations fall into two main types, trade unions and cooperatives. The latter included consumer and producer co-operatives, labour co-operatives, and rural savings banks, among others. Most trade unions and co-operatives were officially affiliated with the Socialist and Catholic parties. Others, however, were officially independent of any political party, although they generally supported the Socialists. Their organizational strength is measured by their membership densities: *Socialist rural membership density, Catholic rural membership density,* and *independent rural trade union membership density*. The rural trade union movement was deeply divided, but by 1910 the political and regional differences were clear. The Socialist and the independent trade unions and co-operatives dominated Central Italy, particularly the Po Valley, while the Catholic organizations were most successful in the North (Horowitz 1963:78ff; Roberts 1979:53ff).

Electoral data for 1919 and 1921 parliamentary elections at the municipal level are a product of field research in local archives. Electoral measures are votes for party blocs defined by Giusti (1921:11–13) and Piretti (1995:221, n18, 232ff). According to these guidelines there were four voting blocs in the 1919 election: the centre-right *Constitutional bloc,* the *Centre-left bloc,* the *Catholic bloc,* and the *Socialists*. In the 1921 election, there were the *Fascists,* the rightist *National bloc,* the *Centre-left bloc,* the *Catholics,* and the *Left bloc* (the Official Socialists, the Independent Socialists, and the Communists).

Incomplete data treatment

All data are complete for the level at which they appear in the models, with the exception of the electoral data. Here incomplete data average 20 per cent across the electoral variables. I use the multiple imputation method (King *et al.* 2001) to estimate incomplete observations. A second data limitation is that in most districts in the May 1921 election, the Fascists ran in coalition with the National bloc. Although the Fascist vote within the National bloc was not reported separately, Brustein (1991) reconstructed the Fascist vote. With this as an indicator of likely Fascist vote, the multiple imputation method estimates the full data. [6]

Summary statement of hypotheses

The civil society thesis suggests that the Fascists attracted support among those at the social margins, such as those less integrated into networks of civic voluntary associations, the politically inexperienced, and the apathetic, e.g. newly enfranchised voters and previous non-voters. Fascism should be least likely to appear in the most civic regions; or if it appears in those regions, those least incorporated into civic life should be most prone to its appeals. Of course, I must control for other possible explanations.

Cross-level effects and contextual analysis

Estimates of cross-level effects between electoral districts and local measures identify the contextual effects giving rise to Fascism. The estimation process involves several steps: estimating the variance in Fascist vote at the local and district levels, selecting the strongest predictor variables of Fascist vote, testing regression models with means-as-outcomes, and testing a random coefficient model.

The final model estimates the intercepts-and-slopes-as-outcomes. The coefficients are the cross-level effects of the district predictors on local intercepts and slopes within the electoral districts. The model estimates coritextual effects, permitting the disentanglement of local and compositional effects. The 1921 Fascist vote was significantly higher where the 1919 Socialist vote and rural organizational membership density were higher. The average slopes indicate that 1919 Centre-Left voters, in districts where 1919 Socialist vote and Socialist rural organizational density were greater, were more likely to vote Fascist.

The model highlights the cross-level interactive effect of the district level 1919 Socialist vote and Socialist rural organizational membership density on both the 1919 Centre-Left vote and 1919 Socialist vote. Both relationships are powerful and significant. The results indicate that the municipalities more likely to vote Fascist were those located in districts where the 1919 Centre-Left and Socialist vote was greater and where Socialist rural organizational membership density was greater. In other words, there was an interactive effect between the district and the local dynamics. The model also contains the contextual effects defined as the difference between the aggregate electoral district

effects and the local effects. The most significant contextual effects for predicting the Fascist vote are the 1919 Socialist vote and organizational membership.

The model's results directly contradict the civil society thesis, but are consistent with the class (Huber and Stephens 1999) and 'Red Menace' (Linz 1976:26, 28–9) interpretations. Fascism developed in those regions where civil society was more robust, the same regions included in Putnam's Most Civic Regions.[7] Moreover, the most successful predictors of the Fascist vote are those characteristics defining civil society highlighted by the social capital thesis: support for mass parties, membership in cooperatives, mutual aid societies, and higher voter turnout. These results offer no support for the social capital thesis. The model successfully accounts for 51 per cent of the total variance, 56 per cent of the electoral district variance, and 18 per cent of the municipal variance in the 1921 Fascist vote.

How do Fascist Regions differ from Italy as a whole and from Putnam's Most Civic Regions? With one exception, all the units comprising the High Fascist Regions form a subset of Putnam's Most Civic Regions (see note 7). Table 2.2 compares a series of political and organizational contextual measures for all of Italy, Putnam's Most Civic Regions, and the High Fascist Regions. The results are striking. First, on the electoral context measures, High Fascist Regions had a higher voter turnout and Left vote in 1919 and 1921, but a lower Catholic vote. Second, linkages between party organizations and vote present a similar pattern. Socialist organizational-vote linkages are stronger in High Fascist Regions than in High Civic Regions and on some measures more than double. In addition, Catholic organization-vote linkages are higher in High Fascist Regions for all Catholic organization and about average for Catholic trade unions. Third, overall and particularly Socialist trade union organizational membership density is about three times higher in High Fascist Regions than in

Table 2.2 Diverse context measures

Italian electoral context measures						
Country	*Voter turnout 1919*	*Voter turnout 1921*	*Socialist vote 1919*	*Left vote 1921*	*Catholic vote 1919*	*Catholic vote 1921*	*Fascist vote 1921*
Italy	52.8	57.8	31.5	29.0	26.2	25.3	6.1
Italy-High Civic[h]	57.8	64.0	41.7	39.4	32.5	26.7	5.3
Italy-High Fascism[a]	58.1	64.5	58.2	43.0	20.9	20.0	17.2

Italian organizational-electoral context measures					
Country	*Soc TU mem/ Left vote[b]*	*Soc org mem/ Left vote[c]*	*Left TU mem/ Left voted*	*Left org mem/ Left vote**	*Catholic TU mem/ Catholic vote*	*All catholic org mem/ Catholic vote[f]*
Italy	3.8	4.4	12.0	13.0	2.5	9.4

Italy-High Civic[h]	3.1	11.0	10.0	10.0	5.6	11.0
Italy-High Fascism[a]	7.1	7.5	26.3	28.6	5.4	17.6

Italian trade union organizational density context measures

Country	TU mem density 1910[b]	Soc TU mem density[b]	Left TU mem density[d]	Catholic TU mem density
Italy	3.2[g]	1.3	2.9	0.4
Italy-High Civic[h]	4.5[g]	1.5	3.4	1.1
Italy-High Fascism[a]	11.0[g]	4.5	10.2	0.8

Notes

a The electoral districts/provinces from the region of Emilia-Romagna are Piacenza, Reggio nell'Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Ferrara, Ravenna, and Forli;
and from the region of Lombardia, they include Cremona, Mantova and Pavia, as well as Rovigo from the Veneto region,

b Bartolini and Mair, 1990:234. For Italy trade union data are for 1910, electoral data for 1919, and Socialist affiliated unions only,

c Includes Socialist affiliated trade unions, co-operatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships,

d Includes Socialist and unaffiliated unions,

e Includes Socialist and unaffiliated trade unions, co-operatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships,

f Includes Catholic trade unions, co-operatives, banks, mutual benefit societies. Includes multiple memberships,

g Includes Socialist and Catholic trade unions,

h Putnam's (1993:150) 'Most Civil Regions': provinces of Emilia-Romagna and Lombardia.

High Civic Regions. Catholic trade union density is slightly lower in the High Fascist Regions than in the High Civic Regions, but above the national average. While these results contradict the regional civic tradition interpretation, they do not contradict the civil society/social capital hypothesis at the individual level. After all, it may not be members of civic associations who voted Fascist, but non-members, e.g. voters reacting to Socialist organizational densities, i.e. the 'Red Menace Hypothesis'. To address this concern, I turn to ecological inference models.

Ecological inference models

Fascism's mere appearance in those regions possessing a more robust civil society does not support the interpretation that members of civic associations were attracted to Fascism. To estimate the links between civil society and Fascism at the individual level, I

now employ ecological inference techniques. The hierarchical linear models above captured the context of Fascism. Within this context I now examine alternative hypotheses proposed by historical institutionalism and the impact of violence and intimidation before turning to directly examining the effects of civic associations on Fascism. To clearly evaluate all interpretations of Fascism, it is necessary to account for the effects of violence. Finally, I directly test the link between civic associational memberships and support for Fascism.

Historical institutionalism and civil society

Historical institutionalism emphasizes the importance of political conflict and formal institutional arrangements in influencing the development of civil society. Tarrow (1996) and Berman (1997a, 1997b) offer interpretations relevant to this research.

Tarrow (1996:394) stated an alternative hypothesis that 'nineteenth-century popular politics in north-central Italy are themselves the source of both civic community and positive political performance of its regional governments'. Therefore, civil society may be the outcome of democratic politics rather than its progenitor. In contrast, Putnam (1993:148–51) cited both support for mass parties and their associated organizations—trade unions, co-operative movements, mutual benefit societies, etc.—as indicators of civic engagement. Because both mass parties, the Socialists and the Catholics, developed a full range of such affiliated organizations, the question revolves around the direction of causality. How much of the relationship is reciprocal and how much is unidirectional, and in which directions? The question is answered by structural equation models permitting reciprocal causality.[8] The results show clearly that the Socialist rural trade union membership has a positive effect on the Socialist vote, but that the reciprocal effect is nil. In contrast, Catholic rural organizations have little direct or reciprocal effects on the Catholic vote. The thesis that political engagement spawned organizational development is not supported.

Berman's analysis (1997a:569–70, 1997b:402) stated that civic associations alienated from political life were more susceptible to Fascism. The linkage between associational membership and political engagement is presented in Table 2.3. Three statistics provide the information in Table 2.3. The figure below each row and column title is the observed mean value for that variable. For example, membership in Catholic rural organizations consisted of 1.2 per cent of the enfranchised population, and 58 per cent of enfranchised voters voted in the 1919 election. Each cell in Table 2.3 contains two figures. The upper figure is the ecological inference estimate; the lower figure is the standard error. In Table 2.3 an estimated 70 per cent of the Catholic rural organizational members voted in 1919, with a standard error of 0.0198.

Table 2.3 compares the effects of the Catholic and the Socialist organizational membership on party vote in 1919. Also included are estimates for the rural occupations most predominant in the Catholic and the Socialist movements. In 1920 Catholic rural trade union membership consisted of 78 per cent sharecroppers and tenants and 8 per cent rural labourers (Horowitz 1963:124). In contrast, the Socialist and independent trade unions drew more from the ranks of day labourers, 54 per cent of the Socialist and 18 per

cent of the independent agrarian trade union membership respectively. Although the contract labourers constituted only about 2 per cent of the rural workforce, their numbers made up 14 per cent of the Socialist and 3 per cent of the independent agrarian trade union members resulting in their influence in the agrarian unions far exceeding their numbers in the workforce.

Table 2.3 Rural occupational and organizational base of Catholic and Socialist vote, 1919

Administrative districts N= 29[a]

Vote	Renters 1921 (7.0%)	Sharecroppers 1921 (15.8%)	Contract labourers 1921 (2.2%)	Rural day labourers 1921 (30.0%)
Voters 1919 (58.1%)	50.0% 0.3203	60.4% 0.0815	45.5% 0.3170	72.6% 0.0792
Catholic 1919 (20.9%)	37.0 0.3621	26.3 0.0937	51.7 0.3617	17.1 0.0432
Socialist 1919 (58.2%)	57.4 0.2990	31.9 0.1459	64.4 0.3080	60.9 0.2498

Municipalities N= 570

Vote	Catholic rural organizational density 1910 (1.2%)	Catholic rural trade union density 1910 (0.5%)	Socialist rural organizational density 1910 (3.8%)	Socialist rural trade union density 1910 (3.6%)	Unaffiliated trade union density 1910 (7.3%)
Voters 1919 (58.1%)	70.0% 0.0198	60.0% 0.1781	62.6% 0.0584	56.2% 0.0961	70.1% 0.1525
Catholic 1919 (20.9%)	59.6 0.1986	44.2 0.0109	16.5 0.1785	5.5 0.0286	8.6 0.0540
Socialist 1919 (58.2%)	41.0 0.0094	41.0 0.0083	62.8 0.1246	59.8 0.2271	76.2 0.0174

Note
a Data for males only.

Table 2.3 indicates that organizational membership has mixed effects on political involvement. First, bearing in mind the differing membership compositions described above, Catholic organizations generated higher electoral turnout than the average for the

occupations most prevalent in the organizations. Socialist organizations had lower than expected turnout and independent trade unions about average. When comparing the capacity of these organizations to channel vote to their respective political allies, the picture is more mixed. Although Catholic organizations increased turnout above the average for occupations that predominated among their members, these organizations had only a modest effect on channelling the vote to the Catholic party. For the Catholics, these results are consistent with a region variously designated as anti-clerical, 'Red', and de-Christianized. In contrast, the Socialist organizations were less successful to mobilizing the vote, but more successful in achieving partisan voting. The independent unions were more successful than both the Catholics and Socialists at mobilizing and channelling the vote. The relative strength of these linkages is a central theme in the civil society thesis. The thesis suggests that the weaker these links in 1919, the more susceptible the linkages were to realignment in 1921. Before examining these links however, it is necessary to account for the role of violence in the rise of Fascism.

Violence, intimidation, and the destruction of civil society

Did Fascism need to destroy civil society to secure its triumph? Because the 1921 election occurred during the period of violence known as the 'Biennio Rosso', scholars have debated the impact of violence on electoral outcomes.[9] Empirical tests of violence's systematic effects offer mixed evidence.[10] Tests using hierarchical linear and structural equation models show no significant systematic effects of violence on 1921 Fascist, Socialist or Catholic vote at the electoral district or municipal level. The high-water mark for violence in 1920–1 followed the Socialist occupation of the fao tories in April and October 1920 and victories in the September–October 1920 administrative elections; however, the intensity of violence leading up to the May 1921 election (1 January 1921 until 7 April 1921) was half that of the three months following the 1920 elections (Gentile 1989:472–4).

An alternative explanation holds that landlords isolated and intimidated their wage labourers; however, agricultural labour relations in this region fail to support this interpretation. The typical agricultural enterprise was a non-family, small to medium size, labour-intensive, capital-intensive farm raising highly commercial crops and employing wage labour.[11] These 'factories in the field' drew upon a vast, and chronically underemployed, wage labour force (a ratio of 80 wage labourers per hectare of commercially cultivated land typified the Po Valley). Overall, wage labourers made up 40 per cent of the total economically active rural population with casual day labourers outnumbering contract labourers by a ratio of 15:1. Typically, labourers lived in 'agro-towns' along the roads outside the farms and met farm overseers at roadside 'hiring halls' each day to bid for work. Gradually, the Socialists organized these hiring halls (termed Chambers of Labour), which became the foundation of Socialist trade unions in the countryside. Fascist violence aimed to destroy these organizations, but Fascist successes were uneven. In the province of Bologna, the Chambers remained intact until well after the 1921 election. If measures of overt violence and the nature of labour relations argue against the intimidation hypothesis, what about covert pressures? Measuring covert

pressure is more difficult, but a more detailed examination of Fascism in Bologna shows no effects of intimidation on the 1921 electoral results.[12]

Civil society and Fascism

Several conclusions about Italian civil society are warranted. First, while the density of Italian civil society showed regional variation; in the regions characterized as 'most civic' between 1860 and 1920, the density of civil society was greater than the national average, but below the densities of Germany and Britain. In contrast to Germany and Britain, however, electoral volatility across the class and religious divisions in these regions was greater. Second, a subset of these same regions with the highest civic densities and voter volatilities gave rise to Fascism in 1920–1. Third, contrary to the historical-institutionalism thesis, civil society was not a product of political agitation. Rather, the causal arrow runs in the direction suggested by Putnam: from associational memberships to political participation and partisan voting. Hence, also contrary to the historical-institutionalism thesis, civic associations are not divorced from political life. However, the effectiveness of organizational memberships in channelling political activity varies across the types of organizations. Finally, violence and intimidation, often cited as explanations for the collapse of civil society and the rise of Fascism, demonstrate no significant, systemic effects on the 1921 election.

Civil society and the Fascist vote, 1921

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 present the ecological inference estimates for the 1921 election. Table 2.4 presents the voter transition matrix for the 1919–21 elections. The estimates indicate that 20 per cent of the Constitutional bloc voters, 64 per cent of the Centre-Left voters, 26 per cent of the Socialist voters, 13 per cent of Catholic voters, and 25 per cent of non-voters in 1919 shifted to the Fascists in 1921. In other words, the Constitutional bloc represented 10 per cent of the 1919 electorate and 14 per cent of the total 1921 Fascist vote. The figures for the other blocs are: Centre-Left, 6 per cent and 5 per cent; Socialists, 41 per cent and 40 per cent; Catholics, 15 per cent and 6 per cent; and non-voters, 30 per cent and 35 per cent. Constitutional bloc voters and non-voters in 1919 were overrepresented among Fascist voters, but Catholic voters were underrepresented. Most overrepresented were those who did not vote in 1919, but did vote in 1921. Over all, the Socialists retained 54 per cent of their 1919 support and the Catholics 47 per cent.

Table 2.5 presents the estimates for the 1921 vote for rural occupations and Catholic and Socialist organization members. In 1919 the Socialist organizations and independent rural trade unions delivered the vote to the Socialists in 1919. However, these same organizations failed to constrain the shift to the Fascists in 1921. In the 1919 election, an estimated 63 per cent of all Socialist rural organization members and 60 per cent of Socialist rural trade union members voted Socialist. In addition, an estimated 76 per cent of the independent trade union members voted Socialist. For the Catholic rural organizational and trade union members, the results are more mixed.

However, in 1921 the situation is reversed. Catholic rural trade unions

Table 2.4 Voter transition matrix 1919–21 (N=570)

Vote	Constitutional 1919 (14.5%)	Centre- Left 1919 (6.6%)	Socialist 1919 (58.2%)	Catholic 1919 (20.9%)	Voters 1919 (58.1%)	Non-voter 1919 (41.9%)
Non-voter 1921 (35.5%)	40.3% 0.0688	47.0% 0.0776	36.2% 0.0139	45.9% 0.0267	17.4% 0.0135	66.9% 0.0191
Voted 1921 (64.5%)	61.8 0.0512	53.9 0.0690	63.7 0.0154	53.3 0.0240	82.9 0.0139	33.2 0.0168
Fascist 1921 (17.2%)	20.2 0.0750	64.1 0.0590	25.6 0.0350	13.2 0.0249	20.8 0.0086	25.9 0.0104
National Block 1921 (13.8%[a])	36.8 0.0219	10.3 0.0434	11.1 0.0157	6.4 0.0402	13.1 0.0242	9.9 0.0292
Centre-Left 1921 (3%)	3.2 0.0032	7.8 0.0217	2.0 0.0024	3.0 0.0042	2.5 0.0020	2.4 0.0024
Left 1921 (43%)	3.5 0.0110	23.8 0.0902	53.5 0.2216	25.1 0.3191	62.6 0.0311	26.0 0.0375
Catholic 1921 (20%)	17.9 0.0148	32.7 0.0685	9.4 0.0247	47.1 0.0532	16.3 0.0091	20.6 0.0110

Note
a Excludes Fascist vote.

Table 2.5 Rural occupational and organizational base of Fascist, Catholic, and Left vote, 1921

Administrative districts N=29[a]

Vote	Renters 1921 (7.0%)	Sharecroppers 1921 (15.8%)	Contract labourers 1921 (2.2%)	Rural day labourers 1921 (30.0%)
Voters 1921 (64.5%)	78.9% 0.2389	58.0% 0.0859	98.0% 0.0218	82.2% 0.0552
Fascist 1921 (17.4%)	32.5 0.1933	31.4 0.2126	70.3 0.1077	56.2 0.1004
Catholic 1921 (20.0%)	34.3 0.2767	33.9 0.1681	46.0 0.3131	11.6 0.0409

| Left 1921 | 48.8 | 50.6 | | 44.9 | 21.5 |
| (43.0%) | 0.2871 | 0.0982 | | 0.2715 | 0.1179 |

Municipalities N=570

Vote	Catholic rural organizational density 1910 (1.2%)	Catholic rural trade union density 1910 (0.5%)	Socialist rural organizational density 1910 (3.8%)	Socialist rural trade union density 1910 (3.6%)	Unaffiliated trade union density 1910 (7.3%)
Voters	68.7%	67.8%	58.4%	55.7%	73.9%
1921	0.1150	0.1580	0.1390	0.1709	0.0313
(64.5%)					
Fascist	35.3	17.0	50.7	56.4	33.9
1921	0.1928	0.0733	0.2709	0.0671	0.0440
(17.4%)					
Catholic	42.6	42.1	9.3	11.3	0.6
1921	0.0852	0.0765	0.0604	0.0735	0.0010
(20.0%)					
Left 1921	21.6	44.1	42.0	54.8	67.6
(43.0%)	0.0856	0.0037	0.1050	0.0279	0.0207

Note

a Data for males only.

were more successful in delivering the vote to the Catholic party than the Socialist unions were in delivering their members' votes to the Left. An estimated 17 per cent of Catholic rural trade union members voted Fascist, but 56 per cent of Socialist trade union members voted Fascist as did almost half of all Socialist rural organizational members. The proportion of Catholic and Socialist organization members voting Fascist should be compared to the overall defection rates for the 1919 Catholic and Socialist voters. For the Catholics, about 13 per cent of their 1919 voters and 17 per cent of Catholic rural trade union members defected to the Fascists. The difference is insignificant as it falls within the standard errors. Moreover, the defection rates for Catholic rural trade union members are about half those for the occupational rates that predominated in the Catholic movement. On the other hand, 26 per cent of all 1919 Socialist voters defected, but 56 per cent of Socialist rural trade union members shifted to the Fascists, and defection rates for Socialist rural trade union members are comparable to the rate for all day labourers.

Independent rural trade union members strongly supported the Socialists in 1919 (76 per cent) and showed a slight decline in 1921 (68 per cent). More significant was the shift in independent rural trade union members from the Centre-Left in 1919 (16 per cent) to the Fascists in 1921 (34 per cent). Because the independent unions were also targets of Fascist violence for their Socialist support in 1919, the differences between the Socialist and independent estimates are consistent with the effects of violence noted above.

Among the groups examined here, the shift to Fascism came from three sources. First, 1919 Socialist voters, and particularly, Socialist rural trade union members whose defection rate is almost twice the defection rate for all 1919 Socialist voters. Second,

almost half of Catholic organization members who had voted Socialist in 1919 voted Fascist in 1921. Among Catholic organization members who voted Catholic in 1919, the defection rate is below the expected rate. Third was the shift of independent trade union members from the Centre-Left in 1919 to Fascism, and to a lesser extent, the shift of independent trade union members from the Catholics and Socialists in 1919 to Fascism in 1921.

Conclusion: the limits of civil society

What can account for such a dramatic failure of the supposed linkage between civil society and democracy? Are these findings an indictment of civil society as elixir for reinvigorating democracy? Can these results be explained by the political context of Italian democracy in the 1920s?

If civic traditions constitute a central logic in the civil society/social capital thesis, then these results severely challenge that logic. Fascism's greatest support appeared in the heart of Italy's Most Civic Regions: the most densely organized, politically engaged and politicized. The density of organizational life, links of these organizations to electoral politics, and partisan volatility were all higher in High Fascist Regions than in the Most Civic Regions as a whole. Moreover, violence and intimidation, often cited explanations, cannot account for Fascism's success.

Estimates of individual political behaviour show that the more organized members were more likely to defect. Socialist rural trade union members were more than twice as likely to defect as the typical Socialist voter. In contrast, Catholic organization members remained more loyal, but Catholic supporters were less densely organized than Socialist voters. The variations in the shift to Fascism across the organizations and parties and within the parties offer an explanation and an assessment of the civil society thesis. The most important voter shift occurred among the 1919 Socialist voters who constituted an estimated 40 per cent of the 1921 Fascist voters. The lowest defections occurred among 1919 Catholic voters. Among 1919 Socialist voters, the highest defections came from day labourers. Among organizational members affiliated to the parties, Catholic organizations most successfully countered the appeals of Fascism. Independent rural trade unions were less successful, while the Socialist rural trade unions were the least successful.

The collapse of civil society needs to be understood within the historical and national context. Three dimensions capture this context:

The consequences of the war and failure of liberalism

The war and its aftermath discredited the liberal governments. The war effort marked a massive undertaking of the Italian government and one which was poorly executed. Italy mobilized 71 per cent of the male population 15–49 years of age, more than Britain did at 49 per cent, but less than France did at 80 per cent. The military death rate as a proportion of the male population 15–49 years of age was 8.4 per cent in Italy, 6.4 per cent in Britain, and 13.2 per cent in France. An additional 5.9 per cent of males 15–49 years of age were mutilated or disabled by the war and an additional 2.7 per cent of the civilian

population died from consequences of the war (Delegazione alla Conferenza per il Consolidamento del Debito di Guerra 1925a:3–5).

Average per capita income in constant prices declined in Italy by 40 per cent between 1913 and 1918 compared to an increase of 10 per cent in Britain and a 32 per cent decline in France. Although Italy had a smaller tax base to finance the war, a study of post-war taxation estimated that taxes absorbed 38 per cent of all income in Italy, 27 per cent in Britain, and 29 per cent in France. Even before the war, the average active male adult Italian diet provided about 5 per cent fewer calories than the recommended daily minimum of 3,300 calories. In contrast, the British diet was 12 per cent greater, and the average French diet 10 per cent greater. During the war, the average caloric intake by civilian adult males declined, reaching its low point in 1917 at 15 per cent below the recommended minimum. The make-up of the diet also varied with the Italian diet providing only 12 per cent of calories from animal sources compared to 36 per cent in Britain and 27 per cent in France (Delegazione alla Conferenza per il Consolidamento del Debito di Guerra 1925c:3–6).

By 1917, deterioration at home and military setbacks abroad led the Liberal government to seek new incentives and make excessive promises of reform. Following the defeat of the Italian forces at Caporetto in 1917, the government sought to motivate the peasant-soldiers with promises of land reform under the slogans, 'Fight for Italy and she is yours!' and 'The land to the peasants!'. Prime Minister Salandra declared:

> After the victorious end of the War, Italy will perform a great deed of social justice. Italy will give land and everything that goes with it to the peasants, so every hero who has fought bravely in the trenches can become economically independent. That will be the Fatherland's reward to its brave sons.
>
> (Schmidt 1966:27; also see Cardoza 1982:246–7)

The statement was widely distributed at the front.

Unemployment following the war in September 1919 increased to 14 per cent above the September 1914 levels; by September 1921, unemployment was 69 per cent above the September 1914 levels (Tremelloni 1923:9). Real wages for day labourers in agriculture were at 1914 levels in 1919, but declined by 16 per cent in 1920. Real wages in industry were 31 per cent below 1913 levels in 1919 and declined to 35 per cent below 1913 levels in 1921 (Delegazione alla Conferenza per il Consolidamento del Debito di Guerra 1925b:37, 60, 63).

Tactical miscalculations by the Left

The War and the Russian Revolution inflamed the passions of those arguing for the 'proletarianization' of rural workers, the collectivization of land, and the promotion of revolution. The 1919 Congress of *La Federazione nazionale dei lavoratori della terra* (The National Federation of Land Labourers) in Bologna urged the abolition of rural working class distinctions that hindered worker unity (Zangheri 1960:xxiv, 350). These debates heightened the tensions within the Socialist agrarian trade unions and culminated with the Socialist labour contracts of 1920 abolishing the distinctions between contract labourers and day labourers (Cardoza 1982:283ff; Corner 1975:150–9; Serpieri

1930:305–6). Proletarianization meant loss of the contract labourers' right of first-hire and forced them into the same precarious status and poverty as day labourers. The 1920 labour pact, therefore, deepened the divisions within the Socialist agrarian unions (Cardoza 1982:366–7; Corner 1974:22–3).

Meanwhile, the Socialists launched a major labour action. In 1920, 44 strikes by day labourers occurred in the Po Valley with the average strike involving 33 per cent of the day labourers (Direzione Generale del Lavoro e della Providenza Sociale and Ministero dell' Economia Nazionale 1924:295). The strikes were both violent and destructive. In Bologna, the agricultural heartland of the Po Valley, 58 per cent of the rice and 19 per cent of the sugar crops were destroyed (Cardoza 1982:287; Perdisa 1938:258). Lower, but substantial, losses occurred for wheat and hemp; wheat yields declined by 33 per cent (Zattini 1920:21). In addition, July 1920 witnessed the collapse of the international hemp market (Cardoza 1982:288). The destructiveness of the strikes crippled the production and drove up unemployment. From January to May 1920 until January to May 1921, unemployment soared by about 100 per cent in Emilia, 200 per cent in Lombardia, over 300 per cent in Piemonte, and over 800 per cent in Veneto (Tremelloni 1923:15).

By the spring of 1921, the revolutionary fever had passed, and the rural labourers found themselves disillusioned, unemployed, and destitute. Moreover, the Socialists had abandoned their unionized contract labourers under the new labour contracts of 1920.

> The decline [in the number of contract labourers] before 1921 and the rise thereafter suggests there were possibly several thousand displaced obbligati [contract labourers] eager to return to their former privileged position once it was clear that socialism had passed its peak.
>
> (Corner 1975:159, n3)

Differing estimates for Socialist and unaffiliated union members support this interpretation.

The advantage of the latecomer

Failure and disillusionment provided fertile ground for Fascism. Moreover, Fascism's late arrival on the political stage meant it was unencumbered by a political past and free to exploit the disillusionment with both the Liberals and the Socialists. In January 1921, the Fascists began tailoring their appeals to the landless workers for the upcoming May 1921 election with such slogans as: 'To every peasant his land! To every peasant the entire fruit of his sacred work' (Cardoza 1982:326–7), and 'The single most important idea of our farm workers is not the collective ownership of land, but the individual ownership of property' (Corner 1974:13).

The Fascist strategy appealed to the economic destitution of the rural labourers and fell into five categories: (1) creation of producer, credit and consumer co-operatives; (2) intervention in strikes and securing more favourable terms than the Socialists had offered; (3) creation of alternative hiring halls to the Socialists Chamber of Labour; (4) demanding restitution of fines imposed by Socialist unions on members for breaking boycotts; and (5) redistribution of land. These tactics varied by local conditions.

Legislation of February 1918 and September 1919 permitted the requisitioning of

underutilized land for use by co-operative movements. Socialist, Catholic and later, Fascist organizers sought to take advantage of the law. The co-operatives offered credit, insurance and marketing assistance (Serpieri 1921; Hobson 1926; Cardoza 1982:337).

Depending upon local conditions, the Fascists settled strikes on more favourable terms than the Socialists or Catholics proposed. For example, in June 1921, in Cremona after a long and bitter strike, the Fascists opposed collective ownership of the land and offered profit sharing (Serpieri 1930:319–20). The agreement was popular because it gave the former Contract Day Labourers more secure access to land. In contrast in Tuscany, where sharecropping was more prevalent, the Fascists sided with sharecroppers in some areas and with Day Labourers in others, sometimes shoring up tenant rights, and at other times demanding land reform (Snowden 1989:97ff).

In the Po Valley where Day Labourers predominated, the Fascists created alternative hiring halls and syndicates, provided legal services and more favourable wage agreements than the Socialists. In other areas, profit sharing contracts were advanced (Cardoza 1982:337; Snowden 1989:101). The Fascists also offered protection against fines imposed by Socialist unions (Cardoza 1982:337–8).

Actual redistribution of land appeared in several regions. In Ferrara by September 1921, the Fascists claimed to have redistributed 18,000 hectares, a little less than 10 per cent of the productive surface of the province, and claimed to have resettled 4,000 families (Corner 1975:157–8); also see Lyttelton (1987:63, 460, n107). Similarly in Tuscany, prominent landlords on the Pisa plain, the Chiana valley and the Sienna region made land available to the Fascists for resettlement of landless workers (Snowden 1989:97). In July 1921, the Fascists in Bologna also made land available for leasing (Cardoza 1982:354). In Brescia, Turati, a native of Po Valley syndicalism, they advocated land redistribution as well (Kelikian 1986:140–1). The Fascists also capitalized on local political traditions. Particularly in the Po Valley with a strong syndicalist tradition, major leaders of agrarian Fascism passed through syndicalism: Grandi, Bottai, Turati, Balbo and Panunzio among others (Sykes 1976; Roberts 1979:182–212).

Usually landlords co-operated with the Fascists in the joint effort to blunt Socialism, but in other cases pressure was also applied (Corner 1975:157; Kelikian 1986:144–53). In at least one case, Santa Maria in Veneto, the Fascists seized and occupied the land in 1920. The incident illustrates the transformation of the movement. After violent confrontations with the owners, but with the support of the Fascist Government in Rome, the peasants assumed control of the land in November 1922. The leader of the seizure, Baratella, went on to become the Fascist *ras* of Padua and led a second seizure of land in 1925. By 1926, however, Baratella was branded a 'false Fascist' and 'representative of the clique' left over from the 'early days of Fascism' when 'Fascism was in the hands of a band of suspicious characters made up of old radicals, some moderate clericals and a few deluded young men' (Evans 1976). In 1931 he was exiled to Bari and by 1934 the party withdrew all support and recognition and his political career was finished, quoted in Evans (1976:36–41, 51–3).

Most of the land distributions took place after the 1921 election and before the regime was consolidated following the Matteotti Crisis. However, most parcels were of poor quality and unable to support the new cultivators resulting in their reemployment as

sharecroppers and labourers. Nevertheless, between 1921 and 1936 (years of censuses), the pro portion of Day Labourers in agriculture declined from 39 per cent to 14 per cent of the agricultural economically active labour force (Corner 1979:244).

This research highlights the limits of civil society as a bulwark of democracy. Italian civil society reached its breaking point following the rapid mobilization of the newly enfranchised into politics, the war and its aftermath, economic crises and rising unemployment, a breakdown of the political centre, and the radicalization of political alternatives. All parties increasingly offered more radical, utopian schemes. Commenting on the consequences of these promises, Gioletti, President of the Cabinet, in a speech at the meeting of the Senate, September 26, 1920, stated:

> All parties vied with one another, just then, in giving promises, vague, indeterminate, and alluring. They promised land to the peasant and factories to the soldiers; promises that meant nothing to those who made them, while those who received them considered them their just deserts.
>
> (Por 1923:n37)

As political life became an arena of rival frauds, the Fascists, unfettered by the past and opportunistic about the future, appeared as a viable alternative.

Notes

1 In Italy suffrage expanded to males over 30 plus some males over 21 with special qualifications. The percentage of the population over 20 enfranchised increased from 15 per cent to 42 per cent from 1909 to 1913. Turnout declined from 60.4 per cent in 1913 to 56.6 per cent in 1919 and then increased to 58.4 per cent in 1921. In Germany the franchise increased from 38.7 per cent of the population over 20 in 1912 to 98 per cent in 1919. Turnout declined from 84.5 per cent to 81.4 per cent and to 78.4 per cent in 1920. In Britain suffrage was expanded from 28.8 per cent of the population over 20 in 1910 to 74.8 per cent in 1918. Turnout in contested constituencies declined from 81.1 per cent to 58.9 per cent and increased to 71.3 per cent in 1922 (Flora 1983:117–20, 126–9, 148–51).

2 The measures of civil society directly parallel or are identical to Putnam's (1993:149) Civic Involvement 1860–1920 factor. His measure of civic involvement conflates five indicators: (1) membership in mutual aid societies; (2) membership in co-operatives; (3) strength of mass parties; (4) electoral turnout; and (5) longevity of local associations. This research differs in two significant elements. First, civic involvement measures are analysed at the municipal level (N=6,110) rather than the regional level (N=16). Second, the HLM analysis separates the civic involvement measures from the political measures to examine the relationship between them and to use both to predict Fascist support in 1921.

3 The municipal units are 'comuni', local administrative centres that usually include several smaller villages, termed 'frazioni'. Size may range from a few hundred to over a million inhabitants; Roma, Milano, and Napoli, for example, are comuni. Over time the boundaries of comuni change, as larger ones may be subdivided or

smaller ones united to form new comuni. Because there is no way of knowing the profile of those areas affected by boundary changes, I aggregate any municipality into another municipality when any part of it is combined or subdivided. Because both pre-war and 1921 census measures are necessary for the analysis, I exclude territories acquired by Italy after the war.

4 The census officials noted that the four principal types were not distinct categories. Particularly in the South, tenure patterns were hybrids. However, the census officials made every effort to classify tenure patterns by the dominant mode of production. In these and other variables only males are used, because they more closely approximate the enfranchised population.

5 Violence figures prominently in several of the best known analyses of Fascism (DeFelice 1966; Lyttelton 1987; Tasca 1966). I test several measures of violence including injuries and deaths in political clashes between January 1920 and May 1921 with data drawn from the Interior Ministry archives (Gentile 1989:472-4), and Fascist-Socialist clashes between January 1 and May 8, 1921, also from the Interior Ministry archives (DeFelice 1966:36–9). A third measure consists of Fascist attacks on Socialist affiliated organizations between January to May 1921 compiled initially by the Fascists themselves, but later augmented by the Socialists (Tasca 1966:120). Both injuries and deaths, and Fascist-Socialist clashes measures exist by electoral district (N=54).

6 Brustein (1991:659) compiled the vote for the official Fascist candidates endorsed by Mussolini. He then 'totalled the votes for each Fascist candidate from the preference votes (voti di preferenza) and from votes from the other lists (voti aggiunti riportati in altre liste) and divided that sum by the province's total preference vote and vote from other lists for all candidates'. The municipal Fascist vote is estimated by the multiple imputation method from the electoral district returns and municipal returns.

7 HLM identifies the following electoral districts/provinces: from the region of Emilia-Romagna are Piacenza, Reggio nell'Emilia, Bologna, Modena, Ferrara, Ravenna, and Forli; and from the region of Lombardia, they include Cremona, Mantova and Pavia, as well as Rovigo from the Veneto region. Together these constitute most of the Po Valley's rich agricultural region and, with the exception of Rovigo, make up a subset of Putnam's (1993:150) Most Civic Regions.

8 Non-recursive Structural Equation Modelling with Instrumental Variables (SEM-IV) has several advantages over the Two-Stage Least Squares with Instrumental Variables method (Wong and Law 1999). One advantage is that it generates the reciprocal effects coefficients and measures their stability (Bentler and Freeman 1983). In the SEM technique, the IVs are exogenous variables used to properly identify the model. The SEM-IV models should meet the following conditions: sample size is adequate (N>200), disturbance terms are free to covary, moderate temporal stability exists, and instrumental variables have significant and equal effects on their respective endogenous variables.

I use the SEM-IV method to estimate and then parse several reciprocal effects. For example, of particular interest are the reciprocal effects of Socialist organizational membership density and Socialist vote, a test of the Tarrow alternative model. The coefficients of interest show that Socialist rural trade union membership density has

a positive effect (standardized coefficient=0.27) on the 1919 Socialist vote, but the reciprocal effect of the 1919 Socialist vote on Socialist trade union membership is insignificant (0.08). The interactive effect is highly stable at 0.020. The model is identified by specifying directed relationships from the IV_1, *voter turnout in 1919,* to 1919 Socialist vote (0.29) and IV_2, *non-Socialist trade union contract labour membership density* to Socialist trade union membership density (0.20). The covariance of the disturbance terms of the IVs is 0.02, and the covariance of the disturbance terms of the endogenous variables is −0.16. The residual error variances of the endogenous variables are 0.036 for 1919 Socialist vote and 0.010 for the Socialist trade union membership density. Because the coefficients of the IVs to the endogenous variables and endogenous variable residual error variances differ from the desired conditions described above, I test for the significance of these differences. A comparison of two models, one in which the directed coefficients are free and one in which they are constrained to equality, shows no statistically significant difference. Thus, the model meets the necessary conditions and the results are robust. Similar models test for endogeneity for other variables. When endogeneity exists, the variables are re-estimated as in the TSLS-IV technique.

9 Although the Catholics were a target of Fascist violence, the majority of the violence was committed against the Socialists. Figures on political deaths and injuries from January 1920 to May 31, 1921 show 70 per cent were Socialists, 18 per cent Fascists, and 12 per cent Catholics (Gentile 1989:472–4). Scholars disagree on its significance. For some (DeFelice 1966:35ff; Gentile 1989:202–8; Smith 1959:345) violence was central to Fascist electoral success, but others (Lyttelton 1987:67; Maier 1975:327) are more qualified, noting that the Socialist vote held despite violence. Still others noted additional factors. Corner stated (1975:144) that 'to attribute so much to the actions of the squads would be to miss something'. He continues, 'In fact the movement towards Fascism by the mass of the provincial population was far more articulated than is suggested by an explanation solely in terms of violence. Some people were beaten into submission, certainly, but many came to Fascism spontaneously and for varying reasons' (Corner 1975:146). In Bologna, which had by far the highest levels of violence, Cardoza concluded, 'Fascist achievements were considerably more modest [compared to Ferrara]. Here six months of punitive expeditions did not succeed in substantially altering mass political loyalties' (Cardoza 1982:342). In a review of the debate, Bernabei (1975:151–3) concluded that promises of land redistribution were as important as violence for mobilizing 1921 Fascist electoral support.

10 Szymanski (1973:399) found a correlation of 0.45 between violence and Fascist vote at the regional level (N=20). More recent studies (Elazar 2000:317; Elazar and Lewin 1999:197) suggest that although significant, violence was not the decisive factor. These studies used DeFelice's (1966:36–9) measures of violence.

11 Forty-three per cent of all enterprises employing wage labour were less than 20 hectares, and an additional 21 per cent were 20 to 50 hectares. The density of wage labourers per hectare of cultivated land employing wage labour averaged 80 workers in the Po Valley, and 29 workers per hectare in the remainder of Italy. This could mean that an enterprise of 50 hectares in the Po Valley had a potential labour force

of 4,000 wage labourers: far too large to house on the estate. Under conditions of persistently high unemployment and seasonal fluctuations in labour demand, employers took advantage of the resulting highly competitive, unskilled labour market to minimize labour costs through competitive labour markets or hiring halls. Later the Socialists organized the hiring halls, Chambers of Labour, upon which the Socialist unions founded their strength. In the Po Valley plain, day labourers made up 40 per cent of heads of households in agriculture; 20 per cent were owner-occupiers, 12 per cent renters, 13 per cent sharecroppers, the remainder non-cultivators (Istituto Centrale di Statistica 1935). Zamagni (1993:198–9) estimates that in 1910–14 an agrarian day labourer had to work 280 days a year for subsistence, but the figure was usually 180–200 and fell to 100–120 days in Bologna in some periods. Zangheri (1960:xi–xix) cites 90 days in Ferrara as typical. Seventy per cent of all chemical fertilizers and 70 per cent of all agricultural machinery in Italy in 1913 were employed in the Po Valley (Zamagni 1993:61–8). Rice, hemp, sugar beet, and wheat constituted the main commercial crops and all were subject to high protective tariffs and subsidies (Ministero dell'agricoltura 1914; Perdisa 1938; Pugliese 1926; Zattini 1922). The Po Valley produced 50 per cent of hemp, 25 per cent of tomatoes, and 80 per cent of sugar beet in 1911. Profits on sugar beet and hemp were four and ten times that of wheat respectively (Cardoza 1982:128).

12 Although the province also had a long history of Socialist politics and trade unionism, the Fascists won 23 per cent of the vote in the May 1921 election, and Mussolini himself won a parliamentary seat. In the months leading up to the election (January 1920 to May 1921), the province experienced the highest rate of political violence in the Po Valley, '[i]n the most important agricultural areas of the province, however, Fascist violence and agrarian pressures, unlike Ferrara, had not significantly weakened the allegiance of the mass of day labourers to the leagues by the summer of 1921...' (Cardoza 1982:370). Covert intimidation by definition remains unobservable, however, two plausible indirect, observable measures for the municipal units (N=49) are *reports of intimidation leading up to the May 1921 election* and *spread of Fascist nuclei across the province's municipalities from December 1920 to May/June 1921* (Cardoza 1982:290–386, 318–19). The analysis assumes that the greater the presence of these two observed variables, the greater the likelihood of covert intimidation. This unobservable or latent variable extracts the common variance of the observed variables. Although the two indicators of intimidation load strongly (0.780 and 0.540) and significantly on the *intimidation latent variable* and a SEM with 200 bootstrap samples generates an excellent fit to the data (Normed Fit Index=0.936) with stable coefficients, the model shows no significant effect of intimidation on the Left vote or the Fascist vote in 1921.

3
The limits of civil society within a divided community

The case of Northcrn Ireland
Feargal Cochrane

The argument of this chapter is a simple one: context matters. The assertion here is that the usefulness of concepts such as civil society and associationalism for building healthy and peaceful democracies, is dependent upon the character and nature of the society itself. This chapter examines the case of Northern Ireland to illustrate that civil society has a dark side as well as a light side, and that to ignore the more destructive forces of civil society and associationalism can lead to an inaccurate understanding of the capabilities of civil society for promoting peace and democratic stability.

The very phrase *civil society* has become absorbed into academic and policy making discourse, and is frequently cited as an essential ingredient of stable liberal democracies. What lies behind such thinking is a notion of civil society as being *intrinsically* a force for stability, civic engagement, and fundamentally, for non-violence. Thus, a vibrant civil society, where citizens are moved to take an interest in their community, join NGOs and informal voluntary associations, vote in elections and so on, will augment what might be referred to as the 'contentment index' within the regime, increase social cohesion and thus reduce alienation and the proneness of the region to conflict.

This chapter argues that within a deeply divided society like Northern Ireland, the normal gravitational forces that underpin the concept of civil society within more stable polities (a sense of community, desire for associational life, sense of civic duty, etc.) are sharpened to a degree that they can just as easily mutate into uncivil norms and values. In other words, while Putnam envisions the decline of American democracy with the increasing trend towards 'Bowling Alone', and the drop-off in associational life (Putnam 2000), within a divided society like Northern Ireland joining *the group* or having a strong sense of *community* can have a wholly different (and violent) set of outcomes. Thus, within the political infrastructure of a divided society, where, by definition, there is more than one single community, with a contested set of politico-cultural values, people may be so interested in *their* community, that they become willing to engage in conflict with those within the *other,* whom they perceive to be threatening or antagonistic to their political, social or economic positions.

The focus of this chapter therefore, is to examine the dynamics of civil society within Northern Ireland over the course of the last 30 years of political conflict, to illustrate that concepts such as *community spirit, civic duty,* or even *public service,* are not neutral values with universally beneficial outcomes, but exist within a wider political and cultural context.

Framing civil society

The phrase civil society has become a relatively sexy one in recent years for Western governments eager to combat declining levels of trust and participation in the democratic process, and international organizations anxious to find some means of tackling protracted social conflicts and ethnic violence. However, while the term has become relatively commonplace in recent years, it has a theoretical pedigree which 'extends a history of the concept, in Western thought, from classical times in Greece and Rome, through the faith-based medieval period, and up to the start of the twenty-first century' (Couto 2001). Whilst it may have become more fashionable after the democratic changes in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s, the concept of civil society has been a strong undercurrent in western political thought throughout the twentieth century.

The argument here, is that it is important to define the limits of civil society within a given political context and to acknowledge that civil society is a relational concept, rather than a static phenomenon with a universal meaning. It can be used to justify and defend a multiplicity of political values and objectives. Western notions of civil society too often cherry-pick associations and NGOs that are deemed to be 'good' rather than 'bad', positive rather than negative, or perhaps more contentiously, those that conform or adhere to hegemonic power relations within the regime (i.e. are reformist rather than revolutionary). Thus, the notion of civil society is deconstructed to incorporate the Church, the media, academia, trade unions, the business sector, non-governmental organizations and so on. When NGOs are mentioned in the same breath as civil society, the focus tends to be on campaigning, advocacy or service delivery groups, human rights organizations, community regeneration projects, reconciliation groups etc. However, these constructions place more emphasis upon notions of *civil* than notions of *society* and may have little bearing on the patterns of association within these communities. Thus, while people may well feel the urge to associate around parent-teacher organizations, recycling campaigns and neighbourhood-watch groups within stable societies, the drive to associate within unstable communities may focus more upon sectarian societies, partisan community groups and ultimately, paramilitary organizations.

This chapter prefers an inclusive definition of civil society to reflect the positive *and* the negative aspects of society itself, and to reflect the fact that the line between what is deemed to be positive and negative within a society, is itself a value judgement that may change over time, and may differ depending upon one's subjective political agenda. If we are going to prioritize the values of community associationalism as being universally beneficial, then we cannot exclude those who join and associate simply on the basis that we do not like the organizations concerned.

The phrase *civil society* is understood here to refer to the groups, associations and individuals, from trade unions, churches, business communities, educational sectors, cultural organizations, NGOs, media groups, the arts, peace groups and other pressure groups, that mediate between the individual and the State. Whilst this focuses upon those non-governmental individuals and groups that make a positive engagement with the liberal democratic polity, it does not exclude those people and organizations that might be perceived as exerting a negative and destructive influence upon the society. Paramilitary

organizations such as the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and ethnocentric cultural/ religious organizations such as the Orange Order, and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) are some of the most powerful and important constituents of civil society within Northern Ireland, and are thus impossible to exclude from any definition, if the political and social dynamics of that society are to be properly understood. As Wilson (1998:103) has remarked; 'civil society will of its diverse nature contain a much broader spectrum of concerns (including many unsavoury ones) and throw up more creative talents (as well as many destructive elements)'.

The resurgence of civil society

The concept of civil society found a renewed currency during the 1990s. This was accompanied by two other features of the decade. First, the ending of the cold war and democratic movements in Eastern Europe, and second, the increase of ethno-nationalist violence and civil wars within state boundaries (Kaldor 1999). The increased opportunities facilitated by the end of the cold war, provided the international community (in the shape of the United Nations and its agencies) with the opportunity to intervene as a third-party in such conflicts. The changing nature of war in the 1990s, rise of ethno-nationalist conflicts and the resulting impact on civilian populations, required it to do so. This set off renewed thinking within international organizations, the academic community and NGO practitioners themselves, as to what role civil society could play in preventing, reducing or resolving such conflict. As Kaldor points out:

> The term 'civil society' and related terms such as 'anti-politics' or 'power of the powerless', seemed to offer a discourse within which to frame parallel concerns about the ability to control the circumstances in which individuals live, about substantive empowerment of citizens.
>
> (Kaldor 2000)

The renewal of interest in the role of civil society during the 1990s also reflects a growing emphasis on conflict prevention given the failure of international efforts to intervene successfully in conflicts that had already broken out.[1] Academic commentators and international agencies alike, have attempted to deal with the underachievement of interventions within ethnically divided or failed states by turning to conflict prevention rather than conflict management or conflict resolution: prevention rather than cure. This trend has opened up a space for the more proactive involvement of civil society actors (such as NGOs, churches, trade unions etc.) within such societies as a bridge between the conflict parties and external agencies with the capacity to intervene. Thus, efforts to prevent conflict that focus on 'deep' conflict prevention (removing underlying political or economic grievances, building trust between protagonists etc.) or 'light' conflict prevention (maintaining cease-fires, providing early warning systems of latent tensions, or rapid response facilities once hostilities have begun) have tended to advocate an expanded role for civil society actors. While there is much that can be done by civil society actors to prevent either the outbreak or escalation of violent conflict, the argument here, is that it would be unwise to decontexualize such groups and individuals from the

societies within which they are located. In other words, civil society is not a universal force for democratic stability or peaceful change. Churches can preach hatred and division, the media can destabilize political dialogue and negotiations between warring factions and increase community division, NGOs can promote sectarian interests and underline divisions, as well as transcend and overcome them.

In their haste to find a coherent strategy for combating violent conflict, the academic, national and international policy-making communities must avoid viewing civil society and its constituent groups as a wonder-pill that will cure all ills. As the following section dealing with Northern Ireland will illustrate, community cohesion, civic activism and the desire for associational life that are the building blocks of civil society, can lead to uncivil as well as civil outcomes.

Civil society in Northern Ireland

For much of its existence, Northern Ireland has been politically unstable. The society has been divided since the creation of Northern Ireland in 1920, between the predominantly Protestant unionist community on the one hand, who wished to remain within the United Kingdom, and the mainly Catholic nationalist population on the other, who wanted to end the British link and join the rest of the island within a united Irish state. Even periods of outward stability have masked political instability at the micro-community level. The region has been the site of a low-intensity ethno-national conflict since 1969 that has resulted in the death of over 3,500 people, and it remains a divided and bitter community today despite experiencing successful political negotiations in 1998.[2] At its height this conflict was a 'dirty war' that involved no-warning bomb attacks on civilians, assassination campaigns by rival paramilitary factions, allegations of human rights violations by the British government, and an aggressive propaganda war on all sides. During the 1970s, Northern Ireland's 'troubles' gave rise to a polity in which normal democratic politics scarcely existed: the 'national'[3] government at Westminster was largely disinterested, the regional government at Stormont was partisan in favour of the unionist section of the population, and the organs of local government had little responsibility and less power.

Following the suspension of the devolved government in 1972, most of the day-to-day policy-making was in the hands of powerful civil servants and QUANGOs. The resulting 'democratic deficit'[4] meant that space opened up for the voluntary and community sector. This sector grew consistently in size, influence, and in the scope of its responsibilities. As opportunities for participation in conventional political structures declined, the voluntary sector emerged as an alternative site for citizen activism, and there was a discernible shifting of human energies away from party politics and into civil society. To put it more bluntly, those who *wanted to do something within* their community, were more likely to be attracted into NGOs rather than into political parties during this period.

At the level of community-based NGOs, civil society groups developed differently within the unionist and nationalist sections of the population. From its formation in 1921 until the suspension of devolved government in 1972, the Northern Ireland government was dominated by the unionist community, which consequently regarded the government,

in a general sense, as a competent deliverer of social services and as something of a large-scale community development organization. Protestants, on the whole, saw a direct and usually positive correlation between their concerns and votes, and the activities and social programmes that the government undertook. The experience of the nationalist community was rather different. Nationalists felt little allegiance to the post-partition state after 1921 and felt excluded from it. While many nationalists deliberately opted out of the State and its structures for ideological reasons, the unionist government did little to persuade nationalists that they were part of the political community of Northern Ireland. Unionists often treated nationalists with suspicion, and excluded them from both the political process and the workplace. As a result of this sectarian bias, the nationalist community could not rely on the State to satisfy all of its needs and soon developed its own 'third sector', based on community co-operation and self-help initiatives. Some of these, such as the St Vincent de Paul society, were associated with the Catholic Church, while others, such as the emergence of the Credit Union movement, were secular initiatives motivated by economic disadvantage. By the early 1970s it had become difficult to disentangle the socio-economic and the political grievances that lay behind both nationalist and unionist community action. As this disagreement became increasingly violent and the central government's reach and authority decreased, unionists and nationalists alike had to rely upon their own resources to fulfil some of the services the State had once provided and to satisfy newly emerging needs. NGOs therefore emerged to populate political and economic spaces. These tended to conform to either service delivery groups such as relief centres for those who had been forced out of their homes and community development initiatives of various kinds, or campaigning groups such as the Peace People, formed in 1976 to oppose sectarian violence from republican and loyalist paramilitary organizations.

Today, Northern Ireland is a small, though highly complex region, with a sophisticated, politically literate and vibrant civil society. Many of its constituent elements, educators, religious organizations, media, business leaders and trade unions, have all played their part in encouraging the 'peace process' that resulted in paramilitary ceasefires in 1994 and the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998. The GFA was the result of several years of political negotiations between the main political actors, mediated by the British, Irish and American governments. The significance of the GFA is that it produced a set of political principles and institutions that would restore democratic accountability to Northern Ireland on an agreed basis and a new system of power-sharing between the unionist and nationalist communities. Unfortunately, the implementation of the GFA has been beset with problems and so far, this agreement has failed to transcend political differences or promote a shared sense of community values within the region.

In a society with just over 1.7 million people, NGOs abound, with a recent estimate putting their number somewhere between 4,500–5,000 groups with an annual turnover of £657 million in 2000–1. Putnam, and Fennema and Tillie within this volume who put such store in the intrinsic value of social capital and community activism, might be heartened to learn that during the same period, the general public donated an estimated £147 million to the voluntary and community sector: an average of £12.17 per person per month (NICVA 2002b)!

The business community were initially wary of expressing views on the political

situation, but have become more vocal since the early 1990s in response to progress in the 'peace process'. While most business organizations would shy away from aligning themselves with particular political viewpoints or constitutional blueprints, many business groups have been eager to point out the economic opportunities that political stability offers to Northern Ireland, and issue warnings about the negative impact on jobs and investment that political instability might lead to. The following statement from Strategy 2010,[5] is typical of many business groups, promoting stability and by inference the GFA as an economic opportunity, rather than on the basis of its political strengths and/or weaknesses:

> The establishment of a stable political environment in Northern Ireland will be of critical importance to the speed and scope of the development of the economy. The civil unrest of recent years has adversely affected business confidence, leading to delay in or cancellation of investment strategies. It has also clearly had an effect on our ability to attract inward investment projects into the region, and this in turn has restricted our integration into the wider European and global economies.
>   […]A lasting political settlement will represent a significant opportunity in both the social and economic context. It will strengthen our ability to attract international investment and provide the right environment for our indigenous firms to realize their full growth potential. The potential for the tourism sector is particularly significant in terms of increased employment in the sector itself and significant spin-off employment in the retail, leisure and entertainment fields. We will need every sector to maximize the economic benefits of peace.
>
> (Strategy Review Steering Group 1999:101)

Influential NGOs meanwhile, such as the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) have taken a leading role in denouncing violence, supporting the 'peace process' and engaging with the devolved government formed in the wake of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) of 1998. NICVA published a response, for example, to the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government (PfG) and draft budget for 2002–3, where they highlighted the need for the promotion of social capital:

> The Programme for Government and public service agreements should also consider how they can make a contribution to building social capital in areas where it has fallen into decline. Social capital is recognized as the glue which binds society or neighbourhoods together. Social capital is about good neighbourliness, social organizations and social contact. It is about the intricate system of connections which exist between people in strong and stable communities.
>
> (NICVA 2002a:7)

This is, of course, true so far as it goes, but it hinges on the definition of the word 'community'. Many of those living within interface areas in Northern Ireland conceive of the *community* in less broad terms than NICVA suggest. These are intensely cohesive, strong and stable communities, divided along a sectarian fault-line. As a consequence,

civil society in Northern Ireland often mirrors the political and social divisions inherent within the communities who live there. It would be fair to say that in political, social and cultural terms, there are two communities rather than one. These two communities exist in close proximity to one another, often in a state of conflict, tension and mutual antagonism.

NICVA is an NGO that has attempted to engage with the political sector and promote stability in Northern Ireland. It has developed a draft policy manifesto in which it deals directly with issues surrounding the political conflict in the region.

> Sectarianism...is present throughout society at all levels. Effective long-term peace-building and conflict resolution must involve all sectors and communities. The voluntary and community sector has a crucial role to play in healing social divisions, empowering local communities and striving to develop a just, anti-sectarian and stable society.
>
> (NICVA 2003:4)

Once again, these are laudable goals, articulated by one of the largest and most influential NGOs in Northern Ireland. The problem lies in selling this message to the diverse and complex range of civil society organizations at the micro-level, against the backdrop of community conflict and interface tension. Many community groups have been formed against this background of low-intensity conflict and revolve around it. Notions of *community* are often narrow and parochial and conceptions of *rights, justice* and *partnership* can differ to an alarming degree.

The NGO universe is a heterogeneous one in Northern Ireland. NGOs range from overtly peace and reconciliation organizations, to more economically focused community development groups. Many of these NGOs are supported financially by the British government and by funding from the European Union, though not without some controversy.

> The EU peace money in the 1990s arrived with a call to get the money 'on the ground' quickly. The result was that funders soon found that they had more money than they could spend in time. Many (most?) of the projects funded have been ill-thought out, poor in quality, and in some cases, just plain silly (Ulster Scots and Gaelic classes to improve the job prospects of ex-prisoners).
>
> (Martin 2000:16)

The existence of a low-intensity political conflict over the last 30 years in Northern Ireland has seen the evolution of a unique and highly diverse subset of NGOs that focus, either explicitly or implicitly, on peace and conflict resolution activity. This diversity is largely a result of the fact that the sector is unregulated and unstructured while at the same time, quite well resourced for the size of the population. Consequently, a wide variety of individuals and community groups are relatively free to begin work as activists and practitioners in areas such as community development, mediation, reconciliation, and human rights activism. In addition, funding from the European Union, the United States, and the British Government (its Northern Ireland Office, in particular) has facilitated development and growth in the NGO sector. This monetary support is evidence of the

general concern of such bodies to promote good social, cultural, and community relations between Northern Ireland's two communities, and to encourage reconciliation and conflict resolution activity. Agencies such as the European Union, British government, and various non state-based philanthropic funding bodies, see civil society (or specific elements of it) as a *good thing*. One of the anomalies of the NGO sector within Northern Ireland, particularly the peace/conflict resolution organizations and community development groups that are a central component of civil society there, is the extent to which they are bankrolled by the British government (arguably one of the protagonists in the conflict itself). Since the early 1990s, successive governments have been eager to fund community development and community relations groups. They had two reasons for doing this. First, it suited the developing ideology of contracting the State and privatizing the provision of services. Thus, statutory agencies were encouraged to shuffle-off responsibilities to the NGO community, funding and co-opting community groups to fulfil what used to be the responsibility of statutory agencies. Some have claimed that another motive for doing this was to emasculate the radicalism of NGOs and force them into the position of service-deliverers rather than advocates of radical social change. This trend was common within the NGO community within Northern Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s. Whilst many groups were formed to resist either the political or economic hegemony of the State, in practice many found themselves sucked into existing political and economic power structures. The amount of resources funnelled into the voluntary and community sector over the last 30 years in Northern Ireland, has rebounded to some extent in public attitudes to it. Some people have reacted against what they perceive to be the professionalization of the voluntary sector, and refer disparagingly to the community relations *industry*. This negative view is held by many of those in less well resourced community development initiatives, reflecting class tensions within the sector. Thus, rather than seeing large high profile and state funded initiatives as being contributions to the region's social capital, these sceptics are more likely to view them as political stunts by middle-class outsiders—sometimes referred to disparagingly as 'toffs against terrorism'—who do not understand, or are unresponsive to, the real demands and needs of the community. This view contends that such initiatives are built on shaky foundations, and will sink as soon as the project funding/political interest in them declines. There has been a fierce debate therefore, even between those actively working within civil society groups and networks in Northern Ireland, as to *what kinds* of association, *what types* of community group, are likely to make a contribu-tion to conflict prevention, social capital and democratic change in the region.

The argument in this chapter is that the example of Northern Ireland suggests that it is unwise to treat social capital as a neutral concept, or to regard a vibrant culture of associationalism as being necessarily helpful to peace and stability. The Northern Ireland case indicates that while many of the actions and activities of civil society groups have contributed positively to conflict management in the region, this is only one side of the coin, and many others have had the opposite effect. The purpose of focusing on Northern Ireland is to illustrate that civil society is not a universal force for good, but must combine with other factors to achieve what its academic and policy-making champions expect of it.

Whilst the main Churches have supported initiatives from the political parties, notably

the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, they remain an obvious source of division within the community. The mainstream media have also been broadly supportive of the GFA, though they too have been accused of fuelling the conflict by concentrating on division and difference, rather than on more positive stories.[6] While the major trade union and business sector groups have often condemned sectarian violence, they have only given vocal support to political initiatives in relatively recent years. The educational sector has also been something of a doubleedged sword. Primary and secondary school provision in Northern Ireland is largely segregated along sectarian lines, with most Catholics attending Catholic schools and most Protestants attending state schools (*de facto* Protestant). While efforts have been made to promote integrated education,[7] this still accounts for under 5 per cent of school provision within the region. Despite this structural segregation, a common curriculum has been in force since 1989 which has tried to instil politico-cultural empathy into both Catholic and Protestant children, with subjects such as Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage Studies.[8] There is little evidence to date that such reforms have impacted significantly on attitudes, or produced greater tolerance amongst Catholic or Protestant school children.[9]

NGOs themselves are divided as to how they can best tackle political division, community conflict and sectarianism. While many current practitioners claim to be above such arguments, civil society groups, and NGOs in particular, have two general approaches to rebuilding social capital and community relations within Northern Ireland. One sees commimication and dialogue between the rival factions as being intrinsically worthwhile. This could involve the provision of a neutral venue for a community discussion on a contentious political issue, or activities that bring the factions together on a non-political basis. The underlying assumption here is that communication and contact between individuals in a non-threatening environment breaks down negative stereotypes and assists understanding between those who differ fundamentally in their political opinions. The contact hypothesis has come in for sustained criticism in recent years for its assumption (with little supporting empirical evidence) that contact between conflict parties will inevitably result in the breaking down of negative stereotypes and a beginning to the process of reconciliation. Ryan (1995:231–2) summarizes the criticism well:

> The crudest version of peace-building is the contact hypothesis, which posits that simply bringing the parties to a conflict together will encourage constructive dialogue and a re-evaluation of negative attitudes…. In fact, many studies have found that attitudes to a host state deteriorate during an extended period of contact.

The alternative approach attempted by NGOs, has been to try to effect change from *within* urban interface areas by involving the parties to the conflict. Thus, instead of trying to marginalize paramilitary organizations by reducing support from within the community for their actions, an effort was made to engage with and involve paramilitary organizations, to demonstrate that the work being carried out by NGOs within the community was not a threat to them, but was actually contributing to the advancement of the communities they were members of, and claimed to be representing and defending.

This, in essence, was the thinking behind the political process on a wider level and lies at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement itself. Provide an inclusive dialogue between the parties to the conflict and design political structures that all sides can buy into and feel ownership of. Critics of this approach—some of whom would also be opposed to the GFA—argue that this is an impractical/immoral strategy, as it fails to lay blame at the doors of the perpetrators of violence, panders to their demands, and makes the whole political process dependent upon their support.

It should not be surprising that within a divided society that has experienced a longstanding, low-intensity community conflict over the last 30 years, NGOs themselves differ as to their views on how to increase social capital and improve community relations within and between the main communities in the region. NGOs working within Northern Ireland, that focus either explicitly or implicitly upon political or community conflict, can be divided into three general categories. The first category are those NGOs that work on a cross-community basis, i.e. they work simultaneously with both Catholics and Protestants on joint projects. A second category engage in community projects on an inter-community basis, working separately with both sides of the community on the basis of their common socioeconomic interests. The third category are single-identity groups. Here, the NGO would normally work exclusively within *either* the Protestant *or* the Catholic community. These NGOs usually focus on trying to redress economic and social deprivation within their own pre-defined community, as a first step towards decreasing sectarianism or tackling more contentious political or cultural issues. There is a major question mark within this third category of NGO, as to where does the internal capacity-building of such groups stop and the cross-community element begin? Critics of single-identity NGOs have alleged that their activities are merely an exercise in resource acquisition for their own narrowly-defined communities, rather than being part of a broader conflict resolution strategy. These people question whether this category of NGO are simply producing better-educated bigots, rather than individuals and groups who have transcended the fear, insecurity and bitterness that characterizes many of those who live within urban interface areas. In their defence, when single-identity groups are asked why they do not pursue cross-community activities, they reply that within bitterly divided interface areas it is not realistic for them to engage in cross-community reconciliation until their own communities are built up to the point that they are capable of participating meaningfully in dialogue with those beyond their own community.

Ironically, within the NGO sector as a whole in Northern Ireland, there is a very underdeveloped analysis of the causes of the conflict, and possible scenarios for its resolution. At first glance this seems odd, as many of these organizations seek to engage with that conflict at some level and mitigate its effects, or more ambitiously, combat its causes, yet they do not (for the most part) have a very closely defined sense of why that conflict exists, other than in the most primitive of terms, i.e. that it is a product of the region's dysfunctional historical evolution, or that it is due to a behavioural inability of the people living there to communicate positively with one another. There is, however, an explanation for this apparent myopia. Many of the people drawn into NGOs, particularly those that focus on the conflict and its consequences, are motivated by the symptoms of the conflict which of course are real, tangible and terrible, rather than the causes of that conflict which may be political, historical and invisible. As it is the effects of the conflict

rather than its underlying causes that impact on people in their everyday lives, it is understandable that they will mobilize around these, whether that involves campaigning against the use of plastic bullets by the police, or paramilitary 'punishment' beatings. It is also the case, of course, that the effects of the conflict are much easier to tackle than the causes, as they are often more visible and self-contained. As a consequence, the goals and objectives of many NGOs revolve around the human costs of the conflict. In an attempt to gain support for these goals, the group will normally attempt to attract as wide a constituency as possible. It will often try to appear non-partisan, non-political or apolitical. The desire to broaden the coalition of support for the organization may preclude it from adopting a developed critique of the existing political order or any broader analysis of the roots of the conflict. Thus, instead of addressing causes they address symptoms, whether these be a concern with an inadequate criminal justice system, an attempt to stop paramilitary 'punishment' attacks, or a campaign to stop the bombing of a railway line.

For many NGOs that get involved in attempts to build social capital within Northern Ireland through community relations/development work, or peace/reconciliation activity, most of the analysis of political conflict is kept at the general level. While this may be the result of a desire not to alienate potential supporters, it often results in the NGO sector as a whole, appearing bland, middle-of-the-road…nice. As a consequence, such groups have often been criticized for being irrelevant to, and remote from, those at the sharp end of community sectarianism.

The impact of civil society in Northern Ireland

Notwithstanding the criticisms outlined above, it is argued here that the role of civil society groups in contributing to progressive social and political change in Northern Ireland has been an important—if indirect—one over the last 30 years of low intensity conflict in the region.[10] While often unacknowledged by the political class, these groups have had a slow-burning positive impact on the political debate, were integral to the 1998 negotiations that resulted in the GFA and saw this influence reflected in post-GFA political structures such as the establishment of a Civic Forum. Thus, they have played, and continue to play, an intrinsic role in the governance of the region. After the GFA was agreed by the main political parties, several key elements within civil society came together to advocate a 'Yes' vote in the subsequent referendum of May 1998. This culminated in the establishment of a non-party political 'Yes' campaign, populated in the main by trade unionists, voluntary and community activists and academics. A nucleus of activists drew together the various strands of civil society, mobilizing support from church leaders, educators, journalists, actors, local sporting heroes and business leaders. Quintin Oliver, Director of the 'Yes' campaign, was aware of the risks that were being taken by a coalition of individuals normally expected to remain outside of the political fray:

> But who were we—other than a group of friends and colleagues, some drawn from the voluntary sector and others from the business sector—and what was

our legitimacy? We knew we had none, in electoral terms, but we felt we had rights as citizens and as inhabitants of Northern Ireland—and, indeed, a duty to help the political process along.

(Oliver 1998:9)

It would be fair to say that without the efforts made by civil society initiatives and specifically by the independent 'Yes' campaign, the result of the referendum[11] would have been significantly closer and the GFA would have received a significantly smaller mandate, imperilling its very exist-ence. More recently, sectarian murders by paramilitary organizations have been met with rallies and demonstrations organized by civil society organizations. Trade union organizations, business leaders and the main churches have taken a very public role in efforts to promote anti-sectarianism and several high profile demonstrations and vigils have been directed at ending sectarian violence. Several thousand people took part in a rally against sectarian violence at Belfast City Hall on 2 August 2002. This followed the killings of a Catholic teenager and a Protestant construction worker who was murdered while working at the Territorial Army base in Derry. Bob Gourley, speaking for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, emphasized ICTU's opposition to sectarian violence. 'The evil purveyors of bigotry have declared war on us all and wished to ensure that the legacy of hatred continued' (British Broadcasting Corporation 2002a). Nigel Smyth, meanwhile, the director of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in Northern Ireland, said people had a right to live free from intimidation and violence. 'Street violence, blatant sectarianism and the recent murders are to be utterly condemned' (British Broadcasting Corporation 2002a). The rally was also supported by the four main churches in Northern Ireland. On Monday 5 August 2002, the Derry Trade Union Council organized a demonstration in the city to protest at these murders. Ann Molloy, from Derry's Trade Union Council, emphasized the importance of such rallies to enable people physically to indicate their opposition to sectarian violence, but suggested that much more needed to be done:

> There really was a sense of widespread revulsion at this murder and this gives people the opportunity to publicly come out and state that they are opposed to this. While rallies are important, we need a strategy to address sectarianism at the roots of our society and that goes a lot further than rallies.
>
> (British Broadcasting Corporation 2002b)

Many of these individuals and groups within Northern Ireland's civil society have worked tirelessly to promote peace and reconciliation (either directly through trade union-sponsored public rallies and vigils, or indirectly through cross-community anti-sectarian workshops) often against a backdrop of vicious and violent conflict within those same communities (Sutton 1994; Smyth and Fay 2000). Indeed, it has often been this sense of *community* which has motivated both the positive *and* negative components of civil society in Northern Ireland. Ironically perhaps, the motivations for the establishment of human rights organizations, reconciliation groups, church-based peace groups, and community development organizations, were identical to those of the main paramilitary factions in Northern Ireland. The sense of *community values* and desire to defend, protect or augment that community's position, has led to a strong (if dichotomous) community

cohesion in Northern Ireland. In a society of 1.5 million people with over 5,000 active NGOs and numerous interventions by other civil society actors such as Church leaders, trade unionists and business leaders, people are seemingly falling over one another to do something for their community. However, in a divided society like Northern Ireland, *the community* is a contested concept. Put simply, there is more than one community, and those who are overly concerned about which community they belong to, have sometimes been prepared to kill those they have determined to be in another community. While a plethora of civil society groups has been working for peace and reconciliation over the last 30 years, perhaps just as many groups and individuals have engaged in uncivil activities. Their motives have often been articulated as the pursuit of civil rights, defence of community cultural heritage/identity, or protection of human rights. Unfortunately, definitions of political, legal and cultural rights and identities have frequently been defined as mutually exclusive by the unionist and nationalist communities, rather than as interdependent. The apathy towards associationalism, community values and democratic participation identified by Putnam (2000) is certainly not apparent within Northern Ireland. There is no sign of voter apathy in elections for example, to the extent that the proponents of civil society have identified in regions such as Great Britain and the United States. At the last UK Westminster General Election in June 2001, the turnout in Northern Ireland was 68 per cent and in some constituencies this was as high as 80 per cent. These figures were significantly above the UK average of 59 per cent.

The existence of two separate and antagonistic communities competing for space and power within the region, has heightened the concern of many people within the region about which community they belong to, about the challenges and dangers facing their community and what needed to be done in response to such dangers. This was just as apparent in 1969 at the beginning of the 'troubles' as it is today. One of the first observable forms of community organization during this period was the formation of the main paramilitary groupings within nationalist and unionist urban areas, particularly in Belfast and Derry. The IRA split at the beginning of 1970, with the emergence of the Provisional IRA, who advocated a more intensive military 'armed struggle' against the British and sought to act as *defenders* of Catholics, who were being burnt out of their homes and intimidated by loyalists in parts of Belfast. On the unionist side, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) had formed in 1966, while the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) emerged in September 1971. This acted as an umbrella organization bringing together a range of Protestant vigilante groupings such as the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) and Shankill Defence Association, in response to a desire for more coordinated action against the Provisional IRA and attacks on Protestant civilians. These groupings were all motivated by Putnam's desire for participation in their community and for associational life. They wanted to make a contribution to their community and support it. They cared pas-sionately about their community and demonstrated exactly the sort of joining spirit desired by Putnam. The organizations they joined in their effort to do this however, were violent ones. Many of those within the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland are veterans of this period, and some became involved in paramilitary activity in the 1970s and 1980s. It may seem anomalous that people who are today engaged in conflict resolution and community development activity, were themselves once direct actors in that conflict. This is explained by the fact that the types of people

who are now attracted to re-building their communities in 2003, were also anxious to defend those same communities in the early 1970s. In this sense, the formation of both sets of paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland was an act of community self-organization identical in motivation, though differing significantly in ideology, activities, and impacts, to the civil society initiatives that exist today and which focus on community development and reconciliation.

The argument of this chapter is that we need to understand civil society for what it is, namely, a subjective reflection of community(ies) values and not an intrinsic force for good. As argued earlier in the chapter, this has not been sufficiently articulated by international institutions, policy-makers or academics such as Putnam (2000), and Fennema and Tillie within this volume, who place the emphasis upon the *universality of the concept* rather than the *specificity of the place* they are applying it to. The positive spin that is put on the *civil* aspect of civil society is very much in the eye of the beholder, as the motivations and mindsets of the paramilitaries in Northern Ireland and their supporters, illustrate in the 1970s. To carve up the phrase civil society, allowing entry only to those groups and individuals perceived to be working for the *community* or *public* good, is to misrepresent and misunderstand the nature of that society. This error is compounded when dealing with a divided society, as it fails to comprehend the dynamics of the conflict incubated within that society. To allow one NGO into the civil society club but not another, is to place one's own value system upon that society and obscure the reality of its dynamic forces. Thus, to allow the peace group in, but exclude other voluntary associations such as the Orange Order or the Gaelic Athletic Association, is a political decision, not a reflection of the forces of associationalism, or conceptions of community that exist within that society. There are, of course, two sides to the civil society coin. To stretch Putnam's metaphor, the argument of this chapter is that a healthy and vibrant democratic polity will not be created simply by encouraging bowling together *per se*. Though this may provide valuable sociopolitical glue for an energized and educated citizenry within a stable society, it will only be useful within a divided society such as that in Northern Ireland, if an equal amount of effort is put into managing, healing, and ultimately, transcending the divisions between the bowlers. This chapter takes issue with those contributions which argue that associative inputs are inherently democratic and universally healthy attributes regardless of the specific political or social context involved. This might be true if the urge to associate was restricted to democratic or peaceful organizations. Of course this is not the case. Within divided societies it is often undemocratic and violent organizations that people feel most compelled to join and to participate in. Academics who advocate the concepts of associationalism and social capital without regard to regional context, would be well advised to extend their fieldwork to regions that are politically unstable, where civil society is divided over contested political/cultural values, and where people are falling over one another to associate in a violent manner. If they did so, their ideas on the nature of civil society and its potential as an agent of democratic change and conflict management/ resolution may become more relevant for people who live in such places.

Conclusion

The argument has been made here that within a divided community like that in Northern Ireland, civil society will only contribute to a healthy and peaceful democratic polity if it is combined with a process of conflict transformation within the constituent elements of that society. Civil society is not a universally consistent force for public good, but it may function to contribute to a particular political and social agenda (that is perceived to be one of progressive peaceful change) within certain circumstances. The example of Northern Ireland illustrates that the capacity of civil society to contribute to a peaceful and stable society is dependent upon more than the desire of people to join organizations and associate with one another. Within a divided society with communities that define one another as antagonistic and malign, civil society can have both positive and negative impacts. When civil society networks (whether in the form of the voluntary and community sector or the paramilitary groups) pursue anti-democratic or even violent agendas, they are unlikely to rescue democracy, or contribute meaningfully to conflict prevention, conflict transformation or stable democratic change. The challenge for the advocates of civil society and social capital is to recognize it for what it is, understand its dynamic forces and accept its limitations.

Notes

1 As Ryan points out, 'the large scale "peace-enforcement" operations in Bosnia and Somalia, authorized by Chapter VII of the [UN] Charter, demonstrated the limitations of the UN's role. The failure of the UN to stop the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 added to a growing chorus of criticism directed at the organization' (Ryan 2000:114).

2 Agreement was reached in multi-party talks on 10 April 1998 over internal and external political and cultural structures and reforms. This is alternatively known as the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement.

3 The unionist and nationalist communities within Northern Ireland are fundamentally divided over whether the national government resides in London or Dublin and thus is placed in inverted commas.

4 For a fuller discussion of this term: see Pollak (1993).

5 Strategy 2010 is the report of the Northern Ireland Economic Development Strategy Steering Group. This was commissioned in 1998 to review economic development in Northern Ireland and devise proposals for economic progress. The review aimed to provide advice to the new Northern Ireland Assembly and was established as a result of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

6 The impact of the media on the conflict in Northern Ireland has been widely debated. (See Miller 1994, Rolston 1991, Spencer 2000.)

7 Integrated schools are attended by roughly equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant children. The first integrated school was Lagan College which opened in 1981. In 1999 there were 44 integrated schools (27 primary and 17 post-primary) attended by

approximately 12,000 pupils, just under 3 per cent of the total school population. In 2004, this percentage has risen to just under 5 per cent.

8 New legislation was introduced in 1989 called the Education Reform (NI) Order. This specified that two *cross-curricular themes* related to the issue of community relations were to be included in the Northern Ireland Curriculum. These are called Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) and Cultural Heritage Studies. The statutory requirement to include these themes in the curriculum of all schools took effect from 1992.

9 For more on education reform in Northern Ireland consult the following: Smith (1999); Murray, Smith and Birthistle (1997); Smith and Montgomery (1997); Gallagher and Smith (2000).

10 For an in depth examination of the nature and impact of NGO activity in Northern Ireland, consult: Cochrane (2001:137–56; 2000:1–22); Cochrane and Dunn (2002).

11 The referendum in Northern Ireland was held on 22 May 1998. Seventy-one per cent voted in favour of the GFA while 29 per cent voted against it.

4
European civil society

Institutional interests and the complexity of a multi-level polity*
Stijn Smismans

Context matters and so do institutions. This chapter analyses to what extent context matters by focusing on two particular aspects. First, it is argued that associations are not unconditionally good for democracy; rather their 'democratic potential' depends on the inherent features of the polity in which they act. This chapter illustrates the role of civil society by highlighting the complex institutional context of the European Union. The supranational and multi-level nature of the European polity makes the associative elixir both rewarding and problematic. Second, it is argued that the 'democratic added value' of associations also depends on how political institutions perceive the role of civil society organizations and how they structure interaction with them. This chapter examines the 'institutional context' from one particular angle: it shows how certain European institutions have made recourse to the idea of a 'European civil society'; it is this discourse that would strengthen their institutional position.

The first section describes the lure of the associative elixir within the context of a multi-level polity. In the second section, I will analyse how and why the European Commission has developed a discourse on European civil society, while the third section will conduct the same exercise for the Euro pean Economic and Social Committee (ESC). The fourth section develops further how institutional interests have shaped the concept of 'European civil society' and how this discourse may alter institutional balances. I conclude that, while both the Commission and the ESC have been quite successful in 'selling' their civil society discourse, the actual impact appears to be much more modest. Indeed, the discourse has not led to important changes and more legitimate European governance, as previously claimed; not least because the opportunistic conceptualization of 'European civil society' given by the European institutions does not sufficiently take into account the unique characteristics of the multi-level polity.

The lure of the associative elixir in a multi-level polity

The introductory chapter of this volume describes how political and social theory has increasingly built its hopes on the positive contribution of associations to democracy. Such different approaches as communitarianism, social capital, civil society and associative democracy have all sought to find in the role of associations a response to the legitimacy problems of current-day representative democracy. However, most of these

approaches have focused on the role of associations within nation-states or focused on the local level within the nation-state context, while the role of civil society in governance structures beyond the nation-state has remained undertheorized.

Nevertheless, the role of civil society organizations in international governance structures has been noted, specifically in the context of the United Nations system where non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in developmental policy (see Chapter 8 of this volume). At the end of the 1990s, social protest at various world summits also brought the emergence of a transnational movement into the spotlight. Interestingly, this movement has had the potential to both contest current international governance structures and to provide collaboration for their reform. In fact, thoughts on 'global governance' build strongly on the role of civil society organizations given the lack of well-established parliamentary representative structures and strong public support and awareness at the international level (Archibugi *et al.* 1998; Salamon *et al.* 1999; Florini 2000). Surprisingly, such reasoning has for long been absent in the normative debate on the legitimacy of the institutional set-up of the European integration process.

The European 'democratic deficit' and legitimacy debate has focused mainly on issues of territorial representation, using above all the parliamentary model as a normative framework (Dehousse 1998:601). Despite an extensive descriptive literature on interest group activity at the European Union (EU) level,[1] a normative link between the role of intermediary organizations and legitimate European governance has not been established until recently (Armstrong 2001; De Schutter 2001). While the initial European Communities were said to be based on a 'permissive consensus' (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970:41)—little popular interest for an elite-driven and technocratic project coincided with a diffuse support for the idea of European integration (De Búrca 1996:350)—the ever increasing transfer of competences to the European level gradually caused concern for the democratic credentials of the European construction. The reply has, above all, been sought in the idea of direct elections and increased powers for the European Parliament (EP), while at the same time, stressing the importance of the Member States' role as 'Masters of the Treaty' and their representation in the Council. In addition, since the beginning of the 1990s, the concept of subsidiarity has been stressed (in territorial terms), a Committee of the Regions has been created, and interest has been shown for strengthening the role of national parliaments in European decision-making.

However, as the introductory chapter of this volume has outlined, territorially-based representative democracy faces problems of legitimacy and accountability related to a technocratization of political decision-making and increased citizen de-mobilization. Moreover, at the European level, the recourse to the parliamentary model as framework for legitimate governance is complicated by the fact that there is no European *demos* as such. The parliamentary model is based on the expression of the general will via majority decisions within the parliament. In order to get these majority decisions accepted by the minority, the governed represented in the parliament should have a certain level of social unity, a common identity (Chryssochoou 1997:76; Cohen 1971:46). 'Liberal democracy', which has served as a normative frame for democracy at the nation-state level, is built on the idea of uniformity amongst the constitutive people of the polity (Tully 1995). This uniformity or common identity has often been defined in ethno-cultural homogeneous terms so that the 'demos' is identified with 'the nation'. Yet, at the European level, such a

demos does not exist. It is not a 'European people' but (still) the 25 peoples of the Member States, which constitute the popular basis for a democratic exercise of government.[2] It has been argued that the European peoples possess neither the subjective nor the objective element of a European demos, i.e. they do not have a sense of shared collective identity and loyalty, nor do they have the objective preconditions such as language, history and ethnicity that could create such a sense. The conclusion easily follows that the EC/EU is not democratic and can never become democratic.

The response to this 'no demos—no democracy' thesis may lie in rethinking both the concepts of demos and democracy. The concept of 'demos' should not by definition be understood in a strictly ethno-cultural sense but can be based on some kind of social unity, or on a form of loyalty to common norms and institutions. According to Weiler, a demos can be understood 'in non-organic civic terms, a coming together on the basis of shared values, a shared understanding of rights and societal duties and shared rational, intellectual culture which transcend ethnonational differences' (Weiler 1997:263) .[3] Habermas talks about 'a form of constitutional patriotism...providing the "bond" which holds together complex societies' (Habermas 1996:133). In the EU the demos could be identified in:

> a commitment to the shared values of the Union as expressed in its constituent documents, a commitment to the duties and rights of a civic society covering discrete areas of public life, a commitment to membership in a polity which privileges exactly the opposites of classic ethno-nationalism.
>
> (Weiler 1997:270)

According to Girault, 'loyalty to the European Union finds its origins in the existence of a Western model of society, the identification of eco-nomic growth with the European Union and the function of European integration as the best guarantee for peace' (Girault 1994:193). Common values could be related to what has been argued to be particular social characteristics of contemporary western European society such as a specific European family model, division of labour, social stratification, mode of urban organization, mode of consumption or welfare state model (Kaelble 1994:27).

Yet, even if one accepts that there are 'common values' or 'a shared commitment' on which a legitimate exercise of power at the European level can be based, one can question whether such 'common values' are strong enough to base democratic input on the sole expression of the general will by the parliament on the basis of majority decisions. The alternative might be to provide for democratic procedures that leave more room for 'difference'. Actually, parliamentary democracy is a very 'reductive' form of democracy. The traditional parliamentary model does not only define citizens as equals in rights and duties; it also assumes a common or shared identity. Consequently,

> citizens are deprived of their particularities and their embeddedness in particular communities, cultures, and social roles and conceived as abstract political beings whose opinions converge around a concept of the public good which is more or less shared by all because all are equals. Only equals can form a general will.
>
> (Preuss 1998:8)

Such a 'reducing of the citizens to abstract equals alienated from their multiple identities'[4] is, however, not a necessity if one tries to define democracy in terms other than the traditional parliamentary model. According to Preuss (1998:9), a democratic polity should:

> provide institutional devices through which individuals can participate in the process of political decision-making without being forced to give up beforehand the qualities which constitute their individuality. Hence, participation in the political process does not require individuals to slip off their individual properties and diversities and to abstract from their affiliations to specific communities, life styles, interest groups, social contexts, etc. On the contrary, democracy as the collective form of individual freedom and autonomy encourages the incorporation of these particularities in the process of political decision-making.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of the European demos—despite some broadly shared values and commitment—the expression of the general will through majority decisions in parliament might not be sufficient to guarantee democratic decision-making. Even more than within the nation-state, democracy at the European level must consist of various channels of participation through which people are represented in their various identities, and through which the heterogeneity of the European demos can find expression.

Therefore, the concept of civil society is particularly attractive for the conceptualization of 'EU democracy'. First of all, it can circumvent the 'demos problem' since it takes the pluralism of society as its starting point and avoids the need for shared values and shared histories to underpin EU governance (Armstrong 2001:105). Second, it fits in well with the notion of democracy that leaves more room for 'difference' than the rather limited citizen interpretation of traditional and 'territorial' liberal democracy. In addition to representation through territorially elected parliaments (at European, national, regional and local levels), European citizens can express their multiple identities via representation through civil society organizations.

The central and particularly important role that civil society may play within the multi-level polity context of the European Union has not attracted much attention until recently. It does not imply that the European institutions have not developed relations with civil society organizations. In fact, civil society organizations have been involved in European policy-making thanks to their expertise and (opportunistically) in order to build a coalition of support for European intervention or to ensure proper policy implementation. However, more recently certain European institutions have also developed an explicit discourse on the assumed positive contribution of civil society to legitimate European governance. These discourses have been shaped by the institutional interests of the institutions concerned.

Civil society as seen by the European Commission

'Civil dialogue' and the supportive role of NGOs in social policy

Although the European Commission had already established contacts with civil society organizations in several policy sectors, such as environmental and development policy, it was only by the mid-1990s that the Commission developed a normative discourse on the role of these organizations. In 1996, the Commission's Directorate General responsible for social policy (DG V) coined the concept of *civil* dialogue to plead for increased interaction with civil society organizations. DG V has enjoyed a long history of supporting *social* dialogue with the social partners (i.e. management and labour associations), through different processes of consultation and coordination, as well as through the encouragement of their bipartite dialogue. While this social dialogue has seen severe institutionalization since the Maastricht Treaty, dialogue with other associations in the social policy arena lacked formal recognition and well-established structures. Yet, in dealing with issues such as gender, youth, social exclusion, disability and racism, the European Union intervened in policy sectors, in which cooperatives, mutual societies and (charitable) associations (other than the social partners) played an important role. The consultation and involvement of these organizations in the drafting and implementation of initiatives in these policy fields increased in importance as these social issues became prominent agenda items in the 1990s. At the same time, the Commission found itself in a defensive position, particularly in relation to social policy, because its previous regulatory intervention had generated Member State hostility. In the context of a more general policy shift from regulatory to persuasive intervention (Streeck 1996; Cullen and Campbell 1998; Hervey 1998), the (then) Commissioner for social policy, Padraig Flynn, found in the civil dialogue an issue DG V could focus on without being seen as too intrusive in the Member States' social policy prerogatives (Kendall and Anheier 1999:294). Moreover, through the involvement of these third sector actors, DG V hoped to build a supportive network favourable to European social policy intervention in the longer run.[5]

   In its attempt to strengthen civil dialogue, DG V found an ally in the European Parliament's Committee of Social and Employment Affairs, which was supportive of more European social policy action in general. As a common initiative, a first European Social Policy Forum was held in March 1996, bringing together over 1,000 participants mainly from NGOs in the social sphere. The Forum, to be held every two years, has been seen as 'the launch of a new policy objective: the building over time of a strong civil dialogue at European level to take its place alongside the policy dialogue with the national authorities and the social dialogue with the social partners' (European Commission 1997 indent 9.7). Today, the Forum is organized as a broad consultation on the general direction of European social policy.[6] Its aim is above all to reach the NGO world,[7] though there are also representatives of the social partners, the Member States, regional and local authorities and research institutes.

   During the preparation of the first Social Policy Forum, 25 European and international confederations of third sector associations formed the Platform of European Social NGOs

to act as a permanent framework for co-operation and interaction with the European institutions. The Platform soon became the privileged partner of the Commission, to be consulted whenever a policy issue involved third sector interests.

In 1997, the European Commission also presented a Communication on 'Promoting the role of voluntary organizations and foundations in Europe' (European Commission 1997) drafted by both its Directorate General for social policy (DG V) and the Directorate General for social economy, small and medium-sized enterprises and tourism (DG XXIII). DG XXIII had been created in 1989, but its focus has been on SMEs and tourism rather than on the third sector. Furthermore, its interest in mutual societies, co-operatives and associations extended only to the specific features of the sector in relation to economic integration,[8] rather than the establishment of a strong dialogue with these organizations. This approach is also reflected in the 1997 Communication, despite the rhetoric on the need for a 'civil dialogue'.

Voluntary organizations[9]—to be distinguished from the two other sectors making up the social economy, namely co-operatives and mutual societies, and from trade unions and employers' organizations, religious congregations and political parties explicitly excluded from the scope of the Communication—are said 'to provide the seed bed or "gene pool" from which future social and other policies may eventually grow'. Moreover, 'voluntary organizations and foundations foster a sense of solidarity and of citizenship, and provide the essential underpinnings of our democracy'. The latter are functions that are said to have never been more vital than ever before 'in the light of the challenges now facing the European Community'. However, the Communication provides merely a survey of the voluntary sector in the Member States and presents the problems and challenges the sector is facing; it does not look into the role of civil society organizations in a multi-level polity, nor does it provide a framework for a further institutionalization of civil dialogue at the European level. Moreover, the Communication found little political support in the other Euro pean institutions (with the exception of the ESC; see below) and even within the European Commission itself beyond the units that had drafted the document (European Commission 1998:50). Last but not least, the Communication provoked little reaction from the third sector organizations themselves (other than some confederal organizations organized at the European level) (Kendall and Anheier 1999:295).

As a result, until 1998 the normative discourse on civil society remained confined to certain DGs of the Commission (principally DG V and DG XXIII) as well as a small number of MEPs who showed an interest in the third sector. The concept of civil dialogue was and still is used to point to the need for a strengthened dialogue between the European institutions, particularly the Commission, and NGOs in the social policy field. It is intended to complement the existing social dialogue with the social partners. Although it is recognized that voluntary organizations play an important role in our democracies, their role as a key factor in the legitimization of European governance has not yet been formulated. The focus remains on the role of social NGOs as a legitimating support for further European social policy-making, rather than for European governance more generally.

'Civil society' as a means of administrative reform and legitimization

By the end of the 1990s, the discourse on the role of NGOs and intermediary organizations broadened, both in terms of the variety of policy actors making recourse to it and in terms of its content. While several events brought the role of NGOs at the international and European levels more to the fore, the legitimacy crisis of European institutions, particularly the Commission, led to the discovery of civil society as a basis for administrative reform and as a source of legitimization.

On 12 May 1998, the European Court of Justice (case C-106/96) annulled a Commission decision to fund 86 European projects seeking to overcome social exclusion. To avoid other condemnations the Commission decided to suspend temporarily several funding projects that lacked a clear legal basis. This caused serious problems for many (European) NGOs; not only did they get project funding from the EU, many of them also depended on EU funding to keep their organizational structure alive.[10] The funding crisis motivated the social NGOs to join forces, specifically under the coordination of the Platform of European Social NGOs (Geyer 2001:484). Moreover, an alliance was made with the development NGOs and human rights NGOs. The crisis brought the NGO sector to the attention of European Members of Parliament, Council representatives, national governments and parts of the Commission that had previously neglected its role. By the end of the year, most budget channels were unblocked. Yet, the financial position of the NGOs remained uncertain in the longer run, given the absence of a strong legal basis. The Platform, therefore, linked the funding crisis to a request for a solid institutionalization of civil dialogue. This included a Treaty basis and a list of accredited NGOs to be compiled by the Commission, on the basis of which it would structure its consultation.[11]

The funding crisis took place at a time when NGO activity and social movements caught the attention of the media with the massive and 'heated' manifestations during the summits of the world leaders: first at the global trade and WTO summits (in Seattle, Sidney, and Davos), and subsequently also at the European summits (in Nice and Göteborg). These protests contested the legitimacy of international decision-making structures. The international organizations and political leaders had to confront the question of whether they would establish or strengthen a dialogue with the better organized parts of the protest movement (i.e. the NGOs), or whether they would isolate themselves in militarized meetings, risking violent outbursts of social protest.

At the level of the European Commission, from the end of 1998 onwards, the DG responsible for trade started organizing *ad hoc* meetings with NGOs. What began as a 'PR [public relations] effort, the purpose of which was to allay public fears' (Goehring 2002:130) gradually became a more structured dialogue, including not only general meetings, but also sectoral meetings on specific subjects.[12]

However, the Commission's response to the increased demand for the institutionalization of civil dialogue has gone beyond the policy sector of trade. In 2000, the Commission published a discussion paper *The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership* (European Commission 2000). The paper finds its place within the context of 'a far-reaching process of administrative reform' of

the European Commission established by Commission President Prodi and Vice-President Kinnock in response to problems of fraud and the legitimacy crisis which had damaged the preceding Santer Commission. Although the discussion paper defined NGOs using the same characteristics as the ones applied to 'voluntary organizations' in the 1997 Communication, it aimed to address the relationships between the Commission and NGOs in all policy sectors and not only in the social policy field. In fact, although the discourse on civil dialogue emerged primarily from the social policy sphere, the Commission has also established important NGO contacts in sectors such as development policy and human rights, and environmental and consumer policy. The paper provided an overview of the existing *ad hoc* structures, through which the Commission consults NGOs or to which it falls back whenever it is necessary to ensure that information on the EU reaches a wider audience. In addition, the paper described the ways in which NGOs are involved in implementing Community projects or in cooperation programmes with non-member countries.

Moreover, whereas previous documents mentioned only in general terms 'the importance of voluntary organizations in a democracy', the 2000 discussion paper stressed the particularly valuable contribution of NGOs towards the development of legitimate European governance. Thus it specifies five considerations for the rationale behind the co-operation between the Commission and NGOs:

1 'Belonging to an association provides an opportunity for citizens to participate actively in new ways other than or in addition to involvement in political parties or trade unions. Increasingly NGOs are recognized as a significant component of civil society and as providing valuable support for a democratic system of government'. Although 'the decision-making process in the EU is first and foremost legitimized by the elected representatives of the European people, NGOs can make a contribution fostering a more participatory democracy both within the European Union and beyond' (in particular in the enlargement states and developing countries, with which the EU deals).
2 NGOs have the ability to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged, and to provide a voice for those not sufficiently heard through other channels.
3 NGOs provide the EU with expert input.
4 NGOs can manage, monitor and evaluate projects financed by the EU.
5 They contribute to European integration. By encouraging national NGOs to work together, the European NGO networks make an important contribution to the formation of a European public opinion.

The relationship between the involvement of civil society and the legitimacy of EU governance is further stressed by the European Commission in its *White Paper on European Governance* (European Commission 2001). The White Paper is the key document around which the administrative reform of the Commission is structured. Its 'goal is to open up policy-making to make it more inclusive and accountable'. The dialogue with civil society holds an important place in the Paper. This central place of the concept of civil society within the White Paper can be related to the experience of the drafting process of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, which had taken place some months earlier. In order to draft a Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European

Union had to resort to a new procedure. Instead of the normal procedure to make changes to the EC/EU Treaties via an intergovernmental conference, the Charter was drafted by a broader Convention, composed of representatives from national governments and parliaments, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Although civil society organizations had no formal role in the Convention, their consultation in 'hearings' as well as their informal influence via e-mail contributions and contacts with Convention members contributed to the Charter being seen as representative of the common European values (Deloche-Gaudez 2001).

The European Commission did not fail to notice the 'legitimacy capital' of such a civil dialogue and gave it a central place in its *White Paper on European Governance*. Its discourse on civil society is broader than in previous papers whose emphasis was on NGOs; it 'does not only include NGOs but also trade unions and employers' organizations, professional associations, charities, grass-roots organizations; organizations that involve citizens in local and municipal life with a particular contribution from churches and religious communities'.[13]

Yet, the White Paper's definition of civil society is not free from ambiguity. Under the title of 'involvement of civil society', the Paper equally mentions that 'European political parties are an important factor in European integration and contribute to European awareness and voicing the concerns of citizens', and even that 'the involvement of national parliaments and their specialized European affairs committees...could also be encouraged'. Moreover, referring to the existence of nearly 700 *ad hoc* consultation bodies, it is not clear to what extent the Commission would also include profit-seeking organizations,[14] scientific experts and representatives from national administrations into its definition of civil society. There is a tension between, on the one hand, the Commission's tendency to define civil society so broadly that all sorts of participatory and consultative fora could be considered as sources of legitimacy and, on the other hand, its proposals to institutionalize contacts with civil society, which seem primarily focused on the NGO sector and are actually a copy of what was proposed in the 2000 discussion paper on the Commission's relationship with the non-governmental organizations. Thus the Commission restates its intention to produce an overview of existing consultative structures and of consulted NGOs in order to increase transparency. In the meantime, a database of European NGOs, called CONECCS (Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society), has been set up on the EUROPA server, more specifically on the web page of the Secretariat-General of the Commission. Similar to the 2000 discussion paper, the aim is subsequently to formulate a code of conduct that sets minimum standards for consultation: what to consult on, when, with whom and how. While the Commission argues, on the one hand, that no strict binding rules for consultation should be imposed on the policy-makers, it introduces, on the other hand, more strongly the idea that civil society organizations should respect certain criteria of 'representativity' in order to be involved in policy-making. This is especially stressed in the call for the more 'extensive partnership arrangements', the features of which remain, however, unclear.

One can conclude that since 1998 the Commission's discourse has changed twofold. First, the discourse on civil dialogue, which until then had been used mainly within the context of social policy (in parallel to an already well-developed social dialogue), has been broadened to include the interactions of NGOs with the Commission in all possible

policy sectors. In the general context of the legitimacy crisis of international institutions (brought to the public's attention by civil society organizations), and in response to the legitimacy crisis of the European Institutions and of the Commission in particular, the discourse on civil society has become part of the Commission's project for administrative reform, as well as its attempt to legitimate itself and its functions.

Second, in its recourse to the civil society discourse as a source of legitimacy, the Commission has used an ever-broader concept of civil society, particularly since the White Paper. It is not entirely clear whether the contacts with this civil society—the civil dialogue—are supposed to include all forms of interaction between EU institutions and intermediary actors. On the one hand, the Commission does not always resist the temptation to use civil society as a legitimating discourse for all its existing interactions, including those with all sorts of private lobby actors. On the website of the Secretariat-General of the Commission, for instance, the issue of 'the European Commission and civil society' does not only include the 2000 discussion paper on relations with NGOs, but also the Commission Communication (European Commission 1992) dealing with '[a]n open and structured dialogue between the Commission and special interest groups', i.e. lobby groups. On the other hand, the definition of civil society organizations provided in the White Paper does not explicitly include private organizations (individual firms, associations of firms, consultants), and the proposed criteria for the institutionalization of civil society involvement (such as accountability, openness and 'representativeness') do not seem to fit such actors.

Civil society as seen by the European Economic and Social Committee (ESC)

The ESC was created by the Treaty of Rome as a body with advisory power in a wide range of policy areas dealt with at the European level. It is composed of 222 members from national socio-economic organizations, which are divided into three groups: (1) employers' organizations; (2) trade unions; and (3) 'various interests', including in particular social economy organizations, consumer and environmental organizations, agricultural organizations, and organizations representing SMEs (small and medium enterprises), the liberal professions and crafts. The ESC could thus be considered as an institutional expression of the organizations making up civil society. Yet, the ESC has only recently started to define itself in these terms.

Despite being the only body enshrined in the EC Treaty to represent associations, the ESC has been faced with ever stronger competition for its advisory role from other *(ad hoc)* consultative fora and direct lobbying activities. The strengthening of the social dialogue—entirely independently from the ESC—and the creation of the Committee of the Regions in the Maastricht Treaty incited even Commission President Delors to warn the ESC that it risked marginalization.[15] In an attempt to tackle this difficult situation, subsequent presidencies of the ESC gave priority to a 'Citizens' Europe' initiative, i.e. by organizing hearings the ESC claimed to give voice to the real aspirations of the European citizens. Yet, the success of these attempts was rather limited given the badly focused and top-down character of the hearings and the difficulties of positioning the ESC vis-à-vis

the European Parliament (Smismans 1999). However, by the end of the 1990s—and supported by its new Secretary General—the ESC changed its focus from 'representation of the European citizen' to representation of 'the organized citizen', namely the intermediary organizations making up civil society.

In January 1999 the ESC adopted its Own-initiative Opinion[16] on '[t]he role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe' (ESC 1999). This served as a starting point for the ESC's 'First Convention of Civil Society organized at European level', a conference in October of the same year, which brought together some 300 representatives from civil society organizations to discuss their involvement in European policy-making. The ESC's Own-initiative Opinion clearly linked the concept of civil society to the legitimacy problem of the European integration project, even before the Commission explicitly dealt with the issue in its White Paper. The ESC defines civil society in broad terms as 'a collective term for all types of social action, by individuals or groups that do not emanate from the State and are not run by it'. Civil society organizations are defined as 'the sum of all organizational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens'. They include:

• the social partners;
• organizations representing social and economic players that are not social partners in the strictest sense of the term;
• NGOs that bring people together for a common cause, such as environmental organizations, charitable organizations, etc.;
• community-based organizations (CBOs), i.e. organizations set up within a society at the grassroots level to pursue member-oriented objectives (e.g. youth organizations);
• religious communities.

The ESC argues that 'strengthening non-parliamentary democratic structures is a way of giving substance and meaning to the concept of a Citizens' Europe' and defines its own role as guaranteeing 'the implementation of the participatory model of civil society; [enabling] civil society to participate in the decision-making process; and [helping] reduce a certain "democratic deficit" and so [underpinning] the legitimacy of democratic decision-making processes'. Referring to the difficult definition of the 'demos' concept within the EU, the Committee argues that 'the democratic process at European level— even more so than at the national level—must provide a range of participatory structures in which all citizens, with their different identities and in accordance with their different identity criteria, can be represented, and which reflect the heterogeneous nature of the European identity'. Enshrined in the Treaty, with a consultative role and composed of representatives of intermediary organizations, the Committee can act as a representation of the people's way of identifying with civil society organizations, and provide a complementary element to the legitimacy offered by the EP representing the citizens' national (territorial) identity.

Since the ESC considers an important role for itself to be that of a representative forum of civil society organizations, the Committee could hardly accept limiting the concept of civil dialogue to the structures of interaction between NGOs and the Commission. On the other hand, the ESC does not claim to have a monopoly over civil dialogue either.

However, due to its institutional status (enshrined in the Treaty) and its membership (including both social partners and NGOs), it argues that it is the right forum in which to further broaden civil dialogue (ESC 1999, points 10 and 12). In order to play this role, it proposes to strengthen dialogue with those civil society organizations not currently represented on the Committee. Given that the ESC has no control over its own composition, the ESC seeks to achieve this via the organization of events within the Committee, as well as 'hearings' outside the Committee that would give more people the opportunity to participate in opinion-forming and goal-setting.

The ESC also considers the possibility of establishing a civil dialogue observatory within its structure, to serve as a forum for discussion and interaction. European NGOs, in particular, would be involved in the work of this observatory. The tasks of such an observatory could include: formulating proposals for the implementation of joint initiatives between the Committee and NGOs; monitoring the development of civil society organizations and civil dialogue at European level; drawing-up criteria for assessing the representativeness of NGOs; and discussing the feasibility of establishing a system of accreditation for NGOs at European level.

The ESC also stresses the role it seeks to play in the institution-building process in the enlargement countries through its contacts with, and support for, civil society organizations in these countries. Finally, in its proposals to the 2000 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) (ESC 2000)—preparing the Nice Treaty—the ESC also defines its role as a meeting point for civil dialogue that should be established between the civil society organizations.

The ESC wanted the 2000 IGC to recognize that the Committee 'is more than just an institutional framework for consulting the economic and social operators', it is 'also a bridge between Europe and the diverse and complex world of civil society organizations' (ESC 2000).[17] The Nice Treaty has partially responded to the ESC's intention to play this role. The Treaty article defining the ESC's composition now states that 'the Committee shall consist of representatives of the various economic and social components of *organized civil society...*'.

European civil society, institutional interests and institutional balances

Both the Commission and the ESC use the discourse on civil society and civil dialogue as an element of legitimization for their activities and institutional position. For the ESC the concept has been a tool to redefine its proper role and combat the risk of marginalization within the European institutional set-up. For the European Commission, the concept has first been used to build support for policy initiatives in the social sphere and subsequently to respond to the legitimacy crisis of the 'Brussels bureaucracy'. With the introduction of the concept of civil society, both the Commission and the ESC have reshaped the political debate on 'EU democracy'. The discourse introduces elements of 'participatory democracy', which is defined as the possibility for those concerned by the decision to participate in the decision-making process. These elements of 'participatory democracy' are said to complement 'representative democracy', which resides in the electoral mandate of parliament.[18]

Some institutions profit more from such a reshaping of the normative framework for EU democracy than others. With reference to participatory democracy (as additional source of legitimacy), the Commission and the ESC, both non-elected bodies, become less dependent on the Parliament as a unique source of legitimization. Not surprisingly, the European Parliament (EP) seems not to be very attracted by the discourse on civil dialogue and civil society. In its comments on the Commission's White Paper on European governance, the EP stressed that 'the involvement of both the European and national parliaments constitutes the basis for a European system with democratic legitimacy', and that 'organized civil society…, whilst important, are (sic) inevitably sectoral and cannot be regarded as having its own democratic legitimacy' (European Parliament 2001, indent 8 and 11a).

Yet, the EP itself has well-developed contacts with civil society organizations. The EP is, for instance, seen as very receptive to demands of the NGO sector (Greenwood 1997:191, 203). However, these contacts are not defined as participatory structures providing legitimacy.[19] Rather, they are sources of information to the Members of Parliament whose democratic legitimacy resides in their electoral mandate. This electoral mandate also allows Members of Parliament the broad discretion to consult whom they want. The EP has always opted to allow its members fairly unrestricted liberty in their interactions with socioeconomic and civil society actors, imposing only a minimal set of standards to ensure 'smart' and 'clean' lobbying practices (Kohler-Koch 1997; Schaber 1998).[20]

The Committee of the Regions (COR) also remains particularly silent on the issues of civil society and civil dialogue. Composed of representatives from regional and local authorities, it prefers to make use of a discourse on subsidiarity, 'proximity' and 'closeness to the people' (COR 2001a, 2001b), rather than stressing the role of intermediary organizations. In fact, quite often local and regional authorities have well-established relations with intermediary organizations, since they are the most natural direct interlocutors for grass roots organizations. The COR is also perfectly aware of this fact and uses it as legitimization for its proper role. However, the COR avoids recognizing the 'democratic credentials' of intermediary organizations, stressing the unique role of territorially-elected representatives in democracy.

The introduction of a discourse on civil society is thus no neutral exercise, simply pleading for more involvement of associations, but it may alter institutional balances.[21] The ESC, for instance, feared with the creation of the Committee of the Regions that it would be obscured by this new body with comparable consultative power but composed of representatives with an electoral mandate. The new interest in civil society and its democratic potential has once more brought the ESC into the spotlight; this time as an expression of 'participatory democracy'.

Institutional interests may explain why certain institutions consider the concept of civil society while others do not. Moreover, they may also explain the way in which 'civil society' is defined by those institutions that make use of the concept. The composition and intentions of the ESC, for instance, explain its insistence on including social partners within the definition of civil society.

It is also worth noting in this context that the institutional interests of the Commission and the ESC have led to a conceptualization of 'European civil society', which does not

adequately take into account the multilevel policy nature of the EU. The Commission and the ESC have primarily linked the concept of 'European civil society' to the Community method of governance, i.e. those European decision-making procedures that have a supranational rather than an intergovernmental character, based on the Commission's exclusive right of legislative initiative, and the legislative (and budgetary) powers of the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament (European Commission 2001). More specifically, the civil society discourse has focused on the involvement of civil society organizations in the drafting of new policy measures at the European level. It is under the Community method, and in particular in the drafting of new policy measures, that the Commission acts as the central policy entrepreneur and the ESC has its Treaty-based advisory competence.

However, civil society organizations may also play a role in intergovernmental procedures relating to justice and home affairs or external policies, or in the benchmarking procedures of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) to which the EU resolves increasingly. The OMC aims to coordinate national policies, not by imposing binding European norms, but by identifying best practices and formulating guidelines. The contribution of civil society to these exchanges of information and its potential role to compensate for a lack of parliamentary involvement in these procedures remain undervalued.[22] Moreover, European policy-making is more than drafting policy-measures at the European level. These measures have to be implemented. According to the policy-sector, implementation may primarily be the task of the Member States or of the Commission. Yet, in both cases, civil society organizations—organized at European, national or local level—may be involved as well. By using a civil society discourse directly related to their own institutional interest, neither the Commission nor the ESC have defined well enough the multiple roles civil society organizations have, or can have, at various territorial levels and in various phases and instruments of policy-making in a multi-level polity.

Beyond the associative narcotic: civil society as a cure for the EU's legitimacy problems?

The European Commission and the ESC have had some success in selling their civil society discourse. In particular, the Commission's White Paper on European Governance has contributed towards making civil society a popular tune at the European level. The ESC has been able—despite its far less important institutional position in relation to the Commission—to influence considerably the content of the debate. Thus, the more restrictive concept of civil dialogue, limited to NGOs (within the social sector), is bypassed by a broader conception referring to the relations of the European institutions with all-civil society organizations. The discourse of the ESC has clearly influenced the debate on the Commission's White Paper, which uses explicitly the definition of civil society provided by the ESC, and acknowledges the particular role the Committee should play in civil dialogue.

Therefore, the discourse of the ESC is also partially successful in reaching one of its objectives (maybe its main objective), namely defining and promoting a new role for the

Committee within the European institutional set-up. As ESC President Göke Frerichs, elected in November 2000, stated in his inaugural speech: the Committee needs an external 'corporate identity':

> the ESC should…press ahead…with the process of promoting an internal awareness of the distinctive nature of the Committee;[23] this process must be backed up by a corresponding process of external promotion of the distinctive character in order to enable us shortly to reach a conclusive agreement on the Committee's role….
>
> (ESC 2000)

Through the civil society discourse the ESC has to a certain extent been able internally to redefine its own role (which has led to changed working methods, other rules of procedure and different policy priorities) and to convince the main European institutions of its central role in civil dialogue. Similar to the Commission—which not only recognizes the ESC's role in its White Paper, but also in a new inter-institutional agreement between the two institutions—the EP defines the Committee as 'an important mouthpiece for civil society' and even argues that an 'early consultation of the ESC by the Commission can be seen as a way of increasing participatory democracy at Union level'. Rather than having civil dialogue via a proliferation of committees and groups of experts within the Commission, the EP opts for strengthening the position of the ESC, given its independence from the Commission (European Parliament 2001, indent 11c and d). Finally, one should not forget that the Member States recognized, with the Nice Treaty, the civil society character of the ESC.

While the Commission and the ESC may have some success in selling their civil society discourse, does this finally lead to more legitimate European governance? The associative discourse may be a good narcotic to make us sleep for some time, but is it a cure for the disease?

The discourse of the Commission, for instance, may be successful for some time but may appear an air-bubble in the longer run if it becomes clear that it is not more than a vague masking concept attempting to legitimate the Commission's position and its current consultation prac-tices. Also the ESC's claims to provide, as a 'forum of civil society', a 'fundamental contribution in bringing the European Union closer to its citizens' cannot be taken for granted.

The ESC was established in the Rome Treaty as a 'functional assembly' (Smismans 2000), i.e. rather than constituting a democratically representative body per se, its task has been to facilitate and promote technical and sectoral integration, by gathering the main socio-occupational groups, mostly from industrial production, and in particular from those sectors where Community action was expected. One can question to what extent the ESC represents the complexity of civil society organizations in contemporary European society. Despite the ESC's current initiatives to organize hearings, to create a civil society observatory and to pay attention to civil society in Eastern Europe, and despite the minor Treaty change proposed in Nice regarding the definition of the ESC, its composition and powers remain unchanged. Moreover, if the ultimate aim of the ESC's discourse is to bring 'Europe' closer to its citizens, one should also question the relation

between ESC members, their organizations and their affiliates. The ESC may well be able to articulate the concerns, experiences and demands of certain civil society organizations in the European debate (in addition to other channels that may be at their disposal), but it does not follow that the ESC can be supposed to lead to a top-down initiated broad debate on European issues. This brings to the fore more profound problems regarding the potential of civil society to be an additional source of legitimacy in European's multi-level polity.

There are a number of problematic assumptions made by the Commission and the ESC that should be clarified here. First, the Commission and the ESC seem to assume that increased involvement of intermediary organizations will strengthen the legitimacy of the EU, especially since such associations—and particularly those organized at the European level—are supportive of European integration. This assumption was already present in the original use of the concept of civil dialogue by the Commission's Directorate-General for Social Policy, which was based on the idea that organizations in the social sector would support a strengthened European social policy. Yet, associations from countries with high social standards may well prefer protecting their own standards instead of getting common, yet lower, European standards. It is useful here to note that a Declaration annexed to the Maastricht Treaty paid attention to associations stating that 'the Conference stressed the importance, in pursuing the objectives of Article 117 of the Treaty establishing the European Community [i.e. the social policy objectives], of co-operation between the latter and charitable associations and foundations as institutions responsible for welfare establishments and services'. This Declaration was mainly the result of the successful lobby of German welfare associations that were motivated by a fear that European integration would threaten their national status, rather than by a desire for more social policy at the European level (Kendall and Anheier 1999:295). More generally, even if associations organized at the European level have a direct organizational interest in European activities, this does not imply that they will be supportive of the policy measures proposed by the European institutions. Even less are there reasons to assume that associations organized at national, international, regional or local level would by definition be in favour of European integration. There is enough empirical evidence to contrast that assumption (Imig and Tarrow 2001).

Second, the Commission and the ESC equally assume that the involvement of civil society organizations at the European level will ensure that European issues are debated at the grass roots level. This top-down approach may contrast with the bottom-up focus that predominates in associative theories, but above makes too easy assumptions on the relations between the European institutions and civil society organizations as well as the relations between the latter and the European citizen. It has been observed, for instance, that quite a number of ESC members are either 'expatriates'—lacking both contacts in Brussels and with their parent organization—or 'sleeping beauties': often retired individuals with a symbolic function in their parent organization and acting quite independently of it, but with a well established network in Brussels (Van der Voort 1997:250). If one should question the extent to which ESC members are able to return to the roots of their organizations, the same question should also be posed to the associations organized at European level, which are the primary focus of the European Commission's civil dialogue. Once organizations have been established at the European

level, the distance between the representatives in Brussels and their home roots often appears difficult to bridge. They are often created top-down, with EU funding, and are expertise- and lobbying-oriented, which often implies disarticulation from the social movement dynamics at the basis (Imig and Tarrow 2001:21). Moreover, it has been argued that the internal governance procedures of the European associations are not sufficiently democratic so as to make them key actors in the socialization process necessary for the democratization of the EU (Warleigh 2001a). As will be analysed in the following chapters of this volume, different organizational features of associations may lead to very different outcomes in civil society's contribution to democratic governance. One should, therefore, take account of the particular organizational difficulties of associations—and their supranational confederations—in a multi-level polity; not only when making assumptions on how they contribute to top-down initiated grass roots debate, but also in assessing how they lead bottom-up to the representation of interests.

Third, the Commission and the ESC make another all-too-easy assumption that dialogue with associations would make the European integration process more inclusive. One can ask to what extent the European confederations of associations are representative of the interests they claim to represent; which entails difficult questions on how representativity should be measured. Is it merely a question of numbers of the associations' membership, or do qualitative criteria also play a role, relating to the content of the opinions defended and to the internal organizational structure of the associations? The Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, UNICE, for instance, regroups 34 national employers' federations from 26 countries, but it struggles internally with its decision-making procedures in order to combine the heterogeneity of its members with the need for a clear negotiation mandate in the European social dialogue (Turner 1998:124). The European Trade Union Confederation, ETUC, has successfully tried to encompass most national trade union organizations, and with a membership base of over 50 million organized workers it now formally represents 90 per cent of unionized workers in Europe (Ebbinghaus and Visser 2000:774). To cope with this growing encompassingness it has changed its internal structures, introducing, among others, qualified majority voting (Dolvik 1997:333). Yet, it has also been argued that the larger and more encompassing the representative association, the less sensitive the leadership will be to demands from particular subconstituencies (Immergut 1995:205).

Even more problematic is the assumption that the involvement of associations will 'provide a voice for those not sufficiently heard through other channels' and that it would even allow the European institutions 'to reach the poorest'. Theories of collective action have shown how difficult it is for the 'excluded' or the 'weakest' to organize even at a local and national level, let alone to organize at the European level.

Conclusion

In a supra-national and multi-level polity such as the European Union, civil society may have an important role to play to ensure democratic governance, in particular since, even more than at the national level, territorially based representative democracy shows

significant shortcomings. While the role of civil society in such a 'polity-without-a-demos' is undertheorized, the European Institutions themselves have developed normative discourses on European civil society. These discourses are inspired by institutional interests. Reshaping the normative framework for EU democracy, a civil society discourse suits some institutions more than others. The European Commission has sought in civil dialogue first a support for new policy initiatives in the social sector and subsequently an instrument to respond to the legitimacy crisis of the Brussels' bureaucracy. For the ESC, the civil society discourse offered a way to overcome its marginalization within the European institutional set-up. Being non-elected bodies, both the Commission and the ESC find in the normative civil society discourse a way to be less dependent on the European Parliament as a unique source of legitimization of European governance.

Shaped by the institutional interests of the Commission and the ESC, the European civil society discourse has been linked mainly to the Community method of governance, and in particular to the drafting of new policy measures, whereas the role of civil society organizations in other phases of the policy-making process and at other levels of the multilevel polity has been neglected. Moreover, the discourse has been based on several problematic assumptions. Thus it assumes that (European) associations are by definition supportive of European integration, whereas associations have also contested European policies and further integration. The discourse equally supposes that the involvement of civil society organizations at the European level makes the integration process more inclusive and ensures that European issues are debated at grass roots level. Yet, not all associations can ensure these functions to the same extent; associational features such as size and internal (participatory) structure play a role. It is precisely for reasons of size that this is a particularly challenging problem for a supranational polity.

One can conclude that the potential role of associations in democracy is not independent of the political context. Rather, this chapter has demonstrated how political context matters in a two-fold way. First, the 'democratic potential' of associations depends on the particular features of the polity they act in. Thus their role in a supra-national and multi-level polity cannot be thought of entirely in the same terms as within a (Westphalian) nation state context. Second, political institutions shape interactions with civil society organizations and may—inspired by their own 'institutional interest'—develop proactively a normative 'civil society discourse'. Moreover, 'political context II' depends on 'political context I', i.e. the normative discourse of political institutions may only be successful in the longer run if it takes account of the specific features of the polity. Considering the complexities of the EU context, one can conclude that if the 'European civil society discourse' aims to be more than an associative narcotic, the institutions taking advantage of it are advised to take better account of the unique features that govern the European multi-level polity; both in conceptualizing the role of civil society organizations at various levels and in identifying the particular organizational problems of associations in a multi-level context.

Notes

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1 Andersen and Eliassen (1998) describe the literature on EU-lobbying as 'Empirical Richness, Theoretical Poverty'. Their survey covers approximately 300 contributions from more than ten countries from 1988 to 1998.

2 In the Preamble TEU the European integration process is described as 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'.

3 In a comparable sense, several authors have decoupled citizenship and nationality (see Preuss 1995 and Tassin 1992).

4 'Liberal democracy', which inspired normative thinking on democracy at the nation-state level, did not only reduce the citizen to 'an equal being part of the constitutive people' but assumed also that the divergences that remained would erode as historical progress would lead to more homogeneous and less stratified societies, a process that would be strengthened by nation building (Tully 1995).

5 Padraig Flynn: 'I assure you that, because it is central to our success in meeting our objectives—the role of the social NGOs will be central to our efforts…. The development and the application of strong and progressive social policy in the Union demands the engagement of the whole of civil society.' See European Commission (1998:49)

6 The 1998 European Social Policy Forum, for instance, discussed three main themes, namely: employment, the future of social protection, and participation and citizenship in Europe (see European Commission 1998).

7 Among the 1,300 participants at the 1998 Forum, for instance, one could find the Finnish Red Cross, the Panhellenic Federation of Parents and Guardians of Disabled People, the Netherlands Platform Older People for Europe and the Swedish Save the Children. Moreover, some delegates came from Central and Eastern Europe, such as the Women's Alliance for Development in Sofia, and from South-Eastern Europe, such as the Pancyprian Welfare Council.

8 Thus attempts were made to draft a European Association Statute that would facilitate the involvement of third sector organizations active in different countries of the EU. The European Parliament (EP) had requested such a Statute as early as 1986 in a Resolution on 'non-profit making associations in the European Communities', OJ C 99/205 (13 March 1987). See also the Commission's multi-annual programme for co-operatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations, COM (91) 273 final, 5 March 1992. Yet, the attempts for such a Statute failed because of disagreement among both the Member States and the organizations

themselves (see 6 1995:141).

9 They are defined as being characterized by the following elements: a) they have some degree of formal or institutional existence; b) they are non-profitdistributing; c) they are independent, in particular, of government and other public authorities; d) they are managed in a 'disinterested' manner, i.e. those who manage them ought not to do so for personal gain; e) they must be active to some degree in the public arena and their activity must be aimed, at least in part, at contributing to the public good.

10 Among the budget headings suspended were: 'co-operation with charitable associations'; 'co-operation with NGOs and associations formed by the socially-excluded and the elderly'; 'measures in the social economy sector'; 'community contribution toward schemes concerning developing countries carried out by NGOs'; and 'subsidies for certain activities of organizations pursuing human rights objectives'.

11 The list, so it was argued, could also be recognized by the European Parliament and other EU Institutions. See Platform of European Social NGOs, 'Political Recommendations on Civil Dialogue with NGOs at European Level', 14 October 1999.

12 For an overview of the current status of the civil society dialogue in trade, see http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/csc/dcs_proc.htm. The dialogue is built around an easy access procedure via the Internet where issue groups can register for participation in the meetings.

13 For 'a more precise definition of organized civil society' the White Paper refers to the Opinion of the ESC (1999:30).

14 Thus, under the title of 'involvement of civil society' the White Paper mentions 'business test panels' as an example of existing consultation mechanisms.

15 Speech presented to the ESC in the June 1993 plenary session.

16 ESC Opinions can result from obligatory consultation (Commission, Council or EP are obliged to consult the ESC according to the Treaty), from optional consultation (Commission, Council or EP can consult the ESC whenever they consider it appropriate) or from the Committee's own initiative.

17 Also: 'Although its mandate is primarily to issue opinions, the Committee has gradually diversified its activities with the aim of helping to ensure effective involvement of organized civil society in opinion-forming and decision-making, and promoting a Europe that is closer to its citizens' (see ESC 2001, point 4.1.1.).

18 The idea of 'participatory democracy' is traditionally linked to direct forms of citizen participation (e.g. Pateman 1970; Barber 1984). On the contrary, as used in the European civil society debate, it refers to another form of indirect participation, i.e. another form of participation via representation, namely via representatives of associations.

19 Through its contacts with civil society organizations the EP has acted as an advocate for 'European citizenship' although not for 'European civil society' or 'civil dialogue'. (See for instance, Vogel 1999.)

20 For the EP, the issue of lobbying became above all linked to the financial status of Members of Parliament, namely the need for each member to declare remunerated activities and any gifts or payments received in connection with their mandate,

whereas the Commission linked the question of lobbying much more with the issue of transparency of its work.

21 In a comparable way it has been argued that the concept of 'European citizenship' has been used by certain EU institutions acting as 'purposeful opportunists' and has been part of an institutional struggle over the development of the EU itself. (See Warleigh 2001b.)

22 In its comment on the White Paper, the ESC acknowledged that the open method of coordination 'opens up interesting possibilities in terms of increasing the involvement of civil society organizations' and suggested monitoring civil dialogue at that level (ESC 2001).

23 I have argued elsewhere that the ESC should focus primarily on its representative nature in order to strengthen its advisory role, (see Smismans and Mechi 2000).

Part II
Features of associations

5
Welfare through organizations

William A.Maloney and Sigrid Roßteutscher

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the role of welfare organizations as an associative cure to the (alleged) pathologies of the contemporary welfare state, i.e. anonymous, depersonalizing and inflexible state bureaucracies. Although welfare states differ in 'their' reliance on voluntary associations, all share a basic perception that voluntary agencies should be '… innovative and flexible, to protect particularistic interests, to promote volunteer citizen participation, and to meet needs not met by government' (Kramer 1981:4). Many commentators (see Roßteutscher, Chapter 1) have argued that voluntary associations generally deliver many positive benefits: the rebuilding of social trust; the re-vitalization of the sense of community; the political re-mobilization of the citizenry; and foster feelings of mutual solidarity against the anonymous apparatus of a faltering welfare state. This chapter examines two aspects that are crucial to an assessment of the nature of the shift from *welfare through state bureaucracy* to *welfare through organizations*. First, voluntary welfare organizations' role as deliverers of social services; and second, 'their' capacity to serve clients through volunteer work. If welfare organizations only provide services to a limited proportion of potential clients then the associative model of welfare would be undermined. However, if they exhibit the capacity to provide welfare services with the assistance of volunteers, then the associative model could be seen as more robust.

Despite the pivotal position of associations within contemporary debates, we know very little about the types of association that are particularly successful in service delivery and/or the promotion of volunteering. Should it be large, encompassing and centralized organizations? Or horizontally organized small face-to-face units? Do large associations with professional staff drive out volunteers? Is too much being demanded of welfare organizations? Are they expected to be efficient service providers and concurrently cosy sites of face-to-face interaction that encourage and bolster the spirit of volunteer action? This chapter seeks to investigate these questions though an analysis of welfare organizations in two cities: Aberdeen (UK) and Mannheim (Germany). However, before we get to the heart of these questions we need to 'set the scene' by providing some necessary background information on the development of welfare regimes in both countries.

Welfare regimes and the role of welfare organizations in Germany and the United Kingdom: a brief sketch

While the development of modern welfare in the UK and Germany has been very different—resulting in two discrete welfare-state regimes—both countries have a long history of integrating voluntary welfare organizations in the delivery of services at the local level. Thus until the turn of the twentieth century, much poverty and welfare relief in the UK and Germany was delivered by the voluntary sector. Under Esping-Andersen's (1990) model, Germany can be classified as 'corporatist' with a conservative core that seeks to maintain differentials and traditionally-recognized status. From its inception, the German welfare state developed along two discrete but inter-related strands. First, an obligatory (Bismarckian) staterun social security system essentially targeted at (male) full-time employees. This structure obliges employees to pay a proportion of their income in return for benefits, i.e. pensions, unemployment and sick leave payments etc., that are directly related to the level of contribution. Second, an associational strand developed along corporatist lines directed at all parts of social care and welfare not related to employment, i.e. child care, drug abuse, care for the elderly, care for homeless people etc. Under the associational strand three major 'welfare players' emerged: the Protestant Church *(Diakonie),* the Catholic Church *(Caritas)* and the working class *(Arbeiterwohlfahrt).*[1] In summary, the corporatist model witnessed the State superseding the market as *the* main provider of welfare, significantly reducing the importance of private insurance and occupational fringe benefits, while simultaneously bolstering and upholding status differentials and relegating redistribution to the margin by restricting coverage to wage earners only.

In the UK, several factors conjoined to create the pressure for the expansion of the British welfare state, including: the impact of the Liberal reforms at the turn of the twentieth century; the political realignment with the advent of the Labour Party; the impact of the Boer and First and Second World Wars; and the depression in the 1930s. These developments culminated in the publication of the Beveridge Report in 1942 and its advocacy of a comprehensive welfare package aimed at attacking the pathologies of Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. The emphasis was on minimum security for all citizens (Kuhnle 1998:52). While Beveridge believed that the State should be the major welfare provider, he nevertheless acknowledged that the voluntary sector had made an important contribution to '…the healthy functioning of society despite the ongoing expansion of state control and direction' (quoted in Kendall and Knapp 1996:2). Subsequently, successive British governments sought to incorporate the voluntary sector into the delivery of social services. According to Hall (2001:75), this 'highly successful policy' made the British voluntary sector (in internationally comparative terms) an extraordinarily important service provider. Many social programmes in the inter-war and post-war eras had the in-built assumption that volunteers were crucial.

In the post-war era, the tenets of British welfarism have not been as stable as its German counterpart where a serious public debate began comparatively recently triggered by the resultant pressures from EU harmonization and the economic crisis in the aftermath of German unification. In the UK, the 'new' political and economic realities of

the mid-1970s (i.e. mass unemployment, continuing social and economic inequality, and rising citizen expectations coinciding with ever-increasing budgetary constraints) witnessed successive British governments attempting to reduce the growing burden of welfare provision. This process saw the UK move from a *Social Democratic* position on Esping-Andersen's (1990) Welfare Regime typology based on the principles of universalism, towards a more *Liberal Policy* location which emphasizes a high reliance on the market and 'safety net' provision of various welfare services (Svallfors 1993:91).[2]

Although both the UK and Germany operate under clearly distinct welfare regimes, voluntary associations play a major role in the delivery of services at the local level. Both countries also face similar economic and political pressures that push welfare policies towards less state, more individual self-responsibility and, most importantly (for this chapter), a stronger role for voluntary agents.

Specifying the object and mapping

While welfare regimes and policies are largely set at the national level, service delivery, volunteering and organizational activity are locally based. Accordingly, if one seeks to examine the welfare contribution of the voluntary sector—the amount and nature of volunteer work and individual welfare engagement—the appropriate area of investigation is the local level. In this chapter we assume that any given community in Britain and Germany would serve this purpose because the impact of regime characteristics and particular national welfare policies should be largely the same everywhere. It was, however, crucial for us to select mediumsized cities: with a fully-fledged educational system; a wide variation of industries and services; extensive local government system; locales large enough to host the full range of welfare programmes, welfare associations and welfare recipients.

We also faced the challenge of defining a voluntary welfare organization. As a first step we sought to define the Welfare State. Inevitably, with many definitional debates, finding a consensus in the literature proved to be elusive. As Ringen (1987:3–4) noted, there are as many definitions of the Welfare State as there are authors writing on the subject. We chose to combine Titmuss's (1958) notion that the term is simply a 'catch-word or a heading under which selected policies are discussed', and Marshall's (1950) '…proposition that social citizenship constitutes the core idea of a welfare state'. Our definition drawing did not end there because our focus was on the voluntary component of this sector: In this regard we adapted Kendall and Knapp's (1996) *structural operating definition* of a voluntary association. Organizations had to be: 1) independent of government and self-governing; 2) clearly distinguishable from commercial or business entities and should not distribute net earning to controlling persons[3]; and 3) sustained through voluntary citizen involvement and voluntary philanthropic contributions. However, we did not require that organizations had 'a constitution or formal sets of rules'. Accordingly we adopted a wider definition of 'voluntary citizen involvement' by deliberately targeting loosely structured and informal organizations.[4] As Kendall and Knapp (1996:115) note, a 'great deal of volunteering is directed "informally"'! We sought to capture such activity.[5] In short, we developed a broad and inclusive definition

of what actually constituted a voluntary welfare organization. However, it is important to note that the operationalization of our welfare categorization in this chapter is empirically based: groups were (self-)classified through their answers to questions in our *organizational survey*.[6]

Voluntary welfare are organizations in Aberdeen and Mannheim

We begin our analysis by locating the welfare sector in the universe of associations in Aberdeen and Mannheim (see Table 5.1). The vibrancy of associational life in both cities is the first major finding. Our comprehensive mapping identified 1,704 organizations in Aberdeen and 5,002 in Mannheim. With an Aberdeen population of 218,220, and a Mannheim figure of 319,944 inhabitants, the ratio of associations to inhabitants is 1:128 in Aberdeen and 1:64 in Mannheim. The Mannheim ratio supports the commonplace assumption that group formation is a very popular German sport: Germans are *Vereinsmeier*. The ratios are particularly high both internationally and within Germany. Previous German research reported a much lower density: one association per 200 inhabitants (Zimmer 1996). Although the Aberdeen ratio appears less impressive, it is far above those established by previous studies. Hall (2001:21) reports findings that vary between one association per 165 inhabitants for a medium-size Scottish city and 1:361 in a metropolitan inner city area. The main reason for our high numbers is the extensive mapping procedure. Previous studies have focused exclusively on official lists and directories,

Tabk 5.1 Welfare organizations in Mannheim and Aberdeen

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
Total of existing organizations	5,002	1,704
Number of inhabitants	319,944	218,220
Organizations per inhabitant	1 per 64	1 per 128
Valid responses to survey	1,618	497
Valid responses from welfare organizations	715	265
% welfare from total of valid responses	44.2	53.3
Issue priority of welfare organization[a]	%	%
Children/youth	14.5	16.6
Education	12.6	11.3
Health	9.9	9.1
Pensioners/elderly	6.6	8.3
Disabled	4.3	9.4
Charity/welfare	4.2	9.8
Women	4.1	2.3
Housing	3.2	1.1
Child care	2.7	3.0

Humanitarian aid	2.3	0.0
Family	1.7	1.1
Ethnic concerns	1.6	0.4
Poverty	1.0	0.0
Local social policy	1.0	N/A
Parents	0.7	1.1
Lodges	0.7	0.0
Veterans/victims	0.6	0.4
Human rights	0.4	0.8
Other welfare concerns	11.3	6.0
Several welfare concerns mentioned	8.8	7.5
All welfare concerns equally important	2.7	1.9
No answer concerning most important	5.5	9.8

Note

a The question was: 'Please indicate (by ticking the appropriate boxes) in which sectors your association/group has been active during the last year.' Respondents had a list of 37 items including sectors such as: hobbies, sports, business relations, charity/welfare, etc. We also asked all organizations who ticked more than one box to indicate what had been the most important sector.

ignoring 'other' associational activities (for a detailed description of the mapping process, see Berton *et al.* 2001:17–20).

Table 5.1 illustrates the organizations most heavily represented in both samples: 'children/youth', 'education', 'health' and 'pensioners/elderly'.[7] The profile of organizational life in Mannheim and Aberdeen is broadly similar, with minor deviations. The noteworthy differences are in the areas of 'charity/welfare' (10 per cent in Aberdeen and 4 per cent in Mannheim) and 'disabled' (9 per cent in Aberdeen compared to 4 per cent in Mannheim). Aberdeen also has fewer 'new politics' organizations such as associations for ethnic concerns, humanitarian aid and women.

Are associations all the same?

Much of the current debate assumes that associations in general provide rich opportunities to improve and stabilize the social and politic fabric of modern societies. More recently, this undifferentiated and generalized celebration of associations has provoked harsh criticism. The 'dark side' of social capital and associative activity has been highlighted: e.g. the Italian Mafia or circles of terrorism (Fiorina 1999). Moreover, most approaches in this field make more or less implicit assumptions about the type and nature of the 'good' association: i.e. Putnam (1995, 2000) eschews single-issue groups; Barber (1984) and Putnam perceive face-to-face contact as critical; and associative democracy protagonists emphasize the importance of large professionalized associations. Such preferences vary largely because of the differing perspective on associations' most important function within modern society. Putnam's (1995, 2000) focus is on trust and

social integration; Barber's (1984) concern is civic virtue and participation; associative democracy theorists consider service delivery and broad mass mobilization as crucial (see Roßteutscher 2000:I72f.). Warren (2001) argued that different organizational features may lead to very different outcomes and that associations which generate high levels of trust may be weak 'schools for democracy'. However, Warren's ambitious classification of the structural features of associations and 'their' impact on democratic outcomes has not been empirically tested. Our concern is much narrower: by focusing on nine different organizational features, we assess associations' contribution to, and the promotion of, service provision and volunteering and activism in the welfare sector.

The bridging and bonding potentiality of welfare organizations

Putnam's (2000:23) recent contributions have emphasized that social capital can emerge in two forms: *bonding* and *bridging*. Bonding creates strong ties within existing groups, bridging generates ties between groups: 'Bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40.' Bonding social capital can be pernicious because of its intra-group qualities: it may reinforce intolerance within social or political groups. Thus neo-Fascist or racist organizations can be strengthened—just as much as charitable or humanitarian aid organizations—through the development of bonding social capital. Bridging social capital refers to relationships developed between different social or political groups breeding tolerance, mutual understanding and accommodation, generalized trust and generalized reciprocity. The concepts of bridging and bonding mainly refer to the idea that there are certain settings which 'bridge' individuals from different backgrounds and with different interest constellations. We try to capture this highly relevant concept at the organizational level. Everything being equal, one can assume that organizations with many and regular contacts to other organizations provide more opportunities for the development of bridging social capital than socially isolated groups—even if their contact partners are operating in the same functional sphere. We asked organizations: 1) to indicate if they had contact; and 2) to write down the names of the most important associational contacts.

The most surprising result in Table 5.2 is the relatively large number of organizations without any contacts to other organizations in both cities. Almost half of the welfare organizations operate in isolation. In both local ecologies, the patterns are similar: co-operative associations build bridges to roughly three other organizations.

A further hypothesis that can be related to the bonding/bridging dimension of the social capital debate is that narrowly defined organizations (i.e. single-issue groups) are less likely to provide the desired out-comes in terms of bridging different sectors of the population and establishing the trust that is needed to enhance the production of social capital. Putnam's (1995:71) rejection of self-help groups is based upon such an argument, '…single-issue groups' self-regard advanced through interest representation and lobbying might be detrimental to the interests and concerns of other groups'. Following this logic the larger the number of organizations with more than one concern, the greater the *potentiality* for a more bridging and inclusive polity and society.

We sought to assess the range of welfare organizations' concerns by analysing their responses to a list of 35 issue concerns or sectorial activities: associations were free to choose as many or as few as they wished. Table 5.3 shows that in Aberdeen and Mannheim, narrowly-focused organizations were a minority, i.e. roughly 16 per cent in Aberdeen and

Table 5.2 Inter-group relations in Mannheim and Aberdeen

	Mannheim	*Aberdeen*
Per cent welfare groups with contacts	56.8	54.3
Mean no. of contacts, all groups	1.5	1.6
Mean no. of contacts, groups with contacts	2.8	3.1

Tabk 5.3 Range of sectoral activities of welfare organizations

	Mannheim	*Aberdeen*
Mean no. of sectorial activities mentioned	4.7	4.7
Median value (50% split)	4.0	4.0
Per cent of 'One-Issue' groups	18.6	16.2
Maximum no. of sectorial activities mentioned	22.0	19.0
Per cent of groups which mention 10 or more sectors	9.8	10.9

19 per cent in Mannheim. Moreover, in both cities about 10 per cent of all welfare organizations report a very broad range of concerns: they claim to be active in ten or more sectors of welfare; while the average welfare organization in both locales has a sectorial interest which ranges between four to five different concerns.

To summarize, with regard to the range of 'issue concerns', welfare organizations in Aberdeen and Mannheim appear to offer significant potential as bridging vehicles. However, with regard to external contacts, their contribution appears to be more muted.

Hierarchical embeddedness

It has been claimed that organizations embedded in hierarchical or vertical structures make less of a civic contribution than those in horizontal structures that enable exchange and communication. Putnam (1993) argued that the hierarchically organized Catholic Church was partly responsible for Southern Italy's poorer social capital production. He maintained that in Catholic Italy, organized religion:

> …is an alternative to the civic community, not part of it…. At the regional level, all manifestations of religiosity and clericalism—attendance at Mass, religious (as opposed to civil) marriages, rejection of divorce, expressions of religious

identity in surveys—are negatively correlated with civic engagement…. In today's Italy, as in the Italy of Machiavelli's civic humanists, the civic community is a secular community.

(Putnam 1993:107–8)

Comparing Catholic and Protestant Church associations in the US, Verba *et al.* (1995:246-7) concluded that the civic networks of the Catholic Church are less efficient in terms of the promotion of participation and acquisition of civic skills: 'Protestants are much more active in their churches than are Catholics. On average, the Protestant church-goer devotes more than twice as many hours each week to nonreligious activities in church than does the average Catholic'. We examined these assumptions through a two-fold comparison: 1) between associations embedded in hierarchical structures of dependence and those not; and 2) between church umbrellas and secular structures of hierarchical dependence. This offers us the opportunity to assess whether differences between vertically and horizontally organized networks of organizations are due to the hierarchical dependence on umbrella organizations in general, or due to a specific type of dependence: the Church.

The number of welfare groups affiliated to umbrella organizations is high: 63 per cent in Mannheim and 51 per cent in Aberdeen. However, compared to the highly similar patterns we found regarding bridging and

Table 5.4 Member of umbrella organization

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
Member of an umbrella organization	63.1	50.6
Member of a church umbrella	30.6	8.7
Member of religious welfare organization	13.4	0.0
Group is umbrella	3.9	12.5
Total no. of cases	715	265

sectorial activities, there are clear systematic differences concerning the role of the Church in contemporary welfare. The Church is a significant umbrella organization in both cities. However, the data clearly demonstrates the significance of the institutionalized pillars in Germany, and within that, the dominance of the religious components. When we add the Church-based welfare organizations—the *Diakonie* and *Caritas*—we find that the welfare contribution of the religious sector in Mannheim is five times higher than in Aberdeen (44 per cent of all Mannheim welfare organizations are attached to some religious umbrella, compared to only 9 per cent in Aberdeen). In other words, the Mannheim world of vertical dependency is almost monopolized by church organizations. In Aberdeen by contrast most welfare organizations are also embedded into patterns of vertical dependency, however, the character of this dependency is largely secular.

Size: income and personnel

Income is one major indicator of group resources. 'Rich' groups should be able to provide a larger number of services to many clients than their less affluent counterparts and employ more personnel to mobilize larger numbers of volunteers. In fact, the most professional organizations may employ individuals whose sole task is to stimulate and maintain volunteering. Conversely, economic muscle might not be so positively related to the promotion of volunteering. These organizations might eschew amateur volunteerism and prefer to draw on a more professionally-trained cohort of employees. Accordingly, the 'civic' contribution of the larger organizations might be job creation rather than the creation of generalized trust and reciprocity.

It is no surprise that Table 5.5 illustrates that the overwhelming majority of the voluntary welfare sector operates on shoestring budgets. In Mannheim 70 per cent of welfare groups have budgets of less than £10,000 per annum. In Aberdeen the corresponding figure is 57 per cent. At the other extreme, 21 per cent of Aberdeen associations have budgets of over £100,000 (11 per cent in Mannheim). In general, there is more economic muscle in Aberdeen than in Mannheim. However, in both cities

Table 5.5 Size of annual group income, % of groups

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
No income	14.9	6.5
Under £10,000	55.0	50.6
£10,000–£49,999	12.9	13.9
£50,000–£99,999	5.8	8.2
£100,000–£499,999	7.4	14.3
£500,000–£999,999	1.7	3.7
£1 million to £10 million	1.5	2.9
£10 million +	0.8	0.0
No. of valid cases	651	245

the income is heavily skewed towards the highly resourceful few compared to the large bulk of resource-poor associations.

A second important aspect of 'size' is labour power. We examine two different indicators of group size: 1) membership size, and 2) number of paid personnel. Again, one might assume that both indicators impact differently on an associations' ability to serve clients and promote volunteering. While membership size could be irrelevant to service delivery, it should be positively related to an organization's ability to attract volunteers: the larger the membership base the bigger the pool of potential volunteers—assuming that each passive member is a potential 'warm-name' volunteer. Conversely, many argue that large organizations drive out volunteering and activism: it is the smaller

groups permitting face-to-face contacts that are valourized as the champions of activism. Size in terms of paid personnel, on the other hand, should be positively related to the number of clients. It is, however, unclear as to whether staff are a prerequisite or hindrance to volunteer activity. Both interpretations exist. As Kramer notes, it is widely believed that 'there is an inherent conflict between professionalism and volunteerism' (Kramer 1981:206). In particular in the UK, the professionals and unions were historically hostile to volunteer work, because it has been seen as an 'expression of social oligarchy and churchy bourgeois attitudes' (Kramer 1981:207). Moreover, amongst the unions, volunteer work had a reputation of 'cheap labour'.

Looking at membership size, we see few significant differences between the welfare sector in Mannheim and Aberdeen. For example, in Mannheim 30 per cent of welfare organizations have less than 10 members (16 per cent have no members), 27 per cent have over 100 members. The Aberdeen distribution is broadly similar and the average association possesses a mean number of 111 members in Aberdeen and 117 in Mannheim.

Turning to the numbers of paid staff,[8] the main finding is the relatively high number of paid staff in Aberdeen: just over 50 per cent of Aberdeen welfare groups employ personnel (the Mannheim figure is 33 per cent).

Table 5.6 Size: total number of members, in % of groups

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
None	16.3	9.3
Less than 5	3.3	2.4
5 to 9	10.1	9.8
10 to 29	19.9	24.8
30 to 49	10.7	13.4
50 to 99	12.8	15.9
100 to 499	18.5	17.1
500 plus	8.5	7.3
Mean no. of members	117	111
No. of valid cases	704	248

Table 5.7 also shows that 1 per cent of Mannheim groups employ more than 100 professionals; the Aberdeen figure is 3 per cent. Moreover, the average Aberdeen welfare association has 25 employees, in Mannheim it is ten. As with income, resources are heavily skewed: there are a few staff-rich organizations and the overwhelming majority have none or a handful.

Sources of income

Not only is the size of income an important factor but so is the source. If voluntary

organizations are a substitute for state activities, a minimum criterion is independence from state structures. Independence or autonomy is sustained through a range of constitutional guarantees. However, the best guarantees may be weak, if welfare organizations are heavily dependent on public finance. 'What is voluntary about an agency that receives most of its income from tax funds?' (Kramer 1981:157f.). External

Table 5.7 Size: number of paid staff (part and full-time), in % of groups

	Mannheim	*Aberdeen*
None	67.1	49.1
Less than 5	13.4	13.3
5 to 9	8.6	16.0
10 to 29	6.7	13.3
30 to 49	1.5	3.1
50 to 99	1.5	1.6
100 to 499	0.6	1.3
500 plus	0.5	2.1
Mean no. of employees	10	25
No. of valid cases	702	239

funding is also not without its problems for the representative basis of organizations. Reliance on patrons can circumvent the requirement for members, or may, as Euchner (1996:47) argues '…cut leaders off from their constituency'. It could also potentially 'corrupt' the aims, objectives, and strategies of the organization if the leadership is concerned that the paternalism of the patron may be strongly tested by the organizational *modus operandi*. Cigler and Nownes (1995:79) have argued that in the US there is some evidence that patronage affects the composition of the public interest sector by diverting funds to professional rather than activist organizations. Organizations exclusively dependent on their members might develop a certain type of relationship with rank-and-file members that might inspire activism and volunteering. In addition to this, high dependence on membership income might lead members to demand greater accountability from leaders: members might seek a *voice*!

Table 5.8 includes data on the percentage of organizations that report receiving income from various sources for which each specific source represents their total income; and the average percentage that each source represents in the welfare sector in total. In general, Aberdeen welfare organizations are much less reliant on membership dues, only 31 per cent receive this income source, on average these fees make-up only 13 per cent of their total budget, and some 5 per cent rely exclusively on subscriptions. The respective figures in Mannheim are: 60 per cent, 27 per cent, and 10 per cent. The second most important source of income in the welfare sector in Mannheim is donations (20 per cent), followed by public finance and umbrella (11 per cent), sales of goods and services (7 per cent) and local government (7 per cent). The Aberdeen rank order is fundraising (24 per cent), local government and membership dues (13 per cent), donations (12 per cent) and

sales of goods and services (8 per cent). There are several interesting findings regarding the welfare sectors in Aberdeen and Mannheim: the relative importance of umbrella organizations as a source of income in Mannheim; the heavy reliance on local government in Aberdeen; and fundraising being the single most important source of funding in Aberdeen and insignificant in Mannheim. There is also a surprisingly strong dependence in Mannheim on membership and donations, in contrast to the public funding and professional fundraising of the Aberdeen welfare sector.

   In general, the data shows that all voluntary organizations in both cities have a diversified portfolio of income: they demonstrate 'organizational autonomy' if autonomy is 'a function of multiple sources of financing' (Kramer 1981:170). Interestingly, national governments have proven not to be a significant financier. This empirical result is surprising if one considers the historical role of welfare organizations as local deliverers of social services through state contracts and funding. There are several reasons why our data does not reflect this situation and why, in particular in Mannheim, there is financial independence from public authorities.

Table 5.8 Source of group income, in % of groups

		Mannheim	Aberdeen
Member dues	Yes	59.6	31.0
	100%	9.5	4.5
	Mean	27.2	13.3
Umbrella	Yes	22.5	9.9
	100%	4.5	2.4
	Mean	10.6	4.2
Local government	Yes	19.7	32.1
	100%	1.7	1.6
	Mean	7.0	13.4
Regional government	Yes	12.2	7.1
	100%	0.3	0.4
	Mean	2.9	3.4
National government	Yes	4.1	2.0
	100%	0.2	0
	Mean	1.0	0.6
Public finance	Yes	27.2	33.8
	100%	2.3	4.0
	Mean	10.9	17.6
Sale of goods/services	Yes	19.0	26.8
	100%	1.4	2.0
	Mean	7.1	7.8
Fundraising events	Yes	12.8	58.0
	100%	0	11.6

	Mean	3.6	23.9
Donations	Yes	62.3	47.6
	100%	6.8	3.7
	Mean	19.8	12.2
Other	Yes	18.7	26.1
	100%	2.6	2.1
	Mean	6.8	8.2
No. of valid cases		550–95	241–55

First, the three major welfare pillars *(Caritas, Diakonie, Arbeiterwohlfahrt),* to which this contract situation mainly applies have, from a quantitative point of view, a relatively marginal position within the context of all existing Mannheim welfare organizations. Second, state funding flows through umbrella organizations and not directly to the welfare organizations active at the local level. In other words, funding through umbrella organizations may, in many cases, be a synonym for public funding.

Degree of institutionalization

Institutionalization can be a twin-headed beast. An institutionalization of participatory rules (e.g. formal requirements concerning a general assembly) might secure democratic processes within associations and facilitate social capital outcomes. Other indicators of institutionalization, such as chairs or boards, might imply a certain element of intra-organizational hierarchy that might improve the efficiency of service delivery, but under-mine the promotion of volunteering. However, institutionalization might also be a defence against autocratic leadership. Applying Weber's typology, Kramer (1981:108) notes: 'voluntary associations that grow beyond the first stage of charismatic or traditional leadership usually require more rational-bureaucratic or technical types of leadership as they become institutionalized'.

Table 5.9 highlights some interesting variations on several aspects of the institutionalization. The explanation for some of the rather large differences is legal requirements: e.g. 63 per cent of Mannheim associations have General Assemblies; in Aberdeen it is 16 per cent. However, such large differences also mask some cultural differences. The cultural variations flow in the opposite direction (i.e. greater numbers in Aberdeen) in the areas of Treasurer and Committees for Specific Tasks. On the basis of such large variations we developed a single indicator of the 'degree of institutionalization'. This is expressed through an additive index of all institutional items 'ticked' by the respondents. This measurement reveals that the Aberdeen sector is more heavily institutionalized than its Mannheim counterpart (mean values of 4.6 compared to 3.8). Moreover, there are almost twice as many fully non-institutionalized groups in Mannheim as in Aberdeen (18 to 10 per cent).

To summarize, considering the huge regime differences under which the welfare sectors of our two cities operate, the structure of their organizational component reveals many striking similarities. There is—with few exceptions—a very similar profile and

priority of welfare concerns covered by associational activity. Moreover, concerns are represented in very

Table 5.9 Institutionalization in the welfare sector, in % of groups

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
Single items		
Chair person	66.2	81.1
Board of directors	56.1	26.8
Executive committee	21.8	48.3
Treasurer	56.5	80.8
Secretary	18.9	78.9
Committees for specific tasks	35.1	54.0
General assembly	62.9	15.8
Written constitution	62.5	74.3
Degree of institutionalization		
None of these	17.9	9.8
All of these	3.8	4.5
Mean degree of institutionalization	3.8	4.6
No. of valid cases	715	265

similar breadth and range. There is also an almost identical appetite for bridging, i.e. networking between organization, in both cities. In terms of membership size there are hardly any differences between welfare organizations in Mannheim and Aberdeen.

However, we also found that Aberdeen groups are better resourced in terms of income and staff: they are less dependent upon members' financial contributions; rely more on general fundraising (presumably, with the help of staff members); and receive higher incomes through public channels. In contrast, the typical Mannheim welfare group resembles the traditional association based on membership both in terms of finance and institutional set-up. Finally, the Mannheim welfare sector is heavily influenced—almost monopolized—by church groups, while Aberdeen's welfare sector is highly secular. Many of these differences can be attributed to regime differences: i.e. the historical structure of German welfare delivery with its strong bias towards the pillars of the Catholic and the Protestant Church; and the strong efforts of British local governments to involve associations in service delivery. Most significantly, the descriptive analyses revealed that not all associations are the same. The associative world is multi-faceted: associative ecologies include small and large, rich and poor, hierarchical and flat organizations, isolated islands and network champions, single-issue groups and multiple concern giants.

**Explaining welfare outcomes: service provision and promotion of
volunteering**

A core aim of this chapter is to investigate the role of welfare associations as deliverers
and promoters of volunteering. Which associative features contribute to welfare
associations' capacity to be successful agents of welfare? Despite differences in staffing
levels (see Table 5.7), the percentage of volunteers in the welfare sector of both cities is
almost identical. Twenty-seven per cent of all welfare organizations report that they have
no volunteers and 46 per cent said they serviced clients (data not shown). While there are
many more organizations in Mannheim than in Aberdeen (see Table 5.1), Table 5.10
shows that the fewer organizations in

Table 5.10 Average number of members, volunteers, personnel and clients, mean values

	Mannheim	Aberdeen
Members	117	111
Active members	40	65
Paid staff	10	25
Volunteers	17	34
Clients	81	99
No. of valid cases	697–704	206–45

Aberdeen generate higher levels of activity. For example, looking at all welfare
organizations in both cities we find that the average organization in Aberdeen has 111
members of whom 65 are activists; in Mannheim the averages are 117 and 40
respectively. There are more paid staff per group in Aberdeen than in Mannheim (25:10),
and volunteering is twice as common in the Scottish city than in its German counterpart
(34:17). There is, moreover, a difference in terms of service delivery; the average
Mannheim group has 81 clients, the Aberdeen figure is 99.

Can these apparent differences in average raw numbers of active members and
volunteers impact on associations' capacity to act as successful welfare agents?
Evidently, quantity is no synonym for efficiency. Organizations with large numbers of
volunteers (and clients) might not be the most efficient agents in turning passive
involvement active. Similarly, staff-rich associations might not be the most efficient
bodies in terms of the number of clients served by number of paid personnel. In the
current academic climate, the optimum association would serve many clients with little
staff input and would turn a large proportion of its passive members into activists and
volunteers.

We investigate the relationship between organizational features and welfare outputs
using OLS regression models to assess the impact and strength of single organizational
elements in comparison to the impact and strength of other features. The analysis
proceeds in two steps: first we analyse quantities. Do welfare organizations function as

viable alternatives or substitutes to public welfare programmes? If so, they should produce large numbers of volunteers and activists and serve a wide range of clients. However, quantity is not efficiency. 'Welfare through organizations' is attractive to the advocates of voluntary action and critics of traditional welfare regimes precisely because these organizations are allegedly more efficient in the production of welfare outcomes. Voluntary welfare organizations attract volunteer activists, which provide 'better' or at least equivalent services to clients and improve both quality and cost-ratios in comparison to impersonal, standardized and professionalized statutory welfare programmes. In short, we now focus on the structural features which contribute to an organization's ability to provide efficient ratios of active to passive members, of volunteers to paid personnel, of clients to paid personnel and clients to volunteers. One simple example might clarify our understanding of quantity and efficiency. If an organization serves 1,000 clients it definitely provides welfare outputs in terms of large numbers, i.e. quantity. If, however, the same organization needs 500 fulltime employees it could be seen as inefficient. Alternatively, if an organization serves 20 clients through one full-time employee it may not be very successful in terms of quantity, but highly efficient when comparing inputs with outputs.

Explaining quantity

Member size is the single most significant predictor of levels of activism (beta of 0.55). There are two further structural features, which contribute to an explanation of activism: 1) the amount of professional personnel; and 2) belonging to the Aberdeen welfare sector—in contrast to being located in Mannheim. However, the impact of these two additional factors seems marginal compared to the overwhelming importance of membership size.

The analyses of volunteering suggest a similar, but slightly broader, set of factors. Once more membership size is an important factor. However, its impact is dwarfed by the significance of the number of paid personnel. If an organization wants to generate large numbers of volunteers it should employ a large number of staff: employees generate volunteers. Moreover, the number of an organization's concerns is also responsible for larger numbers of volunteers. Evidently, the more issues an organization perceives as crucial to its goals, the better it is able to attract volunteers. There is also some indication that a group's belonging to a church umbrella increases an association's attraction to volunteers.

The analysis of the number of clients served shows the most equal distribution of factors contributing to an organizational provision of services to clients. In contrast, when we explain volunteer activity and activism where membership size (activism) and size of personnel (volunteering) (see Table 5.11) are the two most decisive factors, we find that several factors, with none particularly strong, impact on service delivery. For the very first time we see that income has a significant effect. It is not really surprising that wealthy organizations serve more clients than their less affluent peers. Moreover, we also find that organizations with access to public money are big players when it comes to serving large quantities of clients. By contrast, associations that are financially dependent on members are clearly disadvantaged. Generally speaking, organizations that seek to

serve large numbers of clients should opt for small organizational forms in terms of members, but with the financial muscle of the public purse behind them. This is the first real contradiction in our findings. If one assumes that volunteer work and service delivery are equally important to an associative welfare model, one is struck by the fact that a structural feature that is crucial to one part (activism and volunteering) appears to hamper the second (service delivery). In other respects, both aspects seem to function along similar lines. Both volunteer work and service delivery are 'positively' influenced if there are many employees and if the issue concerns of the organization are large. Finally, networked groups in contrast to isolated groups are better clients' servers. However, one could doubt the causal direction of this relationship. It might very well be that organizations that are heavily involved in providing services are forced to co-operate with other service providers.

Table 5.11 Explaining quantity in welfare outcomes, beta *100

	Activism N=803 R^2=0.42	Volunteering N= 789 R^2=0.45	Clients served N= 776 R^2=0.25
Aberdeen	8*	2	–3
Inter-group relations	2	–4	9**
Issue range	2	10**	11**
Umbrella	4	–3	–6
Church umbrella	2	8**	4
Income	1	5	23***
Public authority	1	3	15***
Member fees (source of income)	2	–2	–10**
Umbrella (source of income)	4	7*	3
Fundraising (source of income)	3	7*	7
Size: members	55***	19***	–2
Size: paid personnel	21***	54***	9*
Degree of institutionalization	2	5	4
Assembly	–1	–2	3
Charity/welfare	–	–	–
Health	–	–	–
Disability	–	–	–9*
Pensioners/elderly	–	–6*	–
Education	–	–	–
Children/youth	–	–	–9*
Women	–	–	–
Child care	–	–	–10**

Note
Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=0.001 (two-tailed).

The factors that impact on our indicators of quantitative welfare outputs are seemingly universal, with effects valid for all types of organizations. Controlling for the possibility that an organization's substantial focus matters, we inserted the (numerically significant) organizational types discussed at the beginning of this chapter (see Table 5.1): charity/welfare, health, disability, pensioners/elderly, education, children/youth, women and childcare. We found that the type of organization mattered only in few instances: groups for the elderly were significantly disadvantage in promoting volunteering; and associations for the disabled, children and youth groups and child care associations are disadvantaged in service delivery. Explanations are in all cases more or less obvious: the very nature of groups for the elderly explains its problem with activating volunteers—many members presumably would prefer to be more active but cannot. The fact that associations of the elderly, children and youth groups and child care are disadvantaged in terms of quantitative service output might also be explained by the special character of their constituency: the elderly and children need a more qualitative and timeintensive service that might inhibit the concentration of large numbers.

Explaining efficiency

Membership size is a key factor in turning passive involvement active. However, the causal direction is reversed. In other words, the smaller an organization, the better its chances of generating higher levels of activism. While big is beautiful in terms of quantity, small is the magic formula if one considers a close relationship between passive and active involvement. Two other features accompany the impact of (small) size: the ratio between passive and active members is better in organizations that are situated in Aberdeen (and not in Mannheim), and, surprisingly, in organizations that have higher numbers of staff. Again, we do not find any indication that staff undermine the appetite for active citizen engagement. The opposite is the case. Both features are among the indicators that contributed to quantity in activity patterns. In short, both foster large numbers of activists and help to provide an environment conducive to turning passive involvement active.

Our second indicator of organizational efficiency, the ratio of volunteers to passive members, exhibits similar contradictions. While membership size has been among the organizational features that engendered large numbers of volunteers, it becomes a hindrance in efficiency terms: the less members, the stronger the relationship between numbers of volunteers and paid personnel. Moreover, besides sheer size, financial dependence on member dues significantly decreases an organization's capacity to mobilize volunteers from the member pool. However, this is only part of the story. We also see that size in terms of paid personnel impacts positively on an organization's capacity to hold many volunteers compared to its stock of members. Moreover, groups affiliated to the Church, and groups with many inter-organizational contacts, facilitate a culture of volunteering. Accordingly, some features that aid volunteering in quantitative terms (church umbrella, size of paid personnel) help to establish an organizational environment that is relatively rich in volunteers compared to its stock of passive members. In other words, a set of organizational features equally inspires a positive welfare culture both in terms of quantity and efficiency. This is true in the case of

activism and volunteering. However, in the case of activism the single most important indicator pushes in opposite directions. If an organization wants quantity it should opt for large numbers to begin with. In contrast, if efficiency is the goal, small is beautiful.

Looking at the group internal relationship between volunteers and paid personnel (third column in Table 5.12), we suddenly see member size as an aid to volunteering. With regard to both the mobilization of activists and volunteers from the member pool, small organizations have an advantage. In clear contrast, it is member-rich organizations where the quota between numbers of volunteers and numbers of professionals is best. Moreover, wealth is negatively related to volunteer numbers

Table 5.12 Explaining efficiency in welfare outcomes, beta *100

	Active to passive members N=713 R²=0.16	Volunteers to passive members N=746 R²=0.30	Volunteers to paid personnel N=683 R²=0.09	Clients to paid personnel N=455 R²=0.09	Clients to volunteers N=652 R²=0.14
Aberdeen	24***	–3	6	–9	–10
Inter-group relations	–1	8*	–1	–2	3
Issue range	6	4	2	6	–2
Umbrella	6	–3	6	3	–1
Church umbrella	4	15***	10*	–2	–5
Income	–1	7	–15**	–16**	27**
Public authority (source of income)	–1	–1	7	2	9*
Member fees (source of income)	–6	–22***	4	–7	–3
Umbrella (source of income)	6	3	4	–3	10*
Fundraising (source of income)	–1	6	2	7	4
Size: members	–27***	–37***	21***	5	–17***
Size: paid personnel	11***	18***	–6	–7	–4
Degree institutionalization	1	–4	2	1	0
Assembly	5	3	4	5	0
Charity /welfare	–	–	–	–	–
Health	–	–	–	–	–
Disability	–	–7*	–	–10*	–10*
Pensioner/elderly	–	–	–	–	–
Education	–	–	–	–	–

Children/youth	–	–	–	–	–
Women	–	–	–	–	–
Child care	–	–	–	–	–10*

Note

Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=0.001 (two-tailed).

compared to staff numbers (there is also a negative impact of staff members, however, the coefficient is just above the level of significance). As with all features of volunteering, church affiliation is (once again) an asset to the culture of volunteering. Accordingly, there is a stark contradiction between the two indicators concerning efficiency in volunteering. Small associations (in terms of members, and member dependence), who employ large numbers of paid personnel, are champions of turning their (few) members into volunteers. However, the fact that this relationship is not particularly efficient (and presumably very cost intensive) is demonstrated by the analyses concerning the quota between volunteers and paid personnel. Logically, it is the member-rich, poorer organizations with few staff, where the relationship between numbers of volunteers and staff is optimal.

Successful welfare players should serve a large group of clients. However, much of the current debate rests on the assumption that voluntary organizations (in contrast to the State) function in a way that produces similar outcomes with less input of regular paid staff for two main reasons. First, organizations naturally draw on local expertise and are interwoven with the texture of actual needs. Second, unpaid volunteers carry out functions that state programmes would otherwise have to fund. Accordingly, we focused on an organization's ability to serve many clients with relatively modest staff numbers. It is interesting to note that wealth is the biggest barrier to organizational efficiency: the poorer an organization (i.e. the less staff it can employ), the greater its ability to serve relatively many clients.

Finally, an efficient relationship between volunteers and service delivery is once more negatively influenced by member size (last column in Table 5.12): smaller organizations are better able to turn volunteer work into efficient service delivery. Income helps as well, in particular, if it stems from public or umbrella sources. Evidently, the financial independence from members and a small member constituency accompanied by wealth and access to public money does not only increase an organization's performance in a quantitative respect (a large number of clients served), but also contributes to an efficient use of volunteers.

Again, the observed relationships seem to function similarly for all types of organizations. There are two exceptions: disability groups have a net disadvantage concerning three of five indicators of organizational efficiency; and there is an additional disadvantage for childcare groups concerning the quota between clients and volunteers. The explanation is again fairly obvious and related to very specific characteristics of the clientele of these organizations, which demand and need personnel- and time-intensive care.

Conclusions

These analyses have been conducted in two local associative ecologies, embedded into two different welfare regimes: the UK and Germany. However, it is interesting to note that the impact of associative features on welfare outputs of very different kinds functions universally: i.e. the structural relationship between organizational design and output is the same no matter where the association is located. There is one exception to this rule: the promotion of activism. There is a stronger (internal group) culture of citizen engagement in Aberdeen. There are many more associations in Mannheim than Aberdeen. However, the lower associational vibrancy in the Scottish city is compensated for by higher rates of activism. Moreover, this systematic difference applies only to activists and the mobilization of activists from the membership pool. All other welfare outputs concerning volunteers and clients do not reveal any systemic variations.

To summarize, our results show that activism and volunteering, on the one hand, and service delivery, on the other, are inspired by different and partly contradictory organizational features. Some factors, which influence activism and volunteering, are a disadvantage to service delivery and vice versa (see also Greenstone and Peterson 1973). Moreover, organizational features that are a virtue in 'quantity production' can act as a barrier to efficiency. Only a few features fail to demonstrate contradictory behaviour: somewhat surprisingly the number of paid personnel seems to belong to the set of generally beneficial factors—albeit that there is some indication that its impact is not always positive with regard to efficiency. The width of organizational concerns is a weaker, less universal, but also less useful asset to different kinds of welfare outputs. An organization's bridging capacity is useful in several instances, and at least not harmful in other respects. The same could be said about features such as religious umbrella embeddedness, and surprisingly, financial dependence on public sources. All these very different features do not figure prominently in an explanation of welfare outputs. They have a restricted impact on single outputs. In other words, those features are helpful sometimes, and do no harm in the rest of the cases. However, their impact is not only very restricted, it is also not very large in comparison to the most influential features: membership size, size of paid personnel, and (partly) wealth. However, two of the most influential features show highly contradictory behaviour: extremely helpful in some instances, and extremely unhelpful in others.

The analyses of the impact of organizational features on welfare outputs revealed some counter-intuitive findings. Some characteristics that conventional wisdom and theory perceive as a barrier to the promotion of activism and volunteering, show a clear positive influence on welfare outputs of all kinds. First, professionalization in terms of employed personnel is positively related not only to service delivery but also to vol-unteering and activism. It seems that the culture of volunteering is best nourished in a professional environment of expertise and permanent staff. Second, hierarchical organizations and organizations embedded into religious super-structures are particularly efficient promoters of volunteering. In contrast to the claims of Putnam and others: hierarchy does not appear to be a problem. Third, the *ideal type* association that is organized democratically with ample institutional guarantees of elite accountability is fully

unrelated to welfare outputs. Our data suggests that issues of institutional design are irrelevant.

Based upon these analyses one must conclude that it would be difficult to design organizations that are both champions of volunteering and activism, and masters of service delivery. It is also highly unrealistic to expect the outputs of welfare organizations to be 'positive' in terms of quantity and efficiency, although there are few organizational features which are supportive of welfare performance in general. The most important features exclusively lead to very distinct outputs: there is a clear tradeoff between quantity *and* efficiency, between the promotion of volunteering and activism *and* the delivery of services. However, a second important theme emerges: many organizational features impact on welfare outputs: the exceptions are indicators related to the internal institutional set up of an association. An explanation of welfare outputs has to consider the very different nature of the universe of organizations. More importantly, an associative re-organization of welfare programmes must take into account that the world of welfare organizations is multi-faceted in its structural characteristics: an artificial creation or promotion of certain associative features will lead to very one-sided results in terms of welfare outputs.

Notes

1 The continuing relevance of this historical structure is clearly visible in contemporary Mannheim. Of all the kindergartens in Mannheim, 35 are run by the city, 58 by the Protestant Church, 44 by the Catholic Church and nine by others.

2 Esping-Andersen (1990:33) has argued that the UK scores nowhere near as highly as the Scandinavian countries (most notably Sweden)—he characterizes these countries as close to the *Social Democratic* end of the spectrum. The UK is seen as moving towards 'the liberal, residualist welfare state' akin to that found in the United States and Canada. In a recent and very impressive update of Esping-Andersen's model based upon a wide range of empirical material, the UK has been characterized as a 'liberal' welfare regime (Scharpf and Schmidt 2000:2).

3 We included voluntary associations of businesses (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Federation). These organizations may well undertake philanthropic civic activities, in addition to the political advancement of business interest.

4 Our approach shared several characteristics with the Johns Hopkins project, but there were some significant differences: we included many neighbourhood-based initiatives because they are an integral part of the civic life of a city and may be important in the (local) delivery of welfare services.

5 Kendall and Knapp (1996) also excluded Parent Teachers' Associations, leagues of hospital friends and trust funds operating in support of NHS facilities because, while these bodies were constitutionally independent and many enjoyed charitable status, they funded public sector activities and facilities. However, we included these bodies because they were voluntary, independent, and supported the welfare state through philanthropic contributions of time and money.

6 Associations received a short four-page mail questionnaire concerning crucial

features of their organizational makeup. The questionnaire tapped issues such as hierarchical embeddedness, neighbourhood relations, age, issue concerns, major group activities, size, target groups, formal structure, political contacts, inter-group contacts, wealth, and sources of income.

7 We classified all those groups that indicated that 'charity/welfare', 'health', 'disabled', 'pensioners/elderly' etc. was their most important concern as being 'Welfare Organizations' (see Table 5.1 for the full selection). Many groups found it too restrictive (and impossible) to select the one most important activity and several more stated that all their concerns were equally important. We re-analysed these cases in detail and classified those organizations that selected three or more welfare areas as being important functions as 'Welfare Organizations'. Through self-selection there were 594 Welfare Organizations in Mannheim and 214 in Aberdeen, including the multifaceted organizations the numbers rose to 715 and 265 respectively.

8 In the questionnaire we differentiated between full-time and part-time personnel. For the sake of simplicity responses to both items have been summarized.

6
The position of interest groups in Eastern European democracies

Maturing servicemen or Trojan horses?
Umut Korkut

This chapter examines the democracy-supporting potential of interest organizations in the new democracies of Eastern Europe. The fundamental assumption is that democratic civil society is a crucial arena to foster democratic values and attitudes among the members of democratizing polities (Gibson 2001; Pridham 2000). As such, this chapter argues that as long as civil society organizations are not internally democratic, they cannot serve as 'schools of democracy' for their members (de Tocqueville 1835/1998; Rohrschneider 1999:11). This school of democracy argument arises out of the notion that 'involvement in non-political associations evokes certain civic attitudes [among the citizenry] which are crucial for the health of democracy at large' (Roßteutscher 2002:514). Hence interest organizations, which act as schools of democracy, develop a healthy associational life, promote modern types of citizenship and engage in democracy building as well as creating channels for the articulation of interests and opportunities for participation (Diamond 1994:7–11).

Only non-hierarchical, participatory, internally democratic civil groups can instil virtues of democracy in their members. In other words, in order for civil society to act as schools of democracy, they themselves need to operate democratically (Kamrawa and O'Mora 1998). Attributes, such as organizational structures, routes of participation open for members or local/regional groups, routes of decision-making, and membership procedures reveal a great deal about the democratic potentials of civic groups. Horizontal decision-making procedures allocate an equal voice to all members, and—as Putnam (1993) argues—only if civil society is organized around horizontal bonds of mutual solidarity rather than hierarchical bonds of dependency will it produce trust and co-operation. Collective participation in decision-making shapes the 'consciousness', the interests, and the commitments of members as well as developing their understanding of the situation. On the other hand, elitist behaviour and vertical bonds within interest organizations are prone to hamper interest organizations' potentials as schools of democracy. In itself, a vertically organized civil society can be an obstacle to democracy (Berman 1997a; Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1998; Tarrow 1996). Civil societies are not formed to privilege certain strata or to tolerate rent-seeking behaviour (Riley 1992; Kamrawa and O'Mora 1998; Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1998). As such, undemocratically functioning civil society organizations may function as some form of 'Trojan horse' in consolidating democracies.

This chapter focuses on the type of civil society that can provide horizontal decision-

making procedures and chances of collective participation as *the democracy-supporting civil society*. The key objective of this study is to find out to what extent the context of political culture (within which civil society organizations are moulded) affects the democracy-supporting potential of organizations. In this particular respect, the chapter deals with the internal decision-making of trade unions, employers' organizations and agricultural producers' associations as well as agricultural trade unions from Hungary, Poland and Romania. The aim is to examine the effects of historical legacies from communism on the organizations' functioning during the post-communist contexts. This choice of countries is based on the shared communist past in all three countries, while taking into consideration variations in applications of communism (Rose 1998).

The hypothesis is that the historical legacies from the communist period still affect the role of leaders in interest organizations and the availability of routes of participation for rank and file in the internal decision-making of their organizations. As such, these legacies hinder the development of democracy-supporting civil society. In order to test this hypothesis, this chapter will first provide a brief discussion on general modes of policy making and previous attempts to increase participation in the countries under study during communism. The discussion is followed by a presentation of data gathered through interviews regarding internal decision-making within post-communist interest organizations in Hungary, Poland and Romania. Overall, the study will illustrate the effect of the historical legacies on the context within which the interest groups under investigation are operating and how these groups are affected by their context.

Context matters: the communist political culture and its possible effects on the internal configurations of civil society during the democratization period

More than a decade after initial democratic transitions, the quality of consolidating democracy in Eastern Europe is under discussion. Despite the fact that institutional and formal infrastructures of democracy are in place, the mode in which institutions operate raises questions from a democratic point of view (Korkut 2002a). Some students of democratic consolidation have argued that a mass emergence of democrats can be observed only after a long process of democratization when the democratic political culture permeates all walks of life (Agh 1995, 2001; Mainwaring *et al.* 1992). In this context, however, there has been a tendency in the political science literature to assess the development of civil society in the region solely through looking at sheer numbers of organizations. Nevertheless, studies have shown also that quite often a small number of individuals rather than the masses comprise civil society organizations in Eastern Europe.[1] Moreover, even if citizens join organizations at large, most of the time it is not the citizens' wish to participate in the daily politics but the citizens' distance and feeling of exclusion from daily politics which determine their likelihood of joining social movements (Davis 1999).

This chapter highlights one fundamental obstruction towards the development of civil society during the democratization period: habits or behaviours that develop as a result of citizens' earlier social experiences shape everyday actions of individuals (Bourdieu 1990,

1994). Hence, various imprinted ideologies, goals and strategies might affect new perceptions of civil society actors even under new conditions (Kamenitsa 1998:314–15; Vajda 1993). Of course, communism was not one-dimensional and unidirectional in the countries under study. Each country has had its own particular experience with communism. Even within each country, there have been different periods of communism. Still, the argument is that the experiences of the Eastern Europeans were quite different from what was required for setting up new democratic institutions (Marody 1991; Rychard 1991). The following section seeks to shed some light on this distinct experience through demonstrating the general nature of relations between the communist regimes and interest groups and the role of the *intelligentsia* under communist regimes.

Relations between the regime and interest groups under communism

Right after the Second World War, all communist regimes were uniformly oppressive. As was quite common, in these systems the party and government functioned in concert in controlling, mobilizing and leading the society. Society and its segments were treated as 'masses' to be directed following instructions from above. In essence, communist states fully dominated interest groups to the extent that they lost their identity and were conquered by the State. Hence, interest groups were at best a means of mass coercion to multiply state power or serve as transmission belts. The party and official trade unions were interwoven with the State in sharing the monopoly of coercive force (Fellegi 1992). The motto of policy making was that, 'while interest groups were an indispensable element of socialist democracies as the institutional expression of group interests, they should still adopt the guidance of society (meaning the communist party) as an integrating element' (Lakatoš 1965 in Skilling 1965/1966:444). As a result, the party absorbed both the State and society with the help of these transmission belts. Therefore, the system was set in such a way that no societal power could emerge and persist outside the control of the communist party (Fejtő 1996; Miłosz 1981; Verdery 1996). Rather than the communist ideology, however, it was the patron-client relationship among a closed circle of elites that was the means to sustain authority (Schöpflin 1979:132–3; Fontaine 1995; Tismaneanu 1991).

The main features of the relationship between the State and interest groups, and the terms of policy making were as follows: 1) the right of the State to define social interests could not be controlled from below; 2) the organizational-institutional frameworks within which social and economic processes were formulated would be recognized as legitimate by the State, if and only if the operation of these frameworks were determined from above; and 3) the rules of the game to implement policies in the name of the public interest were specified by the State. In this formulation, the outcomes of the policy processes were contingent on the outcomes of struggles between the various branches of the political apparatus, which were intertwined with different particularistic interests (Bruszt 1988).

In this context, the process of decision-making on a given issue was often called the black box. On paper, at the central level it was normally the *Politburo* (or its functional equivalent) and at the lower levels it was either the executive committee of a local council or a local party bureau that were responsible for policy making. Yet, the conduct

of this process was usually very secretive. Administration was an integral part of the implementation process, and could—indeed *should* according to most communist ideologies—involve the masses. Enabling this involvement was often primarily the responsibility of the party, and ordinary citizens were frequently encouraged to keep an eye on each other's performance, either as individuals or via mass organizations. The result, however, was one of the best examples of *formal elite-based pluralism,* where officially acknowledged interests only pretended to represent the real interests (Wesołowski 1991:79–80; Zhang 1994). This method of policy making, after all, cultivated various elite structures and embedded those with proper cultural and possible political capital into the system (Hankiss 1991).

As regards mass participation as part of the internal decision-making of organizations, the 1970s saw pioneering attempts to institute increased participation through the formation or invigoration of workers' councils in Hungary, Romania and Poland (Makó and Héthy 1979; Nelson 1980; Stefanowski 1977 in Biełasiak 1981). Mechanisms of mass participation were implemented to give an image of increasing citizens' sense of involvement in socio-economic affairs, but without significantly altering regime policy preferences. Yet participation, as the communists saw it, should have been 'of the right sort'. In this context, while the 1970s stressed the successful adaptation of politics to society, as we will see shortly, the main idea was to facilitate the successful adaptation of society to unchanged paternalistic relations (Bruszt 1988:45).

This 'pseudoparticipation', therefore, was beneficial to the political authorities by forging new links between the public and the State. As part of an attempt to develop socialist democracy, the regimes were—in theory—involved in 'the improvement of already existing patterns of representative democracy, the expansion of direct participation by the people in state administration and the intensification of workers' participation in economic management' (Zawadzki 1977 in Biełasiak 1981:87; Holmes 1983:247; see also Nemes 1978; Zaharescu 1978). At its best, however, this was 'purposive socialization' in which a particular agency consciously and openly strives to instil particular orientations (Kavanagh 1972). The result was more careful guidance and supervision by the communist authorities to educate workers as the process was conceived too complex for the workers themselves. The implications were such that the leadership was more committed to maintaining control over decision-making even as opportunities for popular participation were extended.[2] Hence, these attempts to correct the missing participation were solely attempts to correct the 'image' of the party, which at its best led more *intelligentsia* workers to represent the blue collar workers at the communist party meetings (Biełasiak 1981:91–2, 103).

Inevitably, a sub-group of *intelligentsia* and the party bureaucracy with their exclusive possession of cultural capital turned into a new *caste sociale* and used the party as an instrument to consolidate their positions (Konrád and Szelényi 1979). This elite closed its ranks to outsiders (Fehér *et al* 1983), and the communist model came to be characterized by hierarchy and subordination (Csanádi 1997). Many communists enjoyed their elitist, privileged position in society, and felt that by encouraging participation over which they then could exert considerable control, they could appear to be moving towards communism and self-administration without undermining their positions to a greater extent. The result was that the rhetoric of socialist democracy greatly surpassed the actual

implementation of participation opportunities for citizens in their neighbourhoods and workers in factories (Biełasiak 1981:104).

The effect of this context on the citizenry at large was difficult to measure. Nevertheless, some surveys carried out under communism gave us some grounds to come up with inferences on the general effect of this context on citizen behaviour. A study on Hungary in the mid-1980s showed that ambiguities and contradictions characterized the various types of political orientations. The most typical elements of the citizens' political orientation were summarized by the sentiments: 'Politics was important in the abstract, not important in the concrete'; and 'Democracy exists in general but not in particular' (Bruszt 1988:43). The public had no institutionalized relationship with politics, they related to it only in general. By their own assessment of the situation in Hungary, citizens were 'consumers' of politics over which they had little influence (Bruszt 1988:59). Out of these results, one should pay more attention to the respondents' contrast between the 'abstract' and 'concrete' and 'particular' and 'general'. The following part of this section will shed more light on the possible reasons for this contrast.

At the societal level, under communism there was an ongoing coexistence of the ideological versus the actual society (Hankiss 1991:308). The societies sought to develop strategies of adaptation in response to the transformative policies of the communist regimes. Although the type of communist state determined the extent, it is plausible to argue that people had separate lives in their private sphere (micro-sphere) as opposed to the communist system (macro-level). Therefore, on the surface everything could have looked normal with classical lip service to communist values. On the other hand, in private spheres once people were out of the symbolic acceptance of values, the situation would have been very different. The institutions (mezzo-level) placed between the micro- and macro-spheres were perceived as alien, and informalities and personal links replaced alien institutions of the system. In this context, people's constant shift between the micro- and macro-spheres generated tensions and dispersed behaviour towards issues (Koralewicz-Zębik 1985 in Rychard 1993:107; Wńuk-Lipiński 1982).

Another process of adaptation was: 'adaptation through opposition'. This was a sub- or semiconscious process, where the demarcation line between adaptational and oppositional components to communist tactics was very much blurred (Frentzel-Zagorska 1990:762). This was an impact of latent socialism, where there was no overt, deliberate, and organized attempt to inculcate values any longer, yet the values were transmitted nevertheless (Holmes 1983:84). This adaptation became especially embedded and inherent with regard to the dissident elite since they were brought up under communism. This process of adaptation made the dissident elite act according to the make up of the political adversary (Szczepański 1991:214).

Hence, it appears that the communist period did not provide the legacies needed for the emergence of democracy-supporting civil society in post-communist contexts. Hypothetically, communist legacies affect the configurations of the internal decision-making of organizations under investigation in post-communist contexts. They affect:

1 interest groups' carrying out of internal decision-making from above;
2 various elite networks embedded into the internal structures;
3 as an indirect result of the second, they affect interest group leaders' utilization of their

position in organizations for their future career prospects;

4 as well as symbolic attempts at involving grass root members into internal decision-making;

5 also widespread hierarchy, informalities and elitism in the internal structures;

6 and, finally, the continuing contrast between the 'abstract' versus 'concrete' and 'general' versus 'specific' in terms of evaluations of internal democracy.

In order to test this hypothesis, in the empirical part of this chapter, the following will be assessed: 1) the question of whether interest organizations invite their members to discuss governmental policy proposals and in what ways; 2) the levels of autonomy of the leadership in interest organizations from their members regarding internal decision-making; 3) levels of hierarchy within interest organizations; 4) whether presidents of the organizations were elected and how many candidates were running; 5) evaluation of statements related to participation; 6) determinants of the success of an interest organization; and finally, 7) the ranks assigned to various internal decision-making channels regarding their impact on internal decision-making. In a second section this chapter presents some quotations from interviews to support the study's fundamental hypothesis that communist legacy is still present in the minds of the respondents and that this legacy has an impact on the recreation of civil society organizations in a way that is unfavourable to social capital building and the school of democracy.

The effect of context on internal configurations in interest organizations: an empirical analysis

The following findings are based on the results of 62 interviews with either the presidents or executive committee members of trade union confederations and federations as well as employers' organizations, agricultural producers' associations and agricultural workers' unions in Hungary, Poland and Romania. The fieldwork lasted from March 2001 to August 2001. The questionnaire addressed both qualitative and quantitative aspects of issues under investigation with an almost equal distribution of standardized and open-ended questions. After the questionnaire, informal talks continued with interviewees on various matters relating to the position of civil society in the new democracies of Eastern Europe. Also, further data were gathered through a thorough study of internal statutes of interest groups, where and when available. In Hungary, the questionnaire was mostly introduced in Hungarian, whereas in Romania English and French were widely used. In Poland, however, the interviews were conducted with the help of a translator.

Accounts of internal decision-making processes

Quite related to internal democracy within interest organizations are the questions of how and whether interest groups incorporate their members into internal decision-making and convey them information regarding governmental policy proposals. The interviews showed that almost all groups under investigation contacted their members on policy proposals. The most common routes were conferences or executive committee meetings.[3] Therefore, on the surface everything looked as expected from democratically operating

organizations. Nevertheless, answers to further questions illustrated that conferences did not take place very frequently and did not last long. In almost all groups interviewed, conferences took place every four or five years and lasted only a few days. In the interviews, executive committee and presidium meetings were also mentioned as other possible routes of involving members in internal decision-making. Yet, upon consulting internal statutes of interest organizations, it could be suggested that secondary decision-making bodies were extremely self-contained and oligarchic (Korkut 2002b). Even detailed accounts of proceedings were unlikely to be published, although decisions were briefly mentioned in the union press. Hence, incorporating members into internal decision-making through conferences seemingly does not go much beyond a symbolic gesture.

The next step was inquiring about the levels of autonomy from, and dependency on, members and the levels of hierarchy in internal decision-making in Hungarian, Polish and Romanian interest groups. Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 show the results.

All three countries present similarly hierarchical interest group structures. Nevertheless, Hungarian and Romanian respondents featured relatively higher levels of dependence on their members than their Polish counterparts. Hierarchical group structures might be understandable in the light of a classic study by Michels on oligarchical tendencies in big organizations, such as political parties. Yet, this is no reason not to question elitist tendencies in organizations.

Table 6.1 Levels of autonomy within interest groups, number of groups

	Very autonomous	Autonomous	Somewhat autonomous	Somewhat dependent	Dependent	Very dependent
Hungary	2	1	2	2	11	8
Poland	3	4	1	3	4	0
Romania	5	4	4	1	4	6

Table 6.2 Levels of hierarchy within interest groups, number of groups

	Hierarchical	Somewhat hierarchical	Somewhat non-hierarchical	Non-hierarchical
Hungary	9	9	2	2
Poland	9	3	2	1
Romania	11	5	3	2

Following was an enquiry on whether presidents were elected and how many candidates ran in the elections for presidency. The presidents of all groups under investigation were elected through secret voting procedures, with the exception of five Romanian organizations. For the majority of organizations, however, the elections were one-candidate elections with an overt tendency to re-elect the incumbent president. It also

appeared that organizations assigned different bodies with the election of presidents and the management of conferences, the presidium or executive committee meetings. Some respondents stated that there was a general preference for low numbers of candidates for presidency due to inclinations towards a limited pluralism within organizations.[4] Therefore, elections for presidential posts were mostly symbolic and fell short of serving as concrete aspects of internal democracy and accountability.

The questionnaire also presented a series of statements to the respondents to capture their assessment of some statements on participation. Below is a summarized evaluation of those statements relating to participation in internal decision-making. The statements are classified as follows in Table 6.3.[5]

The findings, first and foremost, illustrate that 'mean calculations' on statements relating to participation are extremely close to each other both across the three countries and within each country. Table 6.3 illustrates this very close distribution of means. We can also see that respondents agreed with almost all statements, considering that on a scale from 1 to 7 almost all mean calculations are higher than 3.50. The only two variants were the 'pro-elite individualist hierarchy seeker' option in Hungary and the 'extreme pro-democracy egalitarian' option in Poland. Therefore, it is possible to talk about an 'acquiescence effect': agreeing with all statements relating to participation, regardless of their negative or positive content. We can possibly infer that terms relating to participation are pretty much abstract in the minds of the respondents. On the basis of mean calculations on different statements, we can conclude the following: in Hungarian interest groups, pro-democrats/extreme pro-democrats and egalitarians types were more common. This suggests that the Hungarian respondents have a more visible tendency to agree with opening decision-making procedures to members. For the Polish respondents, however, there is a big difference between extreme and pro-democrats. Respondents think that members can be allowed to take part in decision-making only in certain cases. The Romanian picture is quite similar to the Hungarian picture. There is not a big difference between extreme prodemocrats and pro-democrats in Romania either. On the other hand, egalitarianism is more appreciated by the Hungarian respondents. In Poland and in Romania, however, hierarchy seekers are predominant. Still, in Poland and Romania, three of the highest mean values were produced either by pro-elite or pro-expert individualist hierarchy seeker statements. Therefore, it is plausible to say that there is also a visible

Table 6.3 Classification of statements and mean values per country

Classification	Original items	Hungary	Poland	Romania
Pro-democratic/egalitarian	Internal decision-making should be open to all the members when it comes to certain policies	5.62	6.00	4.79
Extreme pro-democratic/egalitarian	Internal decision-making should be open to all members on every question all the time	5.29	2.77	5.13
Pro-expert	Internal decision-making should be open	4.75	4.69	5.80

individualist/hierarchy seeker	to those members who have the greatest expertise on the issues in question			
Pro-elite/hierarchy seeker	Internal decision-making should be open to those members who make the most contribution to your organization (time/money/voluntary work, etc.)	4.14	5.17	4.79
Pro-hierarchy/hierarchy seeker	An interest group works best if the decisions are institutionalized in central bodies other than subunits	3.50	4.00	5.00
Pro-elite individualist/hierarchy seeker	Enlarging participation in internal decision-making hinders efficient decision-making	3.05	4.14	5.04

inclination among the respondents to limit participation into internal decision-making.

When factors affecting the success of an interest group are evaluated, however, elitist tendencies become more overt. Table 6.4 shows the country evaluations on these factors.[6]

In all countries under investigation, 'skilled leadership' is mentioned as the most important factor for the success of an interest group.[7] 'Skilled leadership' received the highest mean score in Poland, followed by Romania and Hungary. This is in particular contrast to the tradition of civil society in Poland, where the KOR and Solidarity movements presented the only cases in Eastern Europe of massive elite and mass cooperation (Korkut 2002c). Plausibly, for Poland in particular the explanation for this overt preference for elitism can be seen as a direct result of 'adaptation through opposition' (see above).

Another sign of pro-elitism is the ranks appropriated to 'involve many experts in internal decision-making' for the success of an interest group. This is certainly very important for the Romanian respondents, followed by the Hungarians and the Poles. As such, quality is mentioned more often than quantity by interest groups in affecting success. Yet in line with the egalitarian answers mentioned above in Hungary, the number of members has been stated as an important factor right after skilled leadership. Despite respondents' hierarchical description of their organizations, hierarchical decision-making structures did not attract high scores for the success of an interest group.

Links between the political elite and interest group leaders

Alongside visible levels of elitism embedded in the internal decision-making of the organizations, it seems as if the leaderships of these organizations are also in a conspicuous relationship with the political parties. Table 6.5 gives an evaluation of responses regarding links between civil society and the political arena.

What Table 6.5 shows is that at the aggregate level more than one-third of all labour groups either have political links or have a member from their executive committee with political aspirations. Table 6.5 also

Table 6.4 Factors affecting the success of an interest organization, mean values

	Skilled ladership	Number of members	Involving experts in decision-making	Hierarchical decision-making structures
Hungary	2.35	2.43	3.76	4.90
Poland	1.67	3.08	3.00	4.89
Romania	2.00	3.43	2.70	4.19

Note
Cell entries are mean values on a scale from 1 (agree strongly) to 8 (disagree strongly).

Tabk 6.5 Interest groups with political links, number of groups

	Open political links	Co-operate with political parties	Member of its executive committee running in the elections	Total number of interviews
Hungary	7	7	8	24
Poland	11	7	9	14
Romania	8	1	8	24

suggests that there are shifts from the civil sphere into the political sphere. In this context, the president of *Spiru Haret* teachers' trade union from Romania, asserted that skilled leadership and shifts towards the political arena are beneficial for their organization to establish good contacts with the ministries. Nevertheless, as suggested by quite a few other respondents, those leaders who shifted from the civil society into the political arena do not reciprocate support for their organizations once they have become politicians. This raises the question of whether leaders of interest organizations in Eastern Europe use their positions to pursue some other career ambitions.

Hypothetically, interest organizations' leaders establish political links in two steps and in this process they make extensive use of available social and cultural capitals.

Step 1: cultural capital and its transformation into politically relevant social capital
Social capital is a by-product of social interactions and networks. There are two types of social capital produced within interest groups. La Due Lake and Huckfeldt (1998) introduced the first one and called it 'politically-relevant social capital'. The production of politically relevant social capital is a function of the political expertise within an individual network of relations and the frequency of political interaction within the network. The second one is 'participatory social capital'. Participatory social capital, however, is created through ordinary member participation into the internal decision-making of an organization. Voting[8] as well as permanent links between presidency and the rank and file[9] provide the basis of this form of social capital.

In this context, the interviews showed that possessing expertise (cultural capital)

increases one's chances to acquire executive positions within the interest groups. Cultural capital, therefore, becomes germane to be transformed into politically relevant social capital at the interest group level.[10] A member of the Council of Presidents of MOSZ (National Federation of Agricultural Co-operators and Producers) in Hungary asserted that local branches and ordinary members, without expertise, were being only obstacles to a fast and swift process of decision-making. That was why the head of general office from MSZOSZ (Hungarian Trade Union Confeder-ation) thought that 'decision-making should reside where the information resides. If the information is at the central level, then decision-making should happen at the central level. Hence, as the manager-president of the KISOSZ (National Federation of Traders and Caterers, Hungary) thought, hierarchy in decision-making was a derivative of expertise. In contrast, however, participatory social capital was very much hindered by embedded elitism in the internal decision-making of organizations.

Step 2: politically relevant social capital and cultural capital, and their transformation into political capital

In Eastern Europe, in the absence of well-institutionalized policy making (Korkut 2002a), governments either attempt to weaken interest groups and exclude them from policy making or they strengthen and include them in policy making through co-opting them into political movements (Bruszt 1994; Evans 1992). A long-term engagement with a political party becomes an option for interest groups (Korkut 2002a), given their belief that an engagement as such provides them with higher levels of policy effect at the governmental level. This rapprochement also brings the interest organization elite close to the political society (Neumann 1994). Table 6.5 illustrates the extent of this rapprochement in the region. The 1996 and 2000 elections in Romania and the 1997 elections in Poland saw extreme examples of this. Especially in the latter case, the *Solidarity* trade union confederation itself turned into a political party.

Professional qualifications are always important for politicians, and the elite from interest organizations possess such qualifications.[11] That is how the political parties become inclined to recruit people from interest group ranks. In this way, they can attract well-trained people into their ranks as well as possibly attracting the members of interest organizations—where these well-trained people previously served—as voters. To that extent, one respondent argued without any hesitation that interest groups should be a school for training future politicians.[12] The implication of this process was to shift the most qualified members from interest groups into the political sphere.

Most of the time, members of interest organizations see this shift as a chance to provide them with better chances of interest representation once their people are elected.[13] Nevertheless, there are two questions one should ask regarding this process: 1) whether those elected reciprocate their previous organizations after being elected and 2) whether these alliances increase policy satisfaction of the interest organizations which sent their members into the political ranks.

It seems that in the countries under investigation those elected into the political sphere are unwilling or at their best slow to reciprocate their previous organizations.[14] The previous Hungarian Minister of Labour who was formerly the president of the trade union confederation LIGA was a typical example of this. He was elected from the ranks

of FIDESZ-MPP in Hungary and despite trade unions' expectancies, his tenure in office proved to be one of the worst for relations between the government and trade unions in Hungary.[15] In the case of Poland, on the other hand, the previous parliament saw 46 members of the *Sejm* elected from trade unions.[16] This period also saw the *Solidarity* trade union confederation and some agricultural interest organizations ending up as members of electoral coalitions. Still, this very same period proved itself to be one of the worst in terms of relations between interest groups and the government in Poland. The policy satisfaction of Polish interest organizations with the government of this period was very low (Korkut 2002a).

The last case, Romania, also experienced very well established links between the political parties and interest groups. After the 1996 elections, Ciorbea, a former leader of the trade union confederation CNSLR-Fratia, became the Prime Minister. Before getting into politics, Ciorbea was very critical of the lack of vertical communications between the grassroots members and the union leadership, and alliances with political parties. To his mind, these alliances reduced the unions once more to transmission belts in Romania (Stefan 1995). His party, the Democratic Convention (DC), nevertheless brought together a wide platform of civil society organizations and started off with a consociational rhetoric for Romania. The DC, however, soon turned into an elitist organization[17] and its term in office was continuously plagued by social protests. Under these circumstances, trade union support for Ciorbea's government made many analysts note the huge gap between the views of union leaders and the ordinary dues-paying members in Romania.[18]

The conclusion is that this relationship between the interest groups' leaders and the political parties only benefits political parties and elites with suitable qualifications[19] to shift into politics. That is how the transformation of politically relevant social capital and cultural capital takes place.[20] In turn, a massive transfer of skilled staff and experts to the government (Mungiu-Pippidi 2001:244) is the price that civil society pays. Although it would be extreme to say that the relationship between the transmission organizations and the communist party is repeating itself in terms of white-collar *intelligentsia* workers shifting into the communist party pretending to represent blue-collar workers (Bruszt 1988), one can still see a similar framework regarding relations between the leaders of interest organizations rich in cultural capital and political parties.

Symbolic or concrete: where do the borders of democracy-supporting civil society lie in the new democracies of Eastern Europe?

In general, internal decision-making seems to rest on three major and three minor pillars in organizations. Major pillars are the conferences,[21] the president and the secondary decision-making organs.[22] Experts, local branches and ordinary members are the minor pillars of internal decision-making. The 'members' category covers ordinary members, federations, branches, professionals and representations, depending on the group under investigation.

If we are to expect 'conferences' as the most democratic means of decision-making, then the Hungarian and Romanian interest groups appear to be democratic: more so than their Polish counterparts. Yet as was argued above, conferences take place quite

infrequently in interest groups and decision-making rests on some unaccountable secondary decision-making bodies almost all of the time. Local branches, experts and ordinary members do not appear effective in internal decision-making as regards Table 6.6. Nevertheless, many respondents asserted that local branches and ordinary members were already included in internal decision-making through conferences. Some respondents stated that local branches have the highest rank concerning decision-making procedures at the local levels. As we look at the internal decision-making structures, however, it appears that local branches are influenced heavily by the decisions of central authorities. In turn, local branches, ordinary members or federations can barely establish a limited influence. More over, their influence is rather indirect: only through sending delegates to local and national conferences. Yet, quite often, these delegates do not even elect members of main decision-making bodies.[23]

The informal talks, however, allowed me to see what the respondents thought in concrete (rather than symbolic) terms about the aspects of members' rights and roles in internal group decision-making procedures. It appeared that in the formal questionnaire, a number of respondents paid lip service and did not say much beyond the abstract. Some respondents, for example, first praised the need for involving members in internal decision-making while immediately inserting limits. Or else they argued that, in theory, interest groups should provide their members with opportunities, but this did not mean that they should give them the right to decide in practical terms.[24] One respondent expressed the view that only the smallest number of decision takers are needed in internal decision-making in order to avoid controversy.[25] As the talks continued, the difference between the abstract and concrete aspects of internal democracy in the minds of the respondents became much clearer.

Table 6.6 List of internal decision-making components, mean values

	Conferences	*Executive committee*	*President*	*Local branches*	*Experts*	*Ordinary members*
Hungary	1.27	1.91	2.70	3.29	3.84	3.94
Poland	2.00	1.53	1.77	3.88	4.38	5.33
Romania	1.39	1.90	2.41	3.45	3.59	4.57

Answering the questionnaire, some respondents[26] first ranked conferences as the most crucial mechanism of internal decision-making and put presidents or the secondary bodies after the conferences in terms of their effects. Nevertheless, during the informal talks following the questionnaire, the same respondents showed an elitist attitude towards internal decision-making with an entrenched belief in sustaining vertical bonds of dependency regarding their relations with members. In the words of one of the members of the Council of Presidents of MOSZ, it was 'the role of the elites to direct ordinary members towards *real interest*. Elites can provide members with opportunities, but this did not mean that [they] should give the members the right to decide'. The president of VASAS (Steel Workers' Trade Union Federation) from Hungary, emphasized that the

tactical procedures of their union should be exclusive for the presidency.

This emphasis on the importance of presidency in terms of decision-making was a repeating theme. The president of the OPZZ Miners' Trade Union Federation from Poland and the manager-president of the KISOSZ from Hungary also emphasized the predominant role of presidency in internal decision-making, despite their earlier answers to the questionnaire. The president of Agro-Fratia (National Federation of Agricultural Food Industry) from Romania joined the circle by arguing that 'presidents did not have to consult anyone in terms of internal decision-making'. This role attributed to the presidents went as far as 'deciding about the true intentions of members' in the words of the International Affairs representative of VDSZSZ (Free Trade Union of Railway Workers) from Hungary. It seemed as if the avant-garde role of the elite to lead the masses as it used to be under communism was still quite entrenched in the minds of the respondents. One more characteristic that these respondents had in common was their assessment of the conferences as the most important internal decision-making organ in the formal questionnaire. This leads one to believe that there is quite a gap between the symbolic accounts of internal decision-making versus the concrete. This attitude is quite clear in the words of one vice-president of VOSZ (National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers, Hungary):

> Members are always invited to talk about common problems, but members cannot take part in everyday decisions. We have open elec– tions to discourage people from running. In any case, why Kis János is better than Nagy János. We don't want opposition or too many quarrels.

Interestingly enough, he still ranked conferences as the most crucial mechanism of internal decision-making and responded that the elections for the presidential post were through secret voting in the formal questionnaire. Nevertheless, despite all the praise for presidents, one respon-dent[27] was open enough to say that 'presidents are not easily removable in Hungary, despite all the disappointment with the civil sector'.

Two last examples from Romania illustrate the almost predetermined role of presidents in their organizations. It is worth noting that the first respondent can only develop his arguments on participation of members while implicitly emphasizing the role of the president, while the second respondent cannot argue convincingly that her organization has internal democracy without mentioning a dominant role for the president:

> Conference of the federation is just like revolutionary mass. It is the general meeting of the electors. Each elector elects some Cartel-Sprenza member. To identify with the trade union, this is very important. Voting makes people members of the trade union in their minds. In our decision-making, affiliated trade union leaders are also very important. Presidents on the other hand do not have a right to vote. If I were to decide, I would have gone for electing presidents not only through 16 federations, but also through everyone active at the factory level. There are two types of president. One is the leader and the other is the conductor. The conductor is the representative of the workers. Yet, the leader shapes the membership demands.
>
> (Vice-president of the BNS trade union confederation and president of Cartel

Sprenza Metal Workers' Union, Romania)[28]

> Everyone is in a position to propose something. Conference makes the final decisions. You cannot do without permanent connections between the members and the leadership. *Succursales*[29] can make decisions concerning their own fields. If anything more, they control central bodies. Within the organization, we expect everyone to voice his or her interests. This would increase our credibility. Still, our statute says that presidents can take certain decisions only by themselves.
>
> (Vice-president, Nutricomb, Agricultural Producers' Organization, Romania)[30]

These views on decision-making to be carried out by the presidents or the secondary bodies of organizations can be attributed to the expertise these bodies possessed or the charisma they had.[31] The president of the National Union of Farmers from Poland argued that 'at the central level, members were better informed and with better expertise. Also, they had better links with ministries, governments and parliament. That was why decisions should reside at the central levels'. The Head of General Office from the MSZOSZ Hungarian Trade Union Confederation also presented a similar stance regarding this issue. Another group of respondents from Poland[32] stated that the number of participants in internal decision-making should be limited to those with resources. The crudest example of this attitude went as follows: 'We have currently 250–500 people in the *zjazd*.[33] That is the main decision-making body. But we would like to decrease this number to 32 in order to make it more efficient' (Chief Director, Association of Chambers of Agriculture, Poland). 'On political terms, it would be very difficult if all members are contacted. Even at *zjazd,* policy proposals are discussed in smaller groups' (President, The Independent Autonomous Trade Union of Individual Farmers— *Solidarity,* Poland).

Conclusion

To conclude, despite some symbolic attempts at inclusion, internal decision-making channels are closed to members. Especially, the informal interviews showed the importance of elite networks in determining internal policies of organizations. Therefore, member participation does not occur in practical terms, but remains only on the abstract theoretical level. In this context, the first conclusion is that in actual terms interest organizations are run in a spirit of elitism and non-participatory hierarchical thinking. Civil society in the countries under investigation has not yet travelled far beyond the symbolic participation of the communist period.

There were some respondents, who attributed the elite dominance in decision-making to expertise. Although this is a legitimate argument, the chapter could show that interest organization elites use this cultural capital and leadership positions in order to further their long-term career projects. There is a constant shift from the leadership of civil society organizations into politics. Nevertheless, those who join political parties do not necessarily provide reciprocal benefits to their previous organizations. Hence, the second

conclusion is that there are remarkable elite strata who, beyond superficial agreement to democratic values, are driven by career orientations. Similarly to communism, there are still some elites who pretend to represent the masses while paving the way for their own careers.

In this context, one can see similarities to the communist period in these countries. As one respondent noted:

> Mentalities do not change very fast, as long as the socio-economic situation is similar to that of communism. Hence, what we have is democratic feudalism. Feudals need vassals. That is why political parties approach us. Our leadership becomes the vassal and everybody in our organization works for the vassal, not for the general interest.
>
> (Vice-president, CNSLR-Fratia, Trade Union Confederation, Romania)

This chapter was a discussion on the democracy-supporting potential of interest organizations. The interest organizations in Hungary, Poland and Romania were studied in order to see how the context within which these organizations are moulded affects their potential to become schools of democracy for their members. The fundamental argument was that in order to become schools of democracy, interest groups need to operate democratically through horizontal bonds and collective participation. The general context within which they operate is extremely crucial in determining the development of democracy-supporting civil society in new democracies. As such, this chapter provided us with firm grounds to question the civil society rhetoric as regards to the cultivation of civic attitudes in new democracies.

Notes

1 In another study on Hungary with environmentalists, I came across a distinct separation between local activists and professionals in the environmental NGO sector in Eastern Europe. I discuss this issue in detail in Korkut, 2001. Similarly, see Luong and Weinthal, 1999.

2 In other words, a decision designed to give greater job satisfaction to the workers can be taken, even though these workers have not made any overt attempts to influence the decision-makers (see Nelson 1980).

3 Presidium answers are also included in the executive committee.

4 Vice-president, VOSZ, National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers; Manager-president, KISOSZ, National Federation of Traders and Caterers.

5 I owe an earlier version of this classification to Eero Olli.

6 The question presented the following factors to the respondent: skilled leadership; number of members; financial resources; involving many experts in decision-making; establishing umbrella organizations; hierarchical decision-making structures; personal links between the ministries and the interest groups; and dependence on political parties in opposition.

7 Among the labour groups, 11 out of 18 in Hungary, five out of seven in Poland, and ten out of 12 in Romania stated that 'skilled leadership' is very important for the

success of an interest group.

8 Vice-president, BNS, trade union confederation; President, Cartel Sprenza, Metal Workers' Union, Romania.

9 Vice-president, Nutricomb, Agricultural Producers' Organization, Romania.

10 President, Meridian Trade Union Confederation, Romania; President, VASAS Federation of Hungarian Metal Workers, Hungary.

11 President, Railway Workers' Federation, Hungary; Vice-President, Nutricomb, Agricultural Producers' Organization, Romania; President, ANAA, The National Association of Trade Union Activists, Romania.

12 Member of the Council of Presidents, MOSZ, National Federation of Agricultural Co-operators and Producers, Hungary.

13 President, Agro-Fratia Food Workers' Union, Romania; President, FSIA Trade Union Federation of Food Industry, Romania; Vice-President, CNSLR-Fratia, Trade Union Confederation, Romania; President, Meridian Trade Union Confederation, Romania; President, KDSZSZ, Transportation Workers, Trade Union Federation, Hungary; Manager-President, Solidarity Miners' and Energy Workers' Secretariat, Poland; Vice-President, Solidarity Trade Union Confederation, Poland; International Relations Representative, VDSZSZ, Free Trade Unions of Railway Workers, Hungary; Vice-President, Metal Workers' Trade Union, OPZZ, Poland; President, Independent Autonomous Trade Union of Independent Farmers, Solidarity, Poland.

14 President, Spiru Haret, Teachers' Trade Union Federation, Romania; President, Meridian Trade Union Confederation, Romania; Head of International Relations Department, LIGA, Trade Union Confederation, Hungary; Head of International Relations Department, Workers' Councils' Trade Union Confederation, Hungary; Vice-President, Solidarity Trade Union Confederation, Poland.

15 International Relations Officer, VDSZSZ, Free Trade Union of Railway Workers, Hungary; Head of International Relations Department, LIGA, Trade Union Confederation, Hungary.

16 Vice-President, Federation of Mining Workers, OPZZ, Poland.

17 Vice-President, CNSLR-Fratia, Trade Union Confederation, Romania.

18 Nine o'clock, May 23, 2001.

19 President, Meridian Trade Union Confederation, Romania; Executive Manager, UGIR 1903, Economic Centre for Business and Services, Romania; Executive Director, AOAR, The Businessmen's Association of Romania, Romania.

20 President, 'Hangya', Agricultural Producers' Association, Director of International and Training Affairs, IPOSZ, Hungarian Association of Craftsmen's Corporations, Hungary; Deputy-President, OPZZ, Trade Union Confederation, Poland.

21 Conferences are general assemblies or general congresses of interest groups. It is worth noting that interest groups tend to differentiate between congresses and conferences, as the former happens in-between two conferences.

22 As it will appear in the later discussion, these are as follows: operational board; board of directors; national council; steering committee; college of directors; confederal committee; coordination committee; management council; general committee of directors; managerial college; senate; general assembly; presidium; grand presidium; main board; syndical council; collective of co/presidents;

confederation board; and council of affiliates. All secondary organs have been re-grouped under the executive committee in the statistical calculations and interpretations.

23 Internal decision-making statutes give a detailed account on the roles and duties of these organs (for illustration see Korkut 2002b).

24 Head of General Office, MSZOSZ, Confederations of Hungarian Trade Unions, Hungary.

25 President, Solidarity Transportation Workers' Trade Union, Poland.

26 President, SZTDSZ, Trade Union of Social Workers, Hungary; President, LIGA, Trade Union of Iron and Metal Industry, Hungary; Manager-President, KISOSZ, National Federation of Traders and Caterers, Hungary; Head of General Office, MSZOSZ, Confederations of Hungarian Trade Unions, Hungary; President, KASZ, Union of Commercial Employees, Hungary; Member of the Council of Presidents, MOSZ, National Federation of Agricultural Co-operators and Producers, Hungary; Secretary General, ÉSZT, Confederation Unions of Professionals, Hungary; President, VASAS, Federation of Hungarian Metal Workers, Hungary.

27 The respondent did not want his name to be quoted.

28 The respondent did not give any ranks for decision-making components.

29 Romanian word for local organizations.

30 The respondent ranked conferences as the first decision-making component and she put the president at the second place in her rank.

31 Vice-president, Cartel-Alfa Trade Union Confederation, Romania.

32 President and Vice-president, Gdansk Employers' Association, Poland; President, Association of Chambers of Agriculture, Poland.

33 Polish word for conference.

7
Activating participation

Generating support for campaign groups[1]
Emma L.Clarence, Grant Jordan and William A.Maloney

In an era when there is a general concern regarding decline in political and civic activity (Putnam 1993, 1995, 2000), a commonly held view has emerged that group activity has offset this problem by replacing party activism as the normal participatory style. Farrell and Webb (2000:123) note that 'Fewer individuals now take on political roles as loyal party members, perhaps preferring to participate via non-partisan single-issue groups'. Lawson and Merkl (1988) argue that major party decline is correlated to a failure of linkage between the parties and the political process, and that the replacement representative vehicles (groups) have been successful because they offer a more responsive and direct form of 'particularized' linkage. In support of such claims authors have highlighted the significant reductions in party membership and the corresponding dramatic rise in group (numbers and) membership levels. For example, between 1950 and the mid-1990s 'aggregate party enrolment' declined in many advanced democracies from: 1.3 million to 600,000 in France; 3.7 million to 1.9 million in Italy; and 3.4 million to 800,000 in the UK (Scarrow 2000:89). In 2002 the UK Labour Party membership was estimated at 280,000 and the Conservative Party at 318,000. In the same period new organizations formed and cultivated membership in excess of 100,000: Greenpeace 179,000; Amnesty International British Section 150,000; and Friends of the Earth (FoE) 100,000 (*Guardian* 28 January, 2002 and elite interviews).[2] Currently, the membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK is over 1 million: greater than the sum of all UK party memberships.

Accordingly it is appropriate to examine why people support and participate in a variety of political (and social) organizations. This chapter explores the reasons that campaigning group organizers and leaders believe underpin the support of, and participation in, their organizations. It also examines the opportunities for citizen involvement offered by campaigning organizations. While the evidence of greater group mobilization is compelling, the assumption of this chapter is that it is questionable that this is an indicator of democratic health: that a citizen is better engaged with the political system via group—as opposed to party—membership deserves scrutiny, not assertion.

Previous work (Jordan and Maloney 1997) on campaigning groups focused on two 'brand leaders' with memberships in excess of 100,000: FoE (UK) and Amnesty International (British Section). In the case of FoE *supporters* democratic options were limited to *exit* and *loyalty,* while in Amnesty *members* could choose between *exit, voice* and *loyalty* (Hirschman 1970) .[3] Irrespective of this significant formal (and legalistic) difference, supporters/members of both organizations eschewed active involvement in

preference for chequebook participation. Thus, Jordan and Maloney (1997:192) concluded that citizens preferred '…to do very little in public interest groups as opposed to doing very little in political parties'.

This perspective has been bolstered by complementary research in the UK and the US. For example, Bosso (2003:408) suggested, 'In the main, these mature advocacy organizations closely fit the notion of a "protest business"…'. Evans's (1995) description of the British constitutional reform group, Charter 88, is also sympathetic to the model. He uses the neat formula coined in connection with Greenpeace/FoE, *We act—they support*—to describe the relationship between leaders and followers. Evans (1995:100) argues that, 'A division of labour between the Charter's elite political activists and the exiguously-participating signatories was deemed crucial for a pragmatic, efficient organization'. He maintained that the Chartists believed that the movement could survive through an indefinite growth of signatures that would be self-financing and mobilized through mail advertisements and direct mail shots. Evans (1995:98) quotes the executive director, 'The initial thought was that *we must not be a membership type organization* and get bogged down in a whole series of service arrangements' (emphasis added).

While regarding the protest business model as pessimistic, Lowe *et al.'s* (2001:8–9) study of The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) takes it as its starting point and also advances supporting evidence:

> In the course of repositioning itself as an *environmental,* rather than a countryside group, CPRE professionalized its organisational structure. The number of full-time staff at the head office increased from 10 in 1980 to 49 in 1999. A succession of professional campaigners with media experience were recruited to 'front up' the group and its major campaigns.
>
> (Lowe *et al.* 2001:8–9)

They concluded:

> The process of professionalization has extended down through the regional tier and into the branches. At the branch level where we would expect public participation to be most pronounced there is invariably a local elite dominating the participatory process. In important respects, then CPRE conforms to the protest business model outlined by Jordan and Maloney (1997): there is an inner policy making 'core' surrounded by a mass of inactive members.
>
> (Lowe *et al.* 2001:93)

Lowe *et al.* (2001) warn that the protest business characterization should not be carried too far. We have sympathy with that cautious note. The protest business model was based on a few better-known large-scale beasts, but has been extrapolated as a generalization for the whole campaigning sector in a way not originally intended or specified. What this chapter seeks to do is to map a wider terrain and provide a fuller and more accurate picture of the campaigning sector. What participatory opportunities are presented by the campaigning group? To what extent are these real or cosmetic? If the participatory opportunities are real, what is the membership take-up rate? A further aim of this chapter is to assess the impact of group size on the organization's participatory potential. Size, in

this context, relates solely to supportership/membership number. It is of course no surprise that there is a correlation between membership size and organizational wealth: mobilizing large numbers of supporters generates economic muscle. However, to what extent does size have an impact on participatory opportunities? Do large-scale campaigning groups only offer ersatz participation? Do the small-scale organizations come closest to the participatory democracy ideal? Do 'little democracies' have to be little? Or conversely, do they largely suffer from the same democratic 'pathology' exhibited by larger protest business-type organizations: limited (or no) member involvement?

The data

The findings in this chapter are based on a survey conducted in 2000 of organizations categorized as *Campaigning Groups* in the 1988 *Directory of British Associations*. A total of 426 organizations were surveyed and the response rate was 57 per cent (n=241). The 426 groups identified ranged in size from those with fewer than 1,000 supporters to those with over one million. The smallest organization, the Towpath Action Group, reported having 160 members and the largest, the National Pensioners Convention, claimed two million. Given the importance of size for this argument, the sample was sub-divided into three categories. First, small-scale groups with less than 1,000 members (response n=119 from 195 identified in the Directory); second, mid-range organizations whose membership lies between 1,000 and 50,000 (n=101 from 134); and third, large-scale groups with memberships in excess of 50,000 (n=14 from 24) .[4] It is no surprise that the 'n' for the large groups is relatively small. The empirical reality is that organizations with 'memberships' in excess of 50,000 are not common: the 'n' is small because the universe is small. The quantitative data has been supplemented by in-depth elite interviews with two environmental/conservation groups, a consumer organization and a medical related group. The groups were of differing membership sizes: the Down's Syndrome Association 13,200;[5] the CPRE 40,000; the RSPB one million; and the Consumers' Association one million.

Group membership

The main academic debate in the interest groups field can be crudely reduced. On the *positive* side is the (naïve) pluralist argument advanced by Truman (1951) that groups and collective action come as an *automatic* response to common perceived interests, or threats to perceived interests. A belief in the purpose of the group is paramount in the decision to support. On the 'opposing' side is Olson's (1965) rational choice explanation which assumes that participation in collective action is irrational unless individuals obtain a selective benefit—that they would otherwise not get—in return for participation (or if there is coercion). Both propositions are weak. Clearly membership is *not* a spontaneous irresistible phenomenon. Similarly, groups appear to flourish at levels of participation much greater than Olson allowed.

Though our survey selected campaigning groups that are seen as primarily pursuing 'collective goods' that benefit members and non-members alike, 13 per cent and 9 per cent of small and medium groups respectively identified themselves as primarily seeking selective benefits for members (see Table 7.1). The largest groups were even more focused on such benefits, with 29 per cent identifying this as their main purpose. Nonetheless (and unsurprisingly) campaigning groups' pursuit of non self-interested ends was more common with 45 per cent of small and medium groups and 57 per cent of large groups identifying this as 'their' main purpose. Large groups were both more member incentive-driven *and* more non-member incentive-driven.[6] (The details illustrated above demonstrate the difficulty of drawing accurate generalizations about even a relatively small category such as a 'large campaigning groups'. The small and medium categories demonstrate another constraint on oversimplification. Over two-fifths of both categories gave equal weight to *self-interested* and *other-regarding* responses. The 'foot in both camps' quality of many groups is a further aspect of classification problems: empirical examples routinely cross the basic boundaries in the literature.)

When organizations were asked to indicate *their most important* activity, it is of little surprise that campaigning/lobbying and representation were highlighted by all three categories (Table 7.1). In one sense this merely confirms the sample selection. While many of these organizations are engaged in a range of activities, the largest number saw engagement with the political process as their most important function. The 'core business' of the overwhelming number of groups is policy rather than service orien-

Table 7.1 Main purpose and most important activity, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 50,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Is the primary purpose of your group			
Primarily to benefit members	13	9	29
Primarily to benefit non-members and/ or promote a particular cause	45	45	57
Both equally	42	46	14
Total no. of valid cases	117	98	14
Most important activity			
Campaigning/lobbying	36	52	50
Representation	10	4	7
Providing services to supporters	22	10	14
Providing services to non-supporters	6	8	14
Promoting volunteering	0	1	0
Mobilizing members	1	0	0

Fundraising	1	2	7
Education	7	13	0
Other[a]	9	5	7
More than one mentioned	4	4	0
Total no. of valid cases	94	91	14

Note
a Other includes, research, media campaigns and other.

tated (but small organizations conspicuously emphasized services to supporters). While volunteering and mobilizing members are important activities in terms of the democratic contribution of groups (especially in the social capital building perspective). They were not seen by organizational leaders as being of *greatest importance* to their groups.

When organizations were asked to identify their *main* activities (as opposed to the forced choice of *the most important*): most groups responded in many areas. Most importantly however, the significance of volunteering and mobilizing grew—notably among medium and large groups. Table 7.2 shows that while 26 per cent of small groups noted mobilizing members as a 'main' activity, the figures for medium and large organizations were 37 per cent and 29 per cent respectively. Promoting volunteering had far more support from medium (22 per cent) and large organizations (43 per cent) (5 per cent of small organizations). Even if one were inclined to discount the figure for the large size category (because of the low 'n'), the fact is that the difference seems to increase across the categories from low to high. This result has some resonance with Maloney and Roßteutscher's findings in this volume. Large groups—who are likely to employ larger numbers of staff—appear more efficient at

Table 7.2 Main organizational activities, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 50,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Campaigning/lobbying	70	77	86
Representation	41	48	57
Mobilizing members	26	37	29
Media campaigns	29	40	71
Research	36	48	50
Services/support to supporters	53	51	50
Services/support to clients not supporters	31	35	29
Fundraising	15	40	43

Promoting volunteering	5	22	43
Recruiting supporters	20	32	57
Education	43	65	29
Other	10	11	7
Total no. of valid cases	118	101	14

engendering volunteering than medium or small-size organizations. Thus, it appears that professionalism does not necessarily 'drive out volunteerism' and that smaller organizations—where the likelihood of greater face-to-face interaction valourized under the Tocquevillian/Putnam model—are not necessarily the vanguard of volunteering.

Member as a resource

Organizations appear to see 'big numbers' (of members) as an important financial *and* policy-influencing resource. This is confirmed in elite interviews. For example, a representative of Greenpeace—a group almost wholly dependent on supporter income (90 per cent)—stated that:

> They (supporters) are absolutely vital to the organization because we don't take any government money or company money, there is no corporate fund-raising. Our supporters are completely the reason we exist. The income they provide is the life-blood of the organization.

From the policy-influencing perspective, an RSPB representative noted: 'Having a million members is a great lobbying and persuasive tool to dangle in front of the government…that's why we put a lot of emphasis on keeping the million'. Table 7.3 shows that all organizations—irrespective of size—place great importance on the role and contribution of supporters across a range of areas, including: providing evidence of support from affected or concerned citizens; identifying problems for the group to campaign on; and raising income. There are however, three areas where

Table 7.3 Importance of supporters to organization, in % of groups

	Very/fairly important		
	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	*Groups with between 1,000 to 5 0,000 members*	*Groups with more than 50,000 members*
Providing evidence of support from affected or concerned citizens	58	70	67
Helping to influence government	75	80	93

policy-making (e.g. contacting their MPs/MSPs)			
Identifying problems for your organization to act on (e.g. a local environmental problem)	78	74	85
Working voluntarily on behalf of the organization	73	80	93
Running local groups or branches	43	71	79
Providing a source of income for the organization—through fees/subscriptions	88	89	93
Providing a source of income for the organization—through fundraising	22	53	62
Providing ideas about your organization's policies or campaigning strategies	84	77	86
Minimal no. of cases	87	92	12

there are notable differences between the large groups and 'their' smaller counterparts: helping to influence government policy-making (e.g. contacting their MPs/MSPs); volunteer work; and running local groups.

It is not particularly surprising that large groups were more likely to have local branches: 79 per cent as opposed to 36 per cent (small) and 70 per cent (medium) (see Table 7.4). But it is significant that almost four-fifths of these groups offer such avenues for involvement. This finding combined with that highlighted in Table 7.2 on the promotion of volunteering suggests that many large groups are contributing more to citizens' engagement and involvement than scholars such as Putnam (2000) are prepared to concede. Large organizations appear to have some redeeming participatory features. In the UK, organizations such as Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and the CPRE have networks of local branches. Thus the percentages of those involved in local groups (and participating in internal decision-making forums, see Table 7.4) translates into big numbers. The *astroturf* interpretation of large number groups (a sort of synthetic rather than grass roots participation) *can* easily be exaggerated. Organizations do seek out passive supporters to provide regular contributions, and members who wish a more active role may find limited opportunities. However, it is too simplistic to suggest that groups want *only* passive cash-cow members, rather than activists. More accurately it should be seen that groups are prepared to accept membership on that basis, and may welcome more active involvement. However, they may not always be keen to role out the red carpet for a *policy-making membership*.

Accordingly, many organizations pursue a dual mobilization strategy whereby they seek to develop *both* passive and active members. While FoE receives approximately 95

per cent of its income from supporters, the

Table 7.4 Existence of, and participation in local groups, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 5 0,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Organization has local group/chapter	36	69	79
Total no. of cases	111	97	14
Percentage of supporters involved in local group/chapter			
0.5–19	40	54	46
20–39	13	19	36
40–59	23	9	0
60–79	10	9	0
80–100	13	9	18
Mean	35.7	27.5	29.5
Total no. of cases	30	54	11

organization also recognizes that without an active membership the ability to campaign effectively is limited. The main reform document of Charter 88 also highlighted the importance of local activity as a positive reinforcement to national lobbying:

> A Home Office official told us he had taken a straw poll of MPs at the height of the Freedom of Information Campaign. None had received a letter from their constituents…. He and they concluded that '…the people don't care about constitutional issues'…(U)nless national demands are reinforced from below, they will be ignored.
>
> (Prospects and Plans 1990:15; cited in Evans 1992:108)

In their study of the CPRE, Lowe *et al.* (2001:93) noted that,

> …in a multitude of local areas, volunteers are tracking policy as it comes down through the tiers of government and are having a significant impact on the implementation of policy. The 'core' consists of an extensive network of local activists…. Moreover, the CPRE's own central policies are drawn in ways that are sensitive to the views of members.

Lowe *et al.* (2001:96) also highlighted the dual mobilization strategy. They credibly proposed that while some members are passive, there are '…very particular types of activist…[who] wish to get more and more involved in policy'. Our interviews with the

CPRE representative shows that the organization positively encourages active involvement. However, the group is also partly driven to protest business-type behaviour by the reticence of the many members to become activists. The CPRE representative said that they tread very carefully in trying to activate supporters because many *actively seek* passive membership:

> We think we'd lose them if we did that (press for more active membership) because they're people who want to give money and they don't want to do anymore than that…. My remit has been to develop a supporter base as opposed to a member base. It's much easier to recruit people who just want to pay money than recruit individuals into an organisation where they potentially see it as a time-related activity which they don't have time to do basically…. So the whole task (of recruiting people) has to be geared around saying 'oh don't worry, we're not expecting you to come to meetings and things, we just want your support'.

<div align="right">(Interview with CPRE representative)</div>

It is important to note that the *Protest Business* perspective was not advanced as a criticism of the support opportunities. It recorded that supporters were content to 'contract out' their political involvement (see Maloney 1999). This view was echoed in interviews in September 2000. A RSPB representative stated that:

> When we ask them that question (Why did you join?) invariably the answer comes back to support nature conservation. And most want to support nature conservation financially through their subscriptions and through appeals. So I think they really see us as the organisation that acts on their behalf to ensure that wild birds in the places that they live are looked after and protected. So we're sort of acting as a *de facto* for an individual…if they could do it themselves they would but because they can't, they trust us to get on with it…

Internal democracy

'We're a limited company…not a democracy!' (Greenpeace Representative: Interview, 2001). In order to assess the extent to which groups offer meaningful opportunities for citizen involvement it is important to establish: 1) whether members have the ability to participate in the group; 2) what form such participation takes; and 3) (crucially) the intra-organizational participation rate, or what Berry *et al.* (1993:55–6) refer to as the *breadth* and *depth* parameters of participation. Breadth refers to the extent that the opportunity to participate is offered to all members of a community. Depth relates to the extent to which those who seek to participate have the opportunity to do so. In short, how closely do campaigning organizations approximate to Barber's (1984) 'strong democracy' model? This ideal-type model is predicated on the notion of

> …a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions

rather than their altruism or their good nature.

<div align="right">(Barber 1984:117)</div>

The overwhelming majority of groups—regardless of size—had decision-making venues that members could attend. Small and medium sized groups were slightly more likely to have such opportunities than their larger counterparts: 86 per cent; 83 per cent compared to 71 per cent (see Table 7.5). While the existence of such mechanisms is important, the participation take-up rate is more crucial. These are highest among smaller organizations and fall as membership size increases. However, we should not discount the contribution of large organizations: in absolute terms these bodies mobilize a larger number of citizens. Generally take-up rates

Table 7.5 Existence of, and participation in decision-making forums, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 50,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Group has decision-making forums	86	83	71
Total no. of cases	112	101	14
Percentage of members participating in decision-making forums			
0.5–19	41	72	100
20–39	38	14	0
40–59	6	9	0
60–79	10	3	0
80–100	5	2	0
Mean	22.2	11.1	4.9
Total no. of cases	63	58	6

may be relatively low for the tastes of participatory idealists. However, are expectations of higher levels of citizen involvement realistic?

The large-scale organizations included in our qualitative interviews tended towards autocratic leadership. In the mid-1990s a FoE staff member bluntly stated that 'Members have to decide to back us or not. We make policy and if they don't like it they can join some other group' (Jordan and Maloney 1997:188). Subsequent interviews in late 2000 echoed such views. A CPRE representative said that:

> …they (members) don't make policy, the policy is made within the organisation, but they are the sort of watchdog to make sure that what we're doing is sound…. We're a particular organisation that believes in a particular set of values, 'Come

along and join us if you agree with us'. It's not a case of tampering with our message or changing our message to suit potential supporters. We believe in a particular cause and its 'come and join us' on that basis.

While internal democracy is atrophied even in organizations that offer such opportunities, most groups try to anticipate positions that would cost support. Interviewees stressed the importance of being sensitive to the views of 'their constituency'. Several indicated that they had canvassed members' opinions on certain issues and some had used commercial polling organizations to gather the views of potential members and the general public at large. A representative of the Consumers' Association informed us that 'We get feedback from our members particularly through the Internet site…. That's become a great forum for debate with our membership talking to themselves and also talking to us and saying what they'd like us to campaign on'. The market research engaged in by groups means direction is, to some extent, steered by supporter/member attitudes: group policy tends to be that which will maximize support. The 'role of such anticipated reactions' can therefore be significant in maintaining a (tenuous) link between leaders and followers. These organizations operate on a minimalist democratic basis, treading carefully to avoid members taking the *exit* decision—particularly where they have no *voice*.

> …decision-making in most large-scale groups can be termed *anticipatory rather than participatory democracy,* and more critically as *anticipatory oligarchy*. Decisions are made by the few on behalf of the mass within a framework which the *few* believe will be popular enough to maintain support.
>
> (Jordan and Maloney 1997:188–9) (original emphasis)

The recruitment process and maintaining members

A major underlying assumption of this chapter is that group supportership membership is not an autonomous indicator of the public rating of the importance of different social, economic or political problems. Groups stimulate support through professionalized recruitment and marketing strategies. The enthusiastic amateur organizer is unusual. For example, the RSPB's one million members and annual turnover of £40 million (RSPB, 1999–2000) could be taken as direct evidence of the importance of the bird welfare issue for the public. However, the Society is not simply the fortuitous passive beneficiary of the popularity of pro-bird opinion—or the spontaneous coming together of individuals with shared attitudes and concerns as Truman (1951) seems to expect. It has actively stimulated, generated and cultivated this level of support. Bosso argues that the determinants of group size may be on the group side as much as the potential member:

> …the wide disparities in revenue growth (among environmental groups) can have organizational roots—leaders, strategic plans, fundraising techniques, and so on—as much as they can result from shifts in patterns of support owing to changing donor perceptions about organizational effectiveness. (Bosso 2003:402)

He further notes that:

> Even Common Cause—which by itself has generated as much theoretical work on interest groups as the city of New Haven did on power structure research in the 1960s—has evolved into a professional advocacy organization that happens to 'sell' the cause of good government to willing consumers…. If environmentalists are to operate effectively in the same national policy arena as Big Government, Big Business, and Big Labor, then becoming Big Environment wasn't optional…

Many organizations in the campaigning sector are structured like businesses and the staff are recruited on the basis of their professional expertise, and not proven commitment to the cause. For example, the representative of the Down's Syndrome Association said with regard to her previous professional life,

> I had no experience with Down's syndrome or any learning disability …it was fund-raising methods and techniques. It's almost regardless of what the issue is in a way…professional people are attracted into it (the voluntary sector) now, it's not just about 'being worthy'.

While an RSPB representative with the significant job title *Lead Generation Coordinator* said that,

> my job is to identify the names of people who could be approached and asked to become members; so it is a first sort of trawl. We have a target of names to bring into the organisation and we then work on them to encourage them.

While the measure of success for the job is the level of skill, having a commitment as well is common, albeit not essential. An RSPB interviewee claimed that recruiting was 'just a job'. He expanded,

> I think in marketing you are really taken on for your marketing skills first. It is helpful if you have an affinity and some sort of understanding…you can do your job better if you have some sort of affinity for what you're trying to sell.

A similar perspective was advanced by the Down's Syndrome Association representative: '…the reason I am here is there are people with Down's Syndrome and families who need information and support. And I'm here because I help raise the money that pays for that'.

   The 'need' for professionalized recruitment and mobilization strategies has filtered down to relatively small organizations. In our survey many of these groups claimed to have purchased lists of 'warm' names: i.e. individuals with similar profiles to existing members, or people who exhibit relevant predispositions. Although the use of direct mail remains limited among respondents, 26 per cent of small groups using this tool may be higher than expected. Medium size groups also used direct mail to recruit supporters (34 per cent) and 36 per cent bought names. Somewhat surprisingly, only one-third of large

groups used direct mail—all of them have purchased names.

Self-evidendy, small groups do not employ the same number of professional staff as their large-scale counterparts: 39 per cent of large groups had more then ten paid/full time recruitment staff, while no small groups had more than ten paid staff (56 per cent of small groups reported employing two full- or part-time staff to undertake recruitment). The differences that exist in resources between groups suggest that small groups would not utilize the same methods of attraction as large organizations. As Table 7.6 highlights, this assumption holds. The *most important* recruitment routes were grouped under three headings of *self-starters* (individuals that have taken the initiative to contact the organization), *social network recruits* (those encouraged to join by existing members or through local groups), and *marketing recruits* (who found their way into membership through direct mail, paid recruiters, and advertising initiatives).[7] While large groups were not associated with the Truman assumption of self-starting, 29 per cent of small- and 24 per cent of medium-sized organizations identified this as the most important route into membership. Table 7.6 also shows, somewhat surprisingly, that social networks are important for approximately one-third of all groups, irrespective of size. Finally, it highlights the importance of marketing for large groups—although it is not insignificant in the other areas.

To entice potential recruits to join and to retain existing members, large numbers of campaigning groups provide a range of selective benefits, albeit in tangible and nontangible forms: i.e. *material, solidary* and *purposive*. The variety of incentives groups offer demonstrates the complexities of incentive structures. One member's cost is another's benefit: e.g. voluntary work and the opportunity to be actively involved in campaigning activities might be a reward for some members, for others this would definitely be a cost. Once again, we pressed group leaders to indicate what they believed was the 'most important' benefit in helping to

Table 7.6 Most important route into membership, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 50,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Self-starters	29	24	0
Social network recruits	32	38	36
Marketing recruits	15	24	43
More than one mentioned	5	2	0
Other	19	12	21
Total no. of cases	96	92	14

Table 7.7 Most effective benefit in attracting and retaining members/supporters, in % of groups

	Groups with fewer than 1,000 members	Groups with between 1,000 to 50,000 members	Groups with more than 50,000 members
Selective/material benefits	46	51	55
Solidary benefits	27	24	9
Purposive benefits	12	15	36
More than one mentioned	4	5	0
Total no. of cases	83	79	11

Note
Selective/material benefits include free membership benefits and support on a specific individual problem. *Solidary* benefits are the opportunities offered to members to attend events or make personal contacts. *Purposive* benefits relate to campaigning activities.

attract and retain members. Arguably the responses are the most significant thrown-up by our survey: a broad tapestry of explanations emerged, with organizations offering 'lots of little hooks' to catch members and keep them on the 'line'. What is clear is that selective/material incentives are crucial to retention in all groups: 46 per cent of small groups, 51 per cent of medium groups and 55 per cent of large groups identified these benefits as 'most important'. This was the highest score of any category and is perhaps surprising given the 'public good' nature of much of the campaigning activity, although promoting and seeking collective 'goods' is part of the raison d'être of many campaigning groups. When it comes to activating and retaining supporters/members, selective benefits emerge as the most powerful single incentive for all groups regardless of size. Solidary benefits were identified as being of particular importance to small and medium groups and purposive benefits had a greater impact in large organizations.

In the view of campaign leaders, the Olsonian perspective of personal payback seems high—irrespective of the common assumption of communally- or altruistically-motivated behaviour. The RSPB staff member high-lighted that the attraction of free incentives was perhaps under-recorded in research:

We've been very strong on offering lots of benefits to members, lots of freebies...what people say and what people do very often don't add up...no-one really likes to say 'well I joined because I got a free bird table' because it doesn't sound very good.

This view resonated with that advanced by the representative of the Consumer

Association:

> People subscribe for selfish interest. They do not subscribe, from the evidence
> I've seen since I've been here, for the good of the consumer, or the greater
> good. They're not interested at all in our lobbying activity, they're not interested
> in the charitable side. Most people don't view us as a charity…there's no
> altruism at all.

Thus, if the academic world believes that the bulk of members of campaigning groups are
motivated by altruism and regard for others: the industry professionals appear to dissent.

The final open question in our survey elicited group leaders' views on the contribution
of voluntary associations to the health of British democracy: *'In your view, how
important a contribution to the health of democracy in Britain do voluntary
organizations like yours make?'*. Over 50 per cent of respondents answered and (it is of
little surprise that) almost all of these individuals argued that voluntary organizations
make an important positive contribution. A handful of responses were minimalistic—
'nil', 'vital', 'essential', 'huge contribution'—but most provided fuller statements. Broad
themes such as: groups as 'counterbalances' to other interests (for example, business);
groups as information conduits; and groups as mechanisms for 'raising awareness' were
provided. Finally, and most pertinent to this chapter, was the way in which groups were
seen as being more effective representative and linkage vehicles: '…voluntary
organizations are one of the principal mechanisms by which people participate in making
a democracy' and '…they enable active democratic participation voting with feet, hands
and head'. A respondent noted:

> …the public are increasingly disinclined to sign up to an entire party ideology
> by joining a political party, they can still show their strength of feeling on
> particular issues, and thereby still participate in the political process…. I think
> they're crucial because a lot of MPs won't represent every issue their
> constituents want to raise.

Groups were also characterized as a hallmark of a democratic system: 'Very significant.
It's part of an accountable society'; There would not be any democracy—it is the
capacity to organize change and the tolerance of the State to allow it and the occasional
success'; 'Quite a lot—otherwise we would lose the ability of free speech'; and 'I believe
that any organization which tries to assist members of the public to have their voices
heard contribute to democracy…'. In short, these responses show that the leaders of these
groups believe that the campaigning groups system, and their own organization's role in
it, are crucial to democratic health.

Conclusion

A major theme of this chapter is to provide some basis for generalization that
encompasses the entire campaigning group sector, and not simply a few notable brand
leaders. The chapter also focused on the *breadth* and *depth* of participatory opportunities

offered by campaigning groups. What emerged was that participation is far more of a 'mixed bag' than may have been (reasonably) assumed. The large-scale components of the campaigning group sector share many of the characteristics of 'protest businesses'. Many supporters/members of these organizations willingly and deliberately 'contract out' their participation to the paid professionals. Further-more, as the elite interviews demonstrated, these groups seek to lead *supporters,* as opposed to being democratically accountable to a vibrant participatory *membership*. However, this is only half the story. Large groups also offer opportunities for active involvement through participation in local groups and branches, decision-making forums and volunteering. Accordingly, these groups should be characterized as pursuing a *dual strategy* for recruitment—valuing both the active and the inactive. The vast bulk of members are useful for professionalized organizations as evidence of significant numerical support from concerned or interested citizens; and are a crucial income stream. Groups also seek to engender and encourage activity from a fraction of the membership (it is worth emphasizing that low participation rates in the large-scale groups can translate into large numbers of active citizens). These activists and volunteers may be, as Lowe *et al.* (2001:96) argue, largely *self-selecting,* but they fulfil some important organizational roles and reflect the reality that a minority of supporters and members seek active involvement. The evidence from the small (and medium) size groups also points towards a dual strategy. Small organizations are not immune to the science of recruitment: many have bought lists of 'warm' names and just over one-quarter have used the direct mail instrument. However, small groups, by necessity, rely more heavily on activists and volunteers. Finally, the importance of selective (material) incentives in attracting and retaining members in the campaigning sector generally—i.e. irrespective of membership size—is highly noteworthy (see Table 7.7).

In conclusion, while large chequebook groups may contribute more to the generation of social capital than Putnam (2000) perhaps assumed, it would be too great a leap to conclude that the campaigning sector fulfils a role as a major participatory vehicle offering the majority of members the ability to participate. Such participation as takes place is more on *behalf of* groups than making policy *in* groups. Viewing campaigning groups as superior 'linkage vehicles' appears prematurely optimistic.

Notes

1 The research on which this chapter is based was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant reference: L215252038.

2 The data in this chapter is complemented by detailed elite interviews with leaders of various types of campaigning organizations: environmental/conservation; medical-related; human rights; and consumers. The interviews were carried out between 31 August and 13 September 2000 by Dr Jennifer LeesMarshment. Dr Lees-Marshment also contributed to early drafts of the questionnaire drawn on for this chapter.

3 The terminological distinction drawn here between *supporters* and *members* is deliberate and meaningful. FoE supporters have no policy-making role and no way of affecting policy within organizational structures. Furthermore, the leadership is

not elected and cannot be held accountable. Amnesty members had the right to attend an AGM (Annual General Meeting) and could vote on key policies and leadership positions.

4 From the 426 groups classified as campaigning organizations in the Directory, 73 provided no information on membership size. While the overall response rate is a healthy 57 per cent, the apparent response rate in the sub categories is higher than would be the case if we were able to classify the 73 non-respondents. Seven groups refused to provide membership data in our survey.

5 Seven-thousand-five-hundred individuals were 'full members' of the Down's Syndrome Association (with voting rights) and a further 2,500 were associate members (the remaining were based abroad or were schools and clinics).

6 It is worth noting that the question of why people join is of importance only for leaders insofar as it helps them determine successful strategies for gaining and retaining members. The *political* significance of high membership density and the financial resources that the organization gains are the same regardless of why members actually support the organization.

7 *Other* refers to Internet, e-mail and other routes to membership.

Part III
The social fabric of daily life

8
Tracing the contradictions

Associational life versus informal networks in a Third World context
Nadia Molenaers

Societies with high stocks of social capital will be better off economically and politically than societies with low stocks of social capital. Social capital, understood as dense, horizontal networks of civic engagement and generalized norms of trust and reciprocity, seems to be the driving force for democratic performance and economic prosperity (e.g. Putnam 1993; Knack and Keefer 1997; Harrison and Huntington 2000). The definition put forward by Putnam of social capital closely links the attitude of generalized trust with the presence of structures like associations and associational membership. Both attitudes and structures thus form the two main components within the social capital debate. As such, large numbers of associations and elevated levels of associational membership tend to go hand in hand with high generalized trust scores. Taken together, they point to a vibrant civil society with large social capital stocks (Putnam 1993).

The fundamental question is whether the attitudinal and structural components of social capital are always and everywhere as closely related as in Western contexts. In Western contexts, the existence of organizations and associations is often considered as the historical culmination of bottom-up and horizontal co-operation between people. For reasons explained further on in this chapter, this might not be the case for Third World countries. Therefore, the main purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether in a Third World setting the relationship between associational membership and the attitudinal components of social capital can be found as is suggested in part of the literature.

The data presented in this chapter were collected in two Nicaraguan peasant villages (1998–9) and they indicate a possible disconnection, or even contradiction, between the attitudinal aspects (trust and horizontality) and the structural components (associational vibrancy).

Background: international dynamics and associational life

The 1990s have witnessed an increasing awareness and enthusiasm regarding the potential role of social capital and a vibrant, strong civil society in development processes.[1] Promoters of international development like the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, but also the European Union and national governments in the West, have therefore explicitly chosen to strengthen civil society in the developing world (United Nations Development Programme 1993:8; World Bank

1994: i; Foley and Edwards 1996:38). Civil society organizations thus became important instruments for increasing the effectiveness of poverty-reducing policies and for promoting social change, because their participative and bottom-up approach would empower the poor and vulnerable groups. It is expected that the civil society approach can overcome the numerous exclusionary pitfalls of those development models that focused exclusively either on the State or the market (Nederveen Pieterse 1996; Hulme and Edwards 1997:4–5; Brett 1996:5–6).

The belief in the important role of civil society has had some important side effects. Associations, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations have become important candidates for development funding. The donor-driven enthusiasm for civil society created opportunities for associations to start, grow, become larger and professionalize. However, the enlarged existence of associations and associational membership might say more about strategic choices, funding opportunities and 'associational entrepreneurship' rather than about the bottom-up culmination of the horizontal co-operative spirit within a given population.

Regarding the idea of associational entrepreneurship, the case of Nicaragua can be used as an illustration. The number of non-governmental organizations boomed from 309 in 1991 to 1,615 in 1997. The end of the cold war and the defeat of the Sandinist regime together with the victory of democracy and the paradigmatic shift towards the ideas of participatory development, opened large opportunities for associational entrepreneurs. Ex-bureaucrats, ex-party officials and even ex-military officials who were traditionally linked to the Sandinist Party, launched themselves in the civil society field (Varelo Hidalgo 1998). Associations are not only apt instruments for getting access to international funding; they are also the perfect tools for creating self-employment and employment for one's network. Joaquin Rios, member of the Liberal Party, admitted that founding an NGO is 'attractive',

> Because one can manage resources and one can help family, friends or party members. About 15 per cent of the financial resources can be used for administration within the NGO, and everyone considers that an important source of income…. I also have one, I am founding an NGO myself in Madriz, it is called Fundación Madriz.
>
> (part of an interview with Joaquin Rios, published by Imhof (2000)—own translation)

In that same edition of Nicaragua Confidencial, several members of the Liberal Party state that most Members of Parliament have their own associ-ation. The Sandinists especially have a long tradition of forming NGOs—since the 1980s. While the Liberals were only just starting to do this during the 1990s, one of them stated 'we are getting better at it'.

At the same time, and quite surprisingly, Nicaragua's general trust scores hit an all time low: only 14 per cent claim to trust fellow citizens. While in Europe trust scores reach up to 60 per cent,[2] developing countries seem to be marked by extremely low levels of trust and the predominance of clientelism. Research shows that, on average, only 16 per cent of the Latin Americans trust their fellow citizens. Transparency International

states that a country like Nicaragua has entered into a situation of hypercorruption, only matched by the culture of tolerance towards non-compliance and defection.[3] The regional common heritage of distrust (Lagos 1997:129) is reflected in social interaction patterns, which are dominated by verticalism and clientelism, basically indicating fragmentation and the incapacity to develop horizontal co-operation[4] (Eisenstadt and Röniger 1984; Gambetta 1988).

The research question

Based on the insights above, the question arises: how we can understand associational life and is there a link with trust or not? The trust scores, together with the illustration of 'associational entrepreneurship' point to a possible disconnection between attitudes and the structural component of social capital. The research presented in this chapter therefore first analyses the associations, the membership structures and the recruitment mechanisms these organizations employ in the villages. Next, the results will be held against the structure and composition of the existing horizontal informal co-operation networks.

Furthermore, the question 'what do associations enforce?' becomes pertinent. Are they the bearers of social change or are they confirming vertical networks and clientelist mechanisms? It is expected that associations stimulate social change and that they work against the logic of the vertical and clientelist networks, simply because these maintain the poor and vulnerable in positions of dependency. In an ideal development context, aid channelled through associations should foster and stimulate horizontal, inclusive, trusting and co-operative social interaction patterns. Added to this, special attention should be given to the poor and vulnerable, as their position of exclusion has to be turned around. It is therefore imperative to analyse whether organizations are effectively reaching these poor groups. The research results presented below however show that associations heavily depend upon the local leaders and their informal networks, which indicates that the organizations are probably not changing the social interaction patterns in both villages but rather confirming them. The effectiveness of organizations in reaching the poor is also highly determined by the local networks. If these local networks already include the poor, then the associations reach these groups; if not, the vulnerable groups remain outside the scope of the associations and their development interventions.

The villages: associational landscape

El Toro and La Danta are isolated peasant villages in Nicaragua, situated in the poorest region of the country. More than 75 per cent of the population in the villages is dependent upon agriculture and about 40 per cent of the farmers are landless. Similar numbers and kinds of organizations are present in the villages (see Table 8.1).

Interviews were conducted with all the organizations and institutions. They all share the ideal of the participative development perspective. All the organizations also have important links with the outside world as all of them are connected to the municipal

authorities or the central government, national syndicates, regional development offices, international and national **NGOs,** which provide access to tangible and intangible resources. The similarities between these organizations (participative approach, development discourse and bottom-up functioning) stand in stark contrast with the strict theoretical divide between state and civil society. Both governmental and non-governmental actors play in the same field, organize the same kind of interventions and use similar approaches in these two villages. Non-governmental actors can belong to governmental structures and vice versa. In this sense, the rigid division between state and civil society is difficult to maintain, and it becomes a challenge to catalogue all the different kinds of organizations and institutions in fixed compartments. The similarities between the organizations are of course strengthened by the fact that they are all heavily dependent upon, and padding along, the outlines as defined by donors.

The large number of organizations and the extremely high (multiple) membership rates point to the idea that the inhabitants in both villages

Table 8.1 Associations in the villages

Organizations and membership	El Toro	La Danta
Interest groups	2	3
NGOs	7	6
Government institutions promoting development projects	3	2
Community committee	1	1
Total number of organizations	13	12
Per cent of population with at least one membership	44%	60%
Per cent of population with more than 1 membership	25%	32%
Average number of memberships/family	0.8	1.2
Participation of the local leaders (4 leaders in each village)	all	all

are quite organized. Furthermore, all local leaders are very much involved in the associational activities. The four local leaders in both villages are Sandinist and they function as the coordinators for the respective associations present in the villages. Each leader coordinated at least three organizations.

In order to get a good overview of the characteristics of the members of the organizations, the families in the villages were divided according to their political preferences and socio-economic class.[5] In Table 8.2, a summary of the most important results is shown.

In both villages, the participants seem to share a political preference for the Sandinists. This political membership characteristic remains present when multiple membership is analysed. In both villages there were inhabitants accumulating up to five memberships, and most of them were Sandinists. Table 8.3 clearly shows that in both villages the average membership increases substantially when it concerns a Sandinist inhabitant,

while it decreases when the inhabitant prefers the Liberal Party.

The participants in both villages seem to belong to the social class that is somewhat better off, as the elite and the landowning peasants are largely present within organizations. This finding runs parallel with the pattern we find in previous research: associational activity tends to be connected to those that are not extremely poor. Membership, co-operation and trust seem to be particularly difficult for the poorest (Inglehart 1988;

Table 8.2 Membership structure, in %

Membership according to political preference and socio-economic status	El Toro	La Danta
Total population	44	60
Political preference		
Sandinist	79	93
Liberal	31	36
No political preference	27	58
Socio-economic status		
Elite group (>50ha)	57	80
Landowning peasants (<50ha)	84	68
Landless peasants (no land)	20	64

Table 8.3 Membership accumulation and political preference

Average memberships related to political preference	El Toro	La Danta
Total population	0.8	1.2
Sandinists	1.7	2.2
Liberals	0.3	0.5

Newton 1999). From the development perspective however, associations should be reaching exactly these poor and vulnerable groups. In La Danta, the poorest group is effectively and largely included in the associations, in El Toro however only 20 per cent participate.

The absence of the Liberals is quite striking in both villages, but in El Toro the socio-economic bias is even more impressive. Both villages suffer thus from a structural participation bias, even though a relatively large number of organizations are present in both villages, while the rest shares the same goals and supposedly play by the same rules. In order to understand the non-participation structure, we have to look at the associational recruitment mechanisms.

Participation biases: history, resources and access

The associational landscape in Nicaragua is strongly influenced by three factors: history, resources and access. Understanding the membership bias is therefore necessarily linked to these three features.

First, the associational landscape is closely linked to the sociopolitical history of the country. The 1980s were characterized by an upsurge of associations, but most of these were largely inspired by, and stood in function of, the Sandinist Party (Prevost 1996). Access to the organizations was thus automatically linked with being pro-Sandinist. After the electoral defeat, most of the Sandinist associations remained active, but they also took some distance from the party. According to Prevost (1996), this growing distance between parties and organizations has had a positive effect on the strength of the civil society. The number of non-governmental organizations boomed from 309 in 1991 to 1,615 in 1997. This evolution however has probably not affected the membership structure on the local level. The data showed that the associations in both villages still attract mainly Sandinist inhabitants. So given the history of the country, the Sandinist overrepresentation within the membership structures is what we would expect.

Second, resource distribution plays an important role in associational life in Nicaragua. Associations in developing countries tend to be connected to bringing projects, and hence resources, into communities. Members seem to be the first beneficiaries of these tangible and intangible resources. Certain organizations in the villages use the food-for-work approach. Farmers are for example introduced to (new) methods and technologies in agriculture and the ones that effectively implement those new techniques receive food supplies. Also, materials, like wire netting, zinc, pumps with which to spray insecticides and machetes, are offered. A few organizations have provided their members with production materials and financial help, while others have made valuable market information on the prices of sesame available to their members. The latter strengthens the position of the farmers when they have to negotiate with the intermediate buyers. All of the organizations offer education through workshops and seminars. The amounts of scarce resources these organizations carry are quite impressive and the benefits of joining are thus not imaginary. If we take into account that in both villages some inhabitants accumulate up to five memberships, the idea of multiple inclusion and exclusion suddenly receives an important economic weight. From the resources' point of view, joining becomes a privilege.

Third, getting into associations is strongly influenced by the informal networks in the villages. Access to the resources is thus regulated through networks, through one's direct and indirect ties.

> When an organization comes and they want to do something in the village, like a project, they always end up with the local leaders and they say: 'if you know any good people, hardworking people who want to co-operate, get them together and we will start with the project'. And so the leaders decide who is going to be in the group and they always pick the same ones (siempre son los mismos). 'Would you like to join?' Of course…they are getting all the benefits

and we never get anything…

<div align="right">(Farmer in La Danta)</div>

In the villages, most of the non-participants feel excluded from associational life and excluded from access to resources. Membership is the strategy that guarantees access to resources. In this respect, associations can create competition between inhabitants because they want to get into the networks of local leaders in order to get access to the resources. As certain inhabitants are systematically included while others remain outside the associational structure, this creates tensions within the villages. All the organizations and the local leaders confirmed that the local leaders select and recruit members. This responsibility of selecting members by the local leaders simultaneously decentralizes project performance and management to the local leaders. It seems however that this approach offers advantages for the associations themselves: they lower their transaction costs by relying on existing social networks of trust. This tendency to use 'social capital' to guarantee project performance can be questioned, especially when it instrumentalizes existing networks without questioning the composition, structure and content of those networks. These networks can be verticalist and clientelist, enforcing dependency rather than horizontality and equality. Essentially this instrumental use of trust within the area of development studies and development practice runs parallel with, and is a translation of the ideas of, the pragmatic social capital school where social capital is conceived as an instrument to mobilize resources. Networks are thus used to enhance effective control over the project performance through a group that is manageable (a few local leaders) and these leaders can be held responsible and sanctioned by withdrawing them from the community.

   This withdrawal would be negative for the leaders in two different ways. In the first place, leaders acknowledge that associations form the most important connections with the outside world and its resources. This assessment is based on the fact that when the local leaders were asked personally about their most important and most valuable connections, they mainly mentioned associations. In El Toro, the four leaders mentioned in total 18 different contacts, of which 11 were associations. In La Danta, the four local leaders mentioned in total nine contacts, of which seven were associations. Leaders can thus draw upon the organizations for individual help. Strangely enough, political parties and political officeholders are hardly mentioned as important connections. Whether this shift in players also forced a shift in mechanisms remains doubtful. At first sight it seems that political clientelism is mainly replaced by associational clientelism. Second, the withdrawal of organizations would seriously undermine the power position of the local leaders. The position of an entrepreneurial intermediary creates power, and this power will most probably be added to the power he has as access-giver to his personally owned resources (like land, oxen, small amounts of money and food). The more resources an individual controls, the more hierarchical the position and the organization of access will become.

   In this sense, access to those personal and social resources is linked to an obligation to compensate and behave in a reciprocal manner. Access receivers thus owe something to the access giver. This limits bottom-up control, accountability, empowerment and genuine participation (these being the exact goals of the civil society approach). The power

differences between associations and local leaders on the one hand, and local leaders versus inhabitants on the other, are too large. Participation then becomes, at best, agreeing with the one above while sanctioning the one below. Confirmative participation in these cases bends towards clientelism, rather than towards genuine participation. This indicates that getting into associational life is more connected to clientelist mechanisms rather than being the bottom-up culmination of co-operative spirit. It thus seems unlikely that, in this context, associations could be considered as a reflection or a source of the attitudinal components of social capital.

We already indicated that the strong Sandinist bias is explained by the historical evolution of the political opportunity structure, which shaped the character of associational life, while creating and supporting mainly Sandinist leadership structures on the local level. The effect is that Liberals cannot fully take advantage of the associational opportunity structure. These mechanisms, however, do not explain why in La Danta local leaders do select poorer peasants for joining associations, while in El Toro this is not the case. Not selecting the poorer peasants could be viewed as quite rational because it is expected that non-compliance, distrust and defection will be found more frequently in the lower socio-economic classes (Inglehart 1988:1213; Newton 1999:181). The poor tend to have a dimmer outlook on fellow citizens and the world in general (Newton 1999), they have more to lose and make narrow risk calculations because the pay-off is uncertain and the risk of defection is real. The recruitment behaviour of the leaders in El Toro thus seems to respond to this rational logic, albeit to the detriment of the development goals of the donor-driven civil society approach, as the resources do not reach the poorest groups. In La Danta the resources do reach a large part of the poorest strata, but the question is why local leaders risk an involvement with this seemingly 'untrustworthy' group. The structure and content of the local informal networks might provide us with the answer to this question.

Cambio de mano: an informal co-operative network

The emergence and enforcement of norms is facilitated by the closure of networks (Coleman 1990). Closure furthermore enhances the trustworthiness of social structures, allowing the proliferation of obligations and expectations. A structure without closure has difficulties imposing sanctions. In the case of the latter, the person to whom the obligation is owed can sanction defection. In closed networks, sanctions can be collectively imposed and reputations can arise. So, closure creates trustworthiness of the social structure, while open networks lack these enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, we now turn to the study of the informal networks, found in the villages. Our aim here is to check whether horizontal forms of cooperation could be found in these generally verticalist societies, and how these relate to the more clientelist dimension of associational life. Looking for forms of co-operation that would approximate the horizontal, voluntary co-operation aspect of social capital, we found, in both villages, that such horizontal co-operation took the form of neighbouring farmers exchanging labour force. This co-operative relationship is called 'cambio de mano' (transl.: in exchange for a hand). In its most simple form, this rural informal exchange mechanism means that

farmer A helps farmer B a few days on the field and later on farmer B returns the favour by working a few days on the field of farmer A.

This mechanism is an important cash-saver as money is extremely scarce and labour force extremely costly.[6] These kinds of co-operative networks are therefore of immense importance for the poorer peasants because it saves them a lot of money. Thus the rational thing to do is engage in these forms of co-operation, unless there is a lack of trust. Trust is fundamental in these forms of co-operation because there is always a time lapse between the favour delivered and the favour returned. The risk of defection is thus real. The interviewed farmers explicitly stated that trust plays a major role in this mechanism. Especially when more complex forms of cambio de mano exist (involving more than two actors), trust is extremely essential. The trust mechanism involved in this kind of cambio de mano essentially runs like this:

Person A, who delivers the service, trusts the beneficiary B:

1 to acknowledge the fact that he owes something to A;
2 to execute one or more services in return (comparable in size and/or quality with the service delivered by A).

It is important to mention that A does not have to exercise pressure in order to receive a service in return. If A has to invest time and energy in insisting that B returns the favour, this might finally undermine the relationship. In essence this mechanism is quite delicate. The involved actors spontaneously offer each other favours and services in return, thereby ensuring that they do not overload the counterpart with demands and/or obligations. If, after a certain amount of time, the involved parties feel that no one is trying to 'have one's cake and eat it', these co-operative relationships can eventually evolve into complex and multiple support mechanisms where all involved can deduct advantages from the talents, the knowledge and the relationships of the other members of the cooperative community.

Another characteristic is that this 'work for work' relationship involves, in principle, 'equal exchange'. Symmetry between the involved actors is fundamental in this relationship. If one party starts to nibble on the obligations inherent in the relationship, both trust and reciprocity might in the end crumble. Not living up to the expectations can have direct consequences. This is in a way accountability, albeit informal and horizontal. In order to keep this relationship alive, it must be subjected to mechanisms that enforce horizontality: equal rights and obligations are maintained.

Table 8.4 shows that in El Toro only 35 per cent of the respondents are involved in cambio de mano relationships, while in La Danta this amounts to 78 per cent of the farmers interviewed. This already indicates that in La Danta a large majority of the people are co-operating horizontally with each other. An important characteristic of a network is whether or not it is connected. The actors in a disconnected network or graph may be grouped into two or more sub-networks or components that are not linked with each other. So, the more components a network contains, the more disconnected it is (Wasserman and Faust 1994:109). We can see

Table 8.4 Network structure and characteristics of the nodes

Network structure	El Toro	La Danta
Per cent of the population involved	35%	78%
Number of network components in village	10	5
Reachability	0.12	0.59
Average cambio de mano relations/family	0.6	1.8
Participation of local leaders	None	All

that in La Danta a very large group is organized into only five components. In El Toro, on the other hand, we see only a rather small number of farmers organized in ten disconnected components. Components however do not reveal specific information on the density of the networks. In a dense network, there is a path between every pair of actors; hence all actors are mutually reachable. Reachability that equals one, means that all actors are mutually reachable. It is thus the highest density score. La Danta scores high on this indicator: 59 per cent of the actors in the network are mutually reachable. In El Toro this score reveals that only 12 per cent of the actors are mutually reachable. The network analysis also showed that the average number of cambio de mano relationships in La Danta lies significantly higher than in El Toro. This means that in La Danta, not only are more families involved in cambio de mano, but also each family maintains more relationships on average with other families. Furthermore, in La Danta all the associational leaders are integrated in cambio de mano relationships, while in El Toro not one local leader maintains these co-operative relationships with villagers.

Taken together, it seems that horizontal co-operation and trust are overwhelmingly present in La Danta. The high density indicates near closure of networks, and this makes them more effective in terms of normcompliance and reciprocity. Considering the number of involved families and the fact that the local leaders are subjected to these norms of accountability, La Danta seems less hierarchical, more inclusive and integrated, with more horizontal trust and reciprocity than El Toro. Furthermore, the presence of the local leaders in these networks in La Danta suggests that they are subjected to mechanisms of internal social control. The absence of associational leaders in El Toro might indicate that they escape the mechanisms of horizontal accountability, mutual equal exchange, mutual expectations and obligations. Social control, tracing deviant behaviour, will be much easier in La Danta than in El Toro.[7]

Table 8.5 shows that the profile of the involved nodes in both villages

Table 8.5 Characteristics of network members, in %

Characteristics of network members	El Toro	La Danta
Population	35	78

Political preference		
Sandinist	55	89
Liberal	31	80
No political preference	40	63
Socio-economic status		
Elite (>50ha of land)	29	80
Landowning peasants (<50ha)	55	88
Landless peasants (no land)	40	71

seems to be strongly Sandinist and landowning. These data coincide with the profile of the participants as displayed before. There is however a somewhat odd discrepancy. Whereas in La Danta the Liberals were very strongly underrepresented in the membership structure, in these cooperative networks not less than 80 per cent of the Liberal group is involved. While in El Toro the landless peasants were almost totally absent from associational life, here we see that about 40 per cent of the landless peasants are informally co-operating in cambio de mano structures.

After cross-checking the data on associational life with the data on cooperative relationships, the following pattern emerged: in El Toro half of the formal non-participants are integrated in the cambio de mano relationships and half of the organized families in the village are practising cambio de mano. In La Danta, of the 29 non-organized families, 20 are practising cambio de mano (which is almost two-thirds) and of the 41 organized families, 34 are organized in cambio de mano relationships (which represents more than three-quarters).

So, returning to the question in the introduction, associational life is not necessarily linked to the attitudinal components of social capital. The groups that were underrepresented in the formal structures of participation in associational life are strongly present in the horizontal co-operative networks here. In both cases, it seems that formal participation in associational activities and development processes does not say all that much about co-operative spirit. Both the mechanisms behind recruitment and the data on membership-co-operation structures indicate the discrepancy between both phenomena.

More importantly, we also learn that the strong integration of the poor in the networks in La Danta reduces the risk that they might defect; the latter refers to the expectations connected to the associational activities. As the networks provide an environment in which reciprocity is generally expected, the leaders can include the poorest without running too much risk of suffering from large defection problems. The fact that large groups of the poor are active in these horizontal networks (especially in La Danta and to a lesser extent in El Toro) seems to question the general picture of Latin America in which the poorest remain marginalized, isolated, disorganized, a bit fatalist and dependent on rich patrons (Huntington and Nelson 1976).

Conclusion

Associations in Third World countries might not respond to the characteristics that we mostly find in the literature surrounding the social capital debate. Associations are thus not automatically, not always and not everywhere to be seen as the structural embodiment of the attitudinal components of social capital. The link with trust, reciprocity and horizontal co-operation is not to be generalized. The villages presented here score similarly on associational life, yet in El Toro there are only a few small groups co-operating in a horizontal manner, while in La Danta most people are involved in the horizontal networks. In both villages, associational life was effectively linked to more clientelist interaction patterns, in which actors try to get access to social resources via the local leaders, who play the role of intermediaries between organizations and inhabitants. The informal co-operative networks, however, present a very different picture. We saw that both villages scored quite differently on horizontal co-operation. In other words, the network approach brought us much closer to the attitudinal components of social capital. If we had relied on the indicative link between associations and social capital, we would have concluded that both villages score more or less the same on social capital.

The 'discovery' of the mechanisms related to cambio de mano networks, reveals that this might be an alternative indicator for the horizontal and voluntary co-operation dimension of the social capital concept. It is necessary to find these kinds of indicators in order to deconstruct the complex social capital concept and its normative assumptions (Edwards and Foley 1998), especially in a non-Western context, because the policy implications can be significant.

The civil society approach in development co-operation is charged with high hopes. Donors hope that organizations can forge a social change: work against the vertical and clientelist grain, while stimulating the inclusion of the poor and vulnerable groups. The cases show that these objectives are somewhat naïve when held against the complex realities these developing countries face. In the case of Nicaragua, the associational landscape is not as pluralist as often assumed. History and the evolution of the political opportunity structure colour the actual composition of civil society and the membership structure within localities. We saw that in both villages, certain groups, in this case the Sandinist inhabitants, are better organized than others, get easier access to associations and have leadership structures that are externally supported. The leaders receive the power to select players, hence to distribute resources. Associations thus fall into networks and the effectiveness of their development efforts seem to be largely determined by the local structure of the informal networks. If these networks are relatively inclusive, horizontal, dense and ruled by mechanisms of accountability, if poor and rich; leaders and followers are situated in these networks (like in La Danta) then that is what the associations are supporting, developing and stimulating. In other words, important parts of the horizontal, inclusive networks of cooperation are strengthened and the actors involved will effectively benefit from the resources introduced by associations. The insertion of the local leaders in the co-operative informal networks prevents them from abusing their power position, as they are subjected to internal mechanisms of social control through the dense networks. The networks in La Danta thus produce

trustworthiness (e.g. Coleman 1988, 1990) while in El Toro this is not the case. Local leaders do not participate in the horizontal cooperative networks. The networks themselves are quite fragmented, with small numbers of people involved, which, according to Coleman (1988, 1990), indicates the difficulty of creating a trustworthy environment where norm-compliance and reciprocity is maintained. So, when associations have to deal with El Toro-like environments, they are effectively institutionalizing verticalism and clientelism and reinforcing the unchecked power posttion of the leaders. It is thus quite obvious that in these two villages, the horizontal and trusting relationships can be found mainly in the informal networks, and much less so in the formal associations. It thus seems very unlikely that these associations can be seen as sources of trust. In both villages there are groups that are horizontally co-operating and trusting yet they do not get access to the associations; because they have the wrong political preference (in La Danta) or because they are not connected with the local leader (because the latter were absent in the horizontal networks in El Toro). The bad news is that associations also strengthen and institutionalize this exclusion. The biased participation structure is most probably linked with biased informal networks and hence this indicates cleavages. Cleavages are in and by themselves not problematic, as long as all the groups can get access to scarce resources within their respective (pillarized) structures. This is, however, not the case in the villages studied, because the associational landscape is not diversified enough, or because associations lack the capacities, time or means to profoundly study the localities in which they will become active.

All the reflections above bring us to a hard truth: we know very little about how associations in Third World contexts come into being, how they work, recruit and select their beneficiaries (Vandana 1996:218). According to Adler (1992:54) the study of associations and movements that are situated in Third World countries has often been the product of observation (much of it participatory and highly sympathetic) by analysts external to the movements/organizations, but also foreign to the context in which these organizations unfold. What Adler suggests in her analysis is that the sympathetic and often protective attitude of researchers towards movements and associations (especially in Latin America) tends to overemphasize the positive aspects of these organizations. This research suggests—in line with Pelling, Nederveen Pieterse, Vilas—that organizations, associations, movements and NGOs might not be that 'innovative' in the way in which they work; that more research, more critical review and evaluation are pressing needs. It seems imperative to remember that by stimulating civil society organizations we are not necessarily stimulating those attitudes we tend to connect to social capital. It might be considered that reaching the poor in the fragmented, clientelist and distrusting villages will be more effective through not allowing the leaders to participate. If participation turns out to be strengthening clientelism, then imposing non-participative, top-down transparent selection criteria might actually work in favour of the weakest groups (Van der Linden 1997; Vandana 1996). The effective implementation of transparent mechanisms on the level of associations and development interventions (including sanctioning mechanisms in case of defection), institutionalizes distrust, and might as such even create trust and thus social capital. It seems imperative that the strengthening of monopolized leader positions is avoided, that sources of information are diversified, and that the chances are increased that the poor and vulnerable groups will

actually be reached.

Notes

1 See for example the website of the World Bank
  http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital.
2 See: http://www.latinobarometro.org.
3 See http://www.ibw.com.ni/~ien/c5-7.htm.
4 It has been argued that horizontal co-operation can be found in quite a number of developing countries, but it tends to be in-group oriented (bonding), between similar people, while dissimilar people and/or outsiders are rejected. Trust therefore seems to be particular, rather than generalized.
5 Regarding the political preference, respondents could be catalogued as Sandinist (leftwing opposition), Liberal (rightwing party in power) or no preference. With regards to the socio-economic class, we catalogued the poorest as those that did not have land, the middle group as landowning farmers (less than 50 ha) and elite as those farmers that owned more than 50 ha. This categorization was borrowed from the Ministry of Agriculture in Nicaragua.
6 When a farmer has to prepare 1 ha for sowing, only the weeding part might take up to 16 days of work if he works alone. If he would contract one agricultural worker, the labour-time would be halved (eight days of work), but he would have to pay the worker +/ −1.25 US$/day. Eight days of labour would cost the farmer 10 US$.
7 Obviously, the ideas of too much trust and social control are in line with the discussion on bonding and bridging social capital. Too much trust, especially on an in-group basis, can have quite a lot of negative effects (e.g. Woolcock 1998; Portes 1998; Granovetter 1982). Nevertheless authors do seem to agree that whenever collective development is concerned, the existence of integrating networks is preferable over fragmentation and isolation (Woolcock 1998). This chapter therefore focuses mainly on those aspects of social capital relating to integration, horizontality and trust, as necessary, but not sufficient conditions for democratic development.

9

Churches as voluntary associations

Their contribution to democracy as a public voice and source of social and political involvement

Joep de Hart and Paul Dekker

In the extensive literature about the importance of voluntary associations for democracy, churches are usually neglected or mentioned as something special alongside 'normal' associations. There are several good reasons for this special treatment. Apart from specific national reasons and a religiously-motivated reluctance to treat churches like other organizations,[1] an exception can be made because of their long history, their enormous size and their extended networks. The mainstream churches traditionally have strong roots in local communities, and their followers come from very diverse social backgrounds. Churches also are of special importance because of the scope of the issues about which they express a view and the influence they have on the personal decisions of their core members.

Churches function not only as spiritual and support institutions for their members, but also generate broader social commitment. Verba *et al.* (1995) have demonstrated for the US that people, whose educational level and profession would otherwise condemn them to political passivity, can develop civic skills by means of their church activities, which enable them to participate successfully in other social domains, too. In addition, churches sometimes play a manifest political role. Even in countries where Church and State are formally separated, religious institutions have time and again entered the political arena and affected political movements. Among other issues, clergymen imply political stances in their sermons; a solidarity meeting or political debate is organized in a church; churches provide facilities for political mobilization and protest; and representatives of the Church publicly choose sides in social and moral issues.

The central question of this chapter is whether and how churches fulfil these functions in present European societies and in particular in Dutch society, where a very rapid secularization process has taken place during the second half of the twentieth century. We are particularly interested in the role of churches as a public voice and as a mobilizing and facilitating force with regard to the general social and political activities of their members. Is support for the political and social role of churches basically restricted to their active members and does secularization consequently lead to a weakening of both roles? Or do our survey data suggest a shift from face-to-face membership organizations to mailing-list advocacy organizations and do churches follow in this respect a more general trend in idealistic voluntary organizations?

Our analyses are carried out in two stages. First we perform crossnational comparative analyses using several international surveys. These analyses can reveal different roles of

churches in different types of civil society and related to different characteristics of churches (i.e. dominant denomination; state church or not; more or less locally organized; degree of secularization). Second, we carry out more in-depth analyses of national Dutch survey data from the surveys *God in Nederland* 1996, *Civil society en vrijwilligerswerk* 1997, and *Cultural changes in the Netherlands* 2000. These surveys contain a number of questions to measure religious characteristics, social and political involvement and political attitudes simultaneously.

Churches in civil society and politics

The organizational structure of at least the major churches is built upon a combination of facilities and networks at the social micro-level, while at the same time it is based on a hierarchy of administrative units which make possible the coordination of activities at local, national and international levels. In combination with the moral message that they propagate, this appears to make them especially suitable for the massive and effective mobilization of people for ideational or charitable purposes (Wuthnow 1988, 1990). In addition, churches bring people together on a regular basis and thus create a stable and secure setting for the development of various types of social commitment (Cassel 1999). Church participation can be an important form of social capital for many people. The local parish is one of the most important locations where citizens frequently meet each other; and, as Verba *et al.* (1995) put it, in a time in which so much social debate takes place electronically, personal contacts and face-to-face networks are still crucial for the recruitment of people for participation.

Research has led to the conclusion that church participation is related to participation in civil society (Wuthnow 1991) and that 'religious people are unusually active social capitalists' (Putnam 2000:67). Opinions differ, however, as to how this relationship should be interpreted. Several authors have stressed the positive effects of church involvement on behaviour. Hoge *et al.* (1998), Wuthnow (1991) and Wilson and Janoski (1995) see the strength and content of religious beliefs as a motivating factor with regard to volunteering. Hodgkinson (1990), Hodgkinson *et al.* (1990) and Wuthnow (1991) argue that church membership and church attendance have a direct and positive effect on volunteering and making donations to secular charities. Others believe that it is ties with networks of other church members which are the decisive variable, not membership or participation per se, altruistic messages that are delivered from the pulpit, or the content of religious beliefs. Jackson *et al.* (1995) found no net effect of church attendance, but did find intermediary effects of being active in a church group within the Church, which in turn motivates active church members to exhibit helping behaviour. Becker and Dhingra (2001) also found that it is not so much a matter of (liberal or conservative) theology, religious saliency or denomination which causes people to be drawn to volunteering (whether for secular or religious organizations); they, too, found a positive effect from social networks and social ties, which are created by congregations and in which churchgoers participate. This is in line with research of Bekkers who, on the basis of Dutch data, shows that altruistic attitudes are important predictors for volunteering but show virtually no correlation with church commitment. Church members participate

much more in voluntary activities, but the reason is not that they have stronger internalized altruistic norms: they participate more often because they are part of social networks of volunteers and because the church is a meeting place for volunteers (Bekkers 2000).

In line with Durkheim's descriptions of the social integrating and social mobilizing functions of religion, therefore, much of the effect of church commitment on social participation appears to operate through social networks of members, rather than through the content or strength of beliefs. Theology seems to be more of a resource that believers can use to justify both activism and retreatism (Mock 1992). Putnam argues that religious people are more inclined to volunteer or to give to charitable causes because of the social networks that church attenders have with each other: 'connectedness, not merely faith, is responsible for the beneficence of church people' (Putnam 2000:67).

The priest and the prophet

From a historical perspective, the political effects of the position of the churches are not uniform. Very often they have legitimized the social and political status quo and made sacred the norms and values of established society; but they have also often adopted a critical stance and challenged the status quo by holding it up to the yardstick of what they see as the will of God. According to O'Dea, aiding the individual in providing support, consolation, and reconciliation is one of the (six) main functions of religion, but calling society's norms and values into question can be another (O'Dea and O'Dea 1983). To comfort and to challenge: these are the two functions that others have also ascribed to religion (Glock *et al.* 1967). In Weber's studies they are described in the historical figures of the priest and the prophet, which also function as *Idealtypen* for two fundamentally different religious positions (Weber 1971:181–280, 1976:259–85). Where the Church concentrates on their ritual functions for the believers, the priest is at work; where it raises its voice in current societal debates, the prophetic role comes to the fore.[2] And the Church continuously issues statements about, among other matters, social and political issues: about the environment, about unemployment, about discrimination, about developing aid.

In most Western countries, a secularization process has been under way for a considerable time, in the sense of growing institutional differentiation. More and more spheres of life—economy, politics, health care, media, education, etc.—are starting to function according to their own sets of rules and no longer according to religious prescriptions or the prescriptions of religious leaders. As a result, two channels of influence remain for the Church: influencing public opinion and influencing the behaviour patterns of their individual members. Does this mean that the influence of the Church on societal and political events is disappearing? What is the mutual relationship between the priestly and the prophetic functions of the Church in modern Western societies, and are there differences between countries? This is the subject of the following section. According to Weber, which way the scale finally tips depends on the social circumstances and historical constellation. Confessional inspirations and religious traditions are embedded in national contexts. They are neither homogeneous nor immutable. Speculating on the position and social functions of the Church in general is

not very fruitful. Churches and congregations do not exist in isolation, but are a part of complex national, regional and local ecologies with a different pattern of relationships between State, civil society and religious organizations (Gibbs and Ewer 1969; Kanagy 1992; Ammerman 1997).

Secularization

After cracks had begun to appear in the 'sacred canopy' (Berger 1969) from as early as the 1950s, over the next decade the Netherlands joined the Western-European pattern of modernization. In a general sense secularization can be defined as the decline of religiosity.[3] As far as the Christian, Church-oriented religiosity is concerned—on which we concentrate in this chapter—at the level of *society* this means that the reach of the Church was reduced. Increasingly large sections of society became independent of Church influence and the churches were pushed back to people's personal life-sphere (privatization thesis). This begs the question as to what role the churches play in public discourses (i.e. contribute to debates, behave as an advocacy group). At the *individual* level, secularization implies among other things a decline in Church participation and a decrease in the impact of Church directives on people's personal lives.

This raises the question of whether Church affiliation still contributes to the social and political involvement of citizens. More specifically, does Church affiliation contribute to the political attitudes and expectations that support a democratic culture? What role does the Church play in public discourses (i.e. do people trust the Church and expect it to play such a role)? And: does Church affiliation contribute to social and political involvement of citizens? Does Church affiliation contribute to political attitudes and expectations that support a democratic culture?[4] In fact the latter two questions refer to what Glock has called the consequential dimension of religion (Glock and Stark 1965; Stark and Glock 1968).

One could hypothesize that in a rapidly and profoundly secularized country like the Netherlands, religious and non-religious people no longer differ in their views and behaviour in the non-religious domains of life, such as politics. Moreover, in line with the thesis of the privatization of religion, various authors conclude that the impact of religious background nowadays remains restricted to the sphere of the family, childraising, personal ethics and sexuality, and that it has little impact on the decisions people make in the public spheres of politics or economics (Luckmann 1967; Tamney and Johnson 1985; Berger 1969; Davidson and Caddell 1994; Davis and Robinson 1996; Halman *et al.* 1996). Others, however, observe a strong tendency towards 'deprivatization' (Casanova 1994) in religious traditions all around the world (including Spain, Poland, Brazil and the United States) since the 1980s (Juergensmeyer 1993; Casanova 1994; Kurtz 1995; Wuthnow 1996). They see religious institutions and religious groups making renewed efforts to challenge dominant political and social forces, raising questions about public morality, and joining initiatives that are developed in local civil societies.

National diversity

In this section we will mainly present data from the 'Religion' module of the 1998 *International Social Survey Project* (ISSP). Additionally, but also as a kind of test of robustness (because of doubts about the cross-national reliability of questions) some findings are presented from the *Eurobarometer* and from the sourcebook of the 1999 *European Values Study* (EVS; these data are still under scrutiny). Findings are presented for countries that are present in these three sources. In the case of ISSP the USA has been added because much of the literature we use originates from this country. In the order of their presentation in the tables, the countries are: the Netherlands (NL), Sweden (SE), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Austria (AT), Great Britain (GB, data from Northern Ireland are not used), Ireland (IE), France (FR), Italy (IT), Spain (ES), Portugal (PT) and, where appropriate, the United States (US).

Figure 9.1 shows patterns of belonging to a religious denomination and church attendance according to the 1999 EVS data presented by Halman (2001) and the 1998 ISSP data.[5]

Most Western countries have shown a large decline in church member-
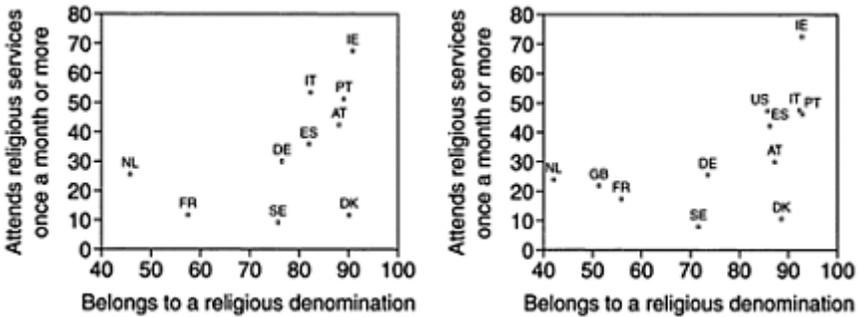
Figure 9.1 Religious affiliation and activity: European Value Study; Halman 2001:74/78 (left) and ISSP 1998 (right).

ship in recent decades, and a much smaller decline in church attendance. The highest levels of church membership are generally found in countries with a (Catholic or Protestant) majority denomination. Various surveys have demonstrated that countries of mixed religion show wider variation. Monopolistic Catholic countries (such as Ireland, Italy and Portugal) have the highest levels of church attendance.

Ireland, Italy and the United States are among the least secularized countries.[6] The Scandinavian countries typically have a high proportion of church members, combined with a low proportion of regular churchgoers. In these countries people belong almost automatically to the Lutheran (state) church, without necessarily accepting the behavioural rules, official creed or ethical authority of the Church. At important transition points during their life course they expect the Church to perform symbolic rites. In Scandinavia church membership is a poor indicator of the level of religious commitment and of people's willingness to incorporate religious considerations into their daily

decisions. As far as the public voice of religious leaders is concerned, there is a clear difference between Sweden and Denmark. Apparently the Danes expect these leaders to refrain from a political role, in Sweden this is not the case.

In the Netherlands the situation is entirely different. From an international perspective, a very small proportion of the population belongs to a church and the percentage of regular churchgoers is also rather low. Moreover, the Dutch do not attach much importance to a role for the Church in 'rites of passage'. They appear to be more straightforward than their fellow Europeans. If they do not attend services they are not very inclined to consider themselves as members of a church; if they are not regular churchgoers they also do not turn to the Church for meaningful moments in their lives. The Netherlands has one of the highest percentages of non-church members in the Western world, but it is also one of the countries with the highest proportion of core members, i.e. members who not only attend services on a regular basis, but also participate in other church activities.

What is the attitude of the general public towards the Church as an actor in the public and political sphere? Relative confidence in the Church compared to other institutions appears to be a good first indicator for the attitude of the public. Table 9.1 shows ISSP data about trust in the Church and religious organizations alongside five other institutions. With the exception of Italy, Portugal and the USA, church and religious organizations turn out to be the least trusted.[7]

As regards the public or political role of the Church, Figure 9.2 shows the level of agreement with statements about political influences religious leaders should *not* have. The statements and questions used for both scatterplots are identical, but the position of several countries differs substantially. Not surprisingly, there is a positive correlation between rejecting the influence of religious leaders on voting behaviour and their influence on government decisions. Although the positions of some countries differ, it is clear that the Swedes, British, Dutch and Americans are more tolerant towards political influence by religious leaders than the Austrians, Danes, French and Portuguese.

With the Swedes and Danes in opposite positions, there seems to be no simple logic in the figures. It is not that the public in religiously plural countries are more tolerant than the public in countries with a state church or a very dominant church (as Fukuyama (1995) would expect). Neither can we say that religious countries are more tolerant (i.e. support religious influences more strongly) than secular countries. The rejection of the statements may well reflect specific events in the relations between the Church and politics and recent actions of religious leaders. That could also explain the different positions of a country in the left and right-hand figure.[8]
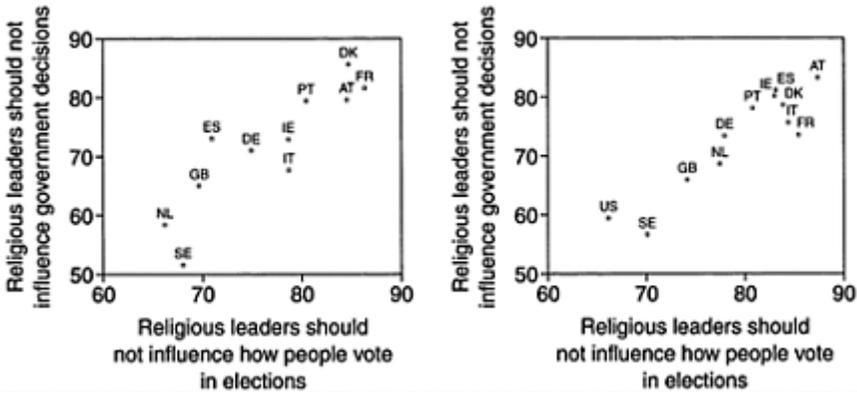
Figure 9.2 Support (agrees and agrees strongly) for political influence of religious leaders: (left) EVS 1999 (Halman 2001:105/107) and ISSP 1998 (right).

Table 9.1 Trust in institutions, population aged 18 and over in 1998, in %[a]

	NL	SE	DK	DE	AT	GB	IE	FR	IT	ES	PT	US
Schools and the educational system	94	72	91	80	92	84	93	79	68	86	85	81
Business and industry	86	71	83	70	74	79	81	33	60	69	50	81
The [national] parliament	83	55	59	48	61	57	64	45	37	61	55	66
Courts and the legal system	75	72	83	66	80	73	72	62	45	51	68	67
Churches and religious organizations	62	56	69	56	57	60	67	50	72	63	80	84
Average % trust	80	65	77	64	73	71	75	54	56	66	68	76

Source: International Social Survey Project 1998, partly weighted results.
Note
a 'How much confidence do you have in...?' Cell entries are the percentages 'complete', 'a great deal' of and 'some confidence' (not 'very little' and 'no confidence at all') of all those who gave a valid answer.

In Table 9.2 we use (the rejection of) the two (ISSP) statements and another statement to measure support for political influence and power for organized religion in society. Besides the average national differences we present three groups: those not belonging to a religion, Catholics (Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic) and Protestants (including Church of England and Scotland). Very small numbers of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, (Eastern) Orthodox, Native American and 'Non-Interdenominational' Americans, the Danish member from the Salvation Army as well as some other Christians and other non-Christians, all together 3 per cent of the samples, are left out.

Not surprisingly, people who belong to churches are more in favour of social and political influence on the part of religious leaders and churches than non-religious people. As regards the influence of political leaders, American Catholics stand between non-religious and Protestant Americans (because they may expect that the 'religious leaders' are Protestants?). The distance between Protestants and non-religious people is large in the USA and the Netherlands and almost absent in the Scandinavian countries.

The final table in this section, Table 9.3, presents data on volunteering.[9] Volunteering in church and other religious activities is everywhere more popular than in political activities.

Members of churches and people who attend services at least monthly are more inclined to volunteer than other people.[10] Further analyses of the combination of denomination and church attendance show that attendance is more important than denomination. This is also true for the explanation of political volunteering. If one adds volunteering for churches and other religious activities to church membership and attendance, the religious volunteering variable 'takes over' almost all the explanatory power of the other variables. This suggests that volunteering in a religious setting is an important stepping-stone between being a member of a religious community and political involvement (Jackson *et al.* 1995).

The church in the Netherlands

The church in the Netherlands is not doing very well. As a result of continuous membership losses, an increasing number of church buildings are being shut, clergymen's positions are being scrapped and the Roman Catholic Church, despite a declining membership, has to cope with a growing shortage of priests. In recent decades the section of the population who are members of a church has fallen sharply, as has as the number of Dutch people attending church on Sundays. Around 100,000 people leave the Church each year, or nearly 2 per cent of the membership of the mainstream churches. According to a recent forecast, by 2010, 67 per cent of the Dutch population will not belong to any church. Moreover, in the Netherlands the break with the Church has radical features.

Table 9.2 Positive attitudes towards religious influence, population aged 18 and over in 1998, in %

	NL	SE	DK	DE	AT	GB	IE	FR	IT	ES	PT	US
'Religious leaders should not try to influence how people vote in elections': reject[a]	23	27	14	22	14	26	22	14	17	20	18	30
Deviations from national average:[c]												
• Non-religious	–6	–1	+3	–5	–5	–5	– 10	–7	–7	–7	–9	–7

	NL	SE	DK	DE	AT	GB	IE	FR	IT	ES	PT	US
• Catholics	+2	–	–	+4	+1	+5	+1	+6	+1	+1	+1	–3
• Protestants	+11	0	0	–1	–	+3	–	–	–	–	–	+3
'Religious leaders should not try to influence government decisions': reject[a]	29	34	19	25	17	32	24	22	22	21	20	34
Deviations from national average:[c]												
• Non-religious	–9	–3	+1	–5	–8	–7	–9	–11	–11	–7	–10	–12
• Catholics	+4	–	–	+1	+1	+5	+1	+9	+1	+1	+1	–5
• Protestants	+18	+1	0	+2	–	+5	–	–	–	–	–	+5
'Do you think that churches and religious organizations in this country have too much power or too little power?': support for more influence:[b]	47	46	47	37	40	44	35	43	37	40	44	49
Deviations from national average:[c]												
• Non-religious	–6	–6	–3	–6	–9	–6	–15	–11	–18	–10	–16	–18
• Catholics	+3	–	–	+3	+1	+4	+1	+8	+2	+2	+1	0
• Protestants	+10	+2	0	+1	–	+5	–	–	–	–	–	+5

Source: International Social Survey Project 1998, partly weighted results.
Notes
a Strongly agrees=0; agree=25; neither agree nor disagree (or 'can't choose' for no more than one question)=50; disagree=75; strongly disagree=100.
b Far too much=0; too much=25; about the right amount=50; too little=75; far too little=100.
c Deviations for categories with at least 50 respondents.

Table 9.3 Volunteering, population aged 18 and over in 1998, in %

	NL	SE	DK	DE	AT	GB	IE	FR	IT	ES	PT	US
Political activities (helping political parties, political movements, election campaigns, etc.)	4	4	4	5	8	4	4	8	4	4	4	10
Charitable activities (helping the sick, elderly, poor, etc.)	31	27	11	9	8	24	23	34	11	13	15	39
Religious and church-related activities (helping	15	11	7	11	10	12	11	16	10	6	14	20

churches and religious groups)

Any other kind of voluntary activities	34	35	22	17	17	19	18	40	9	10	9	38
Any of these	51	49	33	27	29	37	34	58	24	22	27	59
Deviations from national average:[b]												
• Non-religious		−6	–6	–1	–7	–4	–10	–7	–7	–2	+1	+11	–11
• Catholics		+5	–	–	+3	+1	+9	+1	+6	+2	0	–1	–7
• Protestants		+13	+2	0	+2	–	+11	–	–	–	–	–	+7
Deviations from national average:[b]												
• Attends church < monthly	–6	–3	–2	–5	–2	–8	–15	–6	–8	–4	–9	–16
• Attends once a month or more	+19	+36	+20	+14	+5	+29	+6	+29	+9	+6	+12	+17

Source: International Social Survey Project 1998, partly weighted results.
Notes
a 'Have you done any voluntary activity in the past 12 months in any of the following areas? Voluntary activity is unpaid work, not just belonging to an organization or group. It should be of service or benefit to other people or the community and not only to one's family or personal friends.' [+'If the same voluntary activity falls under two or more of the categories listed above, please report it only once under whichever relevant category appears first'.]
b Deviations for categories with at least 50 respondents.

Those leaving the Church rarely return, and there are very few people for whom the Church still serves to provide a frame of reference for their norms and values on issues of beliefs, or to provide support in difficult times.

At present, some 45 per cent of the population consider themselves to be members of a church; of these, 40 per cent subscribe to one of the three largest denominations: Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed and Calvinist. In the 1960s half the Dutch population went to church almost every week; today this applies to only one-fifth of the population. Regular church attendance has also declined sharply among church members during the past 40 years, from three-quarters to fewer than half of all members. As a result, the Church in the Netherlands appears to be resuming the position it held originally, i.e. a minority position in a predominantly non-Christian society.

The picture is also anything but rosy as regards the importance of the Church for individual Dutch citizens, as well as for society as a whole; the Church's relevance for the personal life of the modern Dutch person is limited. Research has shown that nearly all church members generally identify themselves more with people who share their education, do the same kind of work, or have the same interests and hobbies, than with people who share their religious faith. In 1997, less than 10 per cent of a representative sample of the population stated that they would turn to a clergyman in the event of a

sincere dilemma of conscience. At any rate contacts with church representatives are not very frequent. Slightly more than half the Dutch population married in church, indicating that in the Netherlands the Church does not hold the self-evident position that it does in other countries.

The relevance of the Church in people's personal religious life is also diminishing. In the above survey nearly all respondents (95 per cent) held the opinion that a person can perfectly well be religious without ever going to church, while 40 per cent of the respondents who were church members stated that they would have no objection whatsoever if their children should decide to reject any religious belief.

Moreover, the Church appears to have less importance for Dutch society as a whole. There is a constitutional separation of Church and State, which acquired an absolute character particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. The government takes the position of a strictly neutral agency, which considers religion and church life to be a private matter. Another manifestation of the decreasing relevance of the Church for Dutch society was the process of 'depillarization'. Around 1950, much of societal life in the Netherlands was organized along religious lines, as a result of the religious mass mobilizations that had taken place since the last decades of the nineteenth century and which had contributed to the enormous increase in the public relevance of religion in Dutch society (Van Rooden 1996). During the 1950s the proportion of Dutch children visiting a confessional school reached its peak, as did the proportion of the population who regularly attended church. The number of marriages between people of different religions has never been lower than in that period.

Since the 1960s all this has changed dramatically. Most of the religious organizations have been abolished or merged with more general types of organizations.[11] This has changed the *de facto* status of the Church in Dutch society, turning it from a public institution into a network of private organizations. The Church is no longer on the same public level as the State, but is part of the societal sphere between individual citizens and the State, i.e. the civil society. There was a shift of emphasis from the role of the Church as a societal institution to a position of an 'intermediary organization' (Gabriel 1999). Forced by developments in modern Western societies, a shift has taken place in the social position of the Church and its self-image from *volkskerk* to *vrijwilligerskerk* (Dutch), from *Volkskirche* to *Gemeindekirche* (German), from church with universal pretensions to denomination (English). This shift corresponds with the pluralistic character of these societies, in which greater emphasis is put on voluntariness and members' own contributions.

In the Dutch context however, it is rather dubious to speak in general terms about *the* Church. DifFerences in confessional cultures have been characteristic of the Netherlands from its very origin as an independent nation—differences between Catholics and Protestants and differences among Protestants between liberals ('vrijzinnigen') and orthodox believers. These differences are the historical roots of the present threepartition of the religious population in Roman Catholics, Dutch Reformed and Calvinists respectively. In addition to these traditional confessional differences and as a result of the secularization, during the second half of the previous century the differences between church-affiliated and non church-affiliated people have come more and more to the fore.

In present-day Dutch society the Calvinists are the pre-eminently *homini religiosi*.

They are the most faithful church members and Christian believers, for whom religion and church life also have the greatest relevance for daily life. In these respects the Catholics form the other extreme among the Dutch church members. The contrast between Calvinists and Catholics dates only from the 1960s (Dekker *et al.* 1997). From that time on the Catholics became much more like the rest of the population and have maintained much less than the Calvinists a typical, clearly distinct identity. Among the present population, the Calvinists constitute a separate group to such an extent that the main dividing line among Dutch church members no longer runs between Catholics and Calvinists, but between on the one hand Catholics and Dutch Reformed and on the other hand all Calvinist denominations.

Although (or precisely because?) the position of the mainstream churches has become so weakened, Table 9.4 shows that people still attach

Table 9.4 Various opinions about the Church and religion in society, by church
background[a] (in %)

	all	NR	RC	NH	GR	Catholics		Protestants	
						NA	AT	NA	AT
It would be a good thing if the churches were to disappear: disagrees	83	77	94	90	95	91	97	79	96
If the churches disappear, selfishness will have a free rein: agrees	26	16	32	48	62	22	42	33	59
Without the churches, morals would be under threat: agrees	28	16	40	51	63	31	47	33	62
The presence of the churches prevents the decline of society: agrees	28	18	35	46	58	26	42	25	59
Politics and religion should not be separate: agrees	19	12	23	31	50	15	30	19	44
Feels that the following organizations should be organized on religious principles									
Political parties	26	18	29	45	60	20	38	25	59
Trade unions	16	9	14	32	49	10	18	21	43
Broadcasting associations	27	17	34	45	62	29	38	21	60
Sports clubs	6	4	5	10	15	3	7	4	15
Youth associations	22	12	23	46	59	14	31	21	60

Source: God in Nederland 1997.
Note
a NR=Non-religious (belongs to none of the mentioned churches or any other denomination; RC=Roman-Catholic; NH='Nederlands Hervormd' (Dutch Reformed; the largest Protestant church); GR= '(Synodaal) Gereformeerd' (Calvinist; the second largest Protestant church); AT=Attending services; NA=Non-attending.

great importance to the continued existence of the churches, including those who are not members themselves. Roughly one quarter to a third of respondents see the churches as

the protectors of public morals. The Calvinist section of the population in particular accords important societal functions to the churches and to religion: moral fimctions, a political role and religious principles as an organizational basis.[12]

Public voice

The Dutch Church does play a part in public debates about the problems of modern society. In the 1970s the Church had an important voice in discussions about nuclear armament, in the 1980s it was important in putting the issue of poverty on the political agenda, and in the 1990s it was part of the debates about refugees and people seeking political asylum. Many Dutch citizens (and Dutch politicians too) expect the Church to make statements about such social and political questions, not primarily as a religious institution, but as an institution that is concerned with the morality and values of society.

Table 9.5 shows a special kind of 'institutional trust', focusing on reliability of information about social and political issues. Trustworthiness of the Church in this respect is more specific than trust in general (as presented in Table 9.1) but it might offer a better way of exploring the support for the Church as an actor in the public and political sphere.

Table 9.5 Confidence in sources of information[a], by church background[b] (in %)

	all	NR	RC	NH	GR	Catholics		Protestants	
						NA	AT	NA	AT
Government	41	43	37	40	40	31	42	29	44
Political parties	21	21	19	21	27	14	23	15	26
The Church	62	47	78	90	94	70	86	79	96
Scientists	78	81	79	67	65	82	77	65	67
Trade unions	62	64	64	54	47	66	62	44	54
Business	44	44	47	43	36	48	46	44	39
Television	45	47	51	35	28	55	47	33	32
Newspapers	60	63	56	53	56	60	52	58	53
Average number trusted	4.1	4.1	4.3	4	3.9	4.3	4.3	3.7	4.1

Source: God in Nederland 1997.
Notes
a When it comes to major social or political issues, how trustworthy do you consider the following institutions and persons to be as sources of information? The figures reported are the percentages answering 'very trustworthy' or 'trustworthy'.
b NR=Non-religious (belongs to none of the mentioned churches or any other denomination; RC=Roman-Catholic; NH='Nederlands Hervormd' (Dutch Reformed; the largest Protestant church); GR='(Synodaal) Gereformeerd' (Calvinist; the second largest Protestant church); AT=Attending services; NA=Non-attending.

The information published by scientists, the Church and the press generally achieves a high trustworthiness score. Nominal church members put comparatively little trust in the government and political parties as sources of information. Protestants are more sceptical towards the information published by scientists, trade unions and the television. This is not surprising: the trust placed in the Church is high among church members, and especially among those who also attend church. The greater trust shown by Protestants than by Catholics is probably related to the higher percentage of regular churchgoers among Protestants (in particular among Calvinists).

As Table 9.6 shows, people want to hear the Church speaking out mainly on social issues such as poverty and discrimination. In more private matters such as relationships, sexuality or euthanasia this desire is much less pronounced and is concentrated among Calvinists and church-going members of the major Protestant movements.

(Re)source for individual involvement

Before looking at political correlates of church involvement, Table 9.7 gives an overview of memberships of association and voluntary work. Churchgoers are not only more likely to be members of associations, they are also more likely to be members of several associations. They do voluntary work considerably more often, and they do this more often within several sectors. Churchgoers are also more often active in the area of informal help.

Table 9.6 Topics people want the Church to speak out about, by church background[a] (in %)

	all	NR	RC	NH	GR	Catholics		Protestants	
						NA	AT	NA	AT
Poverty in our society	78	74	82	85	83	81	83	71	89
Discrimination	62	55	71	74	79	72	70	60	81
The death penalty	47	41	52	60	59	54	50	50	62
Euthanasia	47	38	56	60	73	55	57	40	72
Abortion	44	36	49	57	71	45	52	42	68
Suicide	41	34	47	50	63	47	46	35	61
Divorce	39	35	41	47	56	43	40	40	54
Homosexuality	36	30	39	47	63	33	45	33	59
Use of contraceptives	32	30	30	43	38	27	34	33	44

Source: God in Nederland 1997.
Note
a NR=Non-religious (belongs to none of the mentioned churches or any other denomination; RC=Roman-Catholic; NH='Nederlands Hervormd' (Dutch Reformed; the largest Protestant church); GR= '(Synodaal) Gereformeerd' (Calvinist; the second largest Protestant church); AT=Attending services; NA=Non-attending.

Table 9.7 Social and political involvement, by church backgroimda (in %)

	all	NR	RC	NH	GR	Catholics		Protestants	
						NA	AT	NA	AT
Is a member of									
Political party or political organization	7	6	6	15	13	3	7	10	16
Choir, musical, theatre or hobby club	25	21	30	29	32	24	34	25	31
Women's association or union	5	3	8	8	8	3	14	6	9
Sports club	39	43	41	29	23	46	37	35	24
Youth association or club house	4	3	3	4	12	3	4	4	8
Volunteers for									
Politics, action and advocacy groups	7	7	8	8	8	5	10	6	9
Professional, trade, etc. organization	7	7	6	7	8	4	8	8	7
Religious, ideological group	9	1	13	27	41	3	22	2	42
Leisure, sport, hobby, amateur arts	34	31	37	40	42	32	42	33	44
Schools, organizations for children	24	21	28	29	28	30	26	29	29
Women's group, association or union	3	2	3	6	12	1	5	6	9
Organized advice and assistance	5	4	8	6	10	7	8	4	9
Informal help	17	13	25	25	22	18	32	17	26

Source: God in Nederland 1997.
Note
a NR=Non-religious (belongs to none of the mentioned churches or any other denomination;
RC=Roman-Catholic; NH='Nederlands Hervormd' (Dutch Reformed; the largest Protestant
church); GR='(Synodaal) Gereformeerd' (Calvinist; the second largest Protestant church);
AT=Attending services; NA=Non-attending.

A number of denominational differences also emerge. Protestants are more often

politically organized; Calvinists are relatively often members of a religious association or youth association. Catholics and non-church members, by contrast, are more often members of a sports club. Calvinists are often active in religious voluntary work, within a women's association or in providing general community help.

The question arises as to what it is that prompts religious people (with the Calvinists as the prime example) to their greater social input. Is it the content of their religion? Is it their church attendance (being surrounded by a network of like-minded people)? To answer these questions, we analyse the impact of religious variables on the performance of secular voluntary work. Table 9.8 shows adjusted odds ratios for church involvement (=attendance and/or involvement in other church activities) and denominational membership, as well as some standard socio-demographics and a measure of performing voluntary work for a church or religious organization.

As expected, people with a strong church involvement do more secular voluntary work, and those with no church involvement do less voluntary work, than people with a weak church involvement. Church involvement appears to be more important than denomination. However, when

Table 9.8 Effects of religious variables on secular volunteering: adjusted odds ratios

	Church-related variables			*+ socio-demographics*	*+ church-related volunteering*
Church involvement					
• None instead of moderate	0.5***		0.5***	0.5***	0.6***
• Strong instead of moderate	1.4**		1.4*	–	0.4***
Denomination					
• None instead of Catholic		0.7*	1.3*	1.3	
• Protestant instead of Catholic		1.6***	1.5*	–	1.0
• Other instead of Catholic		1.1	0.9	–	0.8
Female	–		–	0.8**	0.8**
50 and older	–		–	1.1	1.1
Secondary school and higher	–		–	1.5***	1.5***
Church-related volunteering	–		–	–	34.3***

Source: Civil society and volunteering 1997.

Note

Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=<0.001 (one-tailed); n=2,245.

adjusted for church involvement, Protestantism still has a positive impact and, surprisingly, non-religious people are *more* inclined to volunteer than Catholics. The third column shows that church-related volunteering has an enormous effect—to give an idea: 82 per cent of those who do voluntary work for a church also perform secular voluntary work; only 19 per cent of those who do not perform church-related voluntary work are involved in secular volunteering. Adjusted for the effects of church-related volunteering, the distinction between Protestants and Catholics disappears and, where those with a strong church involvement initially performed more voluntary work than those with a weak involvement, this situation is now reversed. This finding supports the ideas on spill-over effects and the interpretation of the effect of church attendance as put forward by Jackson *et al.* (1995): people do not leap straight from the church pew to the executive committee of the local football club, but they may find their way to that football club via church-related voluntary work.

In Table 9.9 we seek to discover the nature of the effects of church participation. Is it the norms and values (such as the continued emphasis on the willingness to make sacrifices and charitableness) which are most important, or other networks (with a greater chance of being mobilized and with greater social control)? Adjusting for norms and integration in networks, respectively, ought to reduce the effect of church involvement.

The control variables used have the expected positive effects on the chance that secular voluntary work will be performed. Association membership not surprisingly has the strongest effect and neighbourhood

Table 9.9 Effects of church involvement, networks and norms on secular volunteering: adjusted odds ratios

	Church	Church + networks	Church + norms	All indicators
Church involvement				
• None instead of moderate	0.5***	0.7***	0.6***	0.7***
• Strong instead of moderate	1 5***	1 5***	1.4*	1.4*
Network				
Neighbourhood contacts	–	1.2*	–	1.2*
Association membership	–	3.7***	–	3.5***
Norms				
Willingness to make sacrifices	–	–	1.4***	1.3**
Positive attitude towards other people	–	–	1.6***	1.4***

Source: Civil society and volunteering 1997.
Note
Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=<0.001 (one-tailed); n=2,245.

contacts (the most easily available but a weak indicator for the actual social networks) the weakest. However, the question is to what extent these variables and support for the norms reduce the effects of church involvement. Given that the coefficients for church involvement undergo virtually no change and remain significant, there is every reason to assume that there must be something more going on. It is likely that a combination of both explanation types is needed, and/or that we are dealing with networks with specific values.

Putnam's reasoning that religious people are more inclined to volunteer because of the social networks that church attenders have with each other (Putnam 2000) is supported by our analyses. However, there seems to be something special about the connectedness surrounding churches. Other analyses show that it is not simply the content of religious beliefs that make church connectedness or networks different from other networks (De Hart 2001), and we may have to look for evidence of a sense of community and feelings of commitment in order to come closer to the truth here. However, our dataset does not offer possibilities for doing this.

Let us now turn to politics. Table 9.10 shows the effects of denomination and church attendance on five political variables. A finding relating to control variables that should be stressed while focusing on the importance of associational life is the overall importance of the old-fashioned educational variable. As regards the religious variables, adjusted for education, age and sex, only church attendance has political consequences (in analyses with only one religious variable, belonging to a church has a significant effect on 'Vote').

It is interesting to compare churches with other voluntary associations. Our dataset contains only figures on trade union membership (26 per

Table 9.10 Effects of belonging to a church and church attendance on political variables: adjusted odds ratios

	(%)	Interest[a]	Influence[b]	Protest[c]	Action[d]	Vote[e]
Belongs to a church (or religious group)	(37)	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.3
Attends services once a month or more	(21)	1.2	1.5*	1.3	1.7**	1.7**
Female	(51)	0.5***	0.9	0.8*	0.9	0.9
50 and older	(38)	2 1***	0.8*	1.1	1.3*	1.9***
Secondary school and higher	(33)	3.0***	2 3***	1 7***	1 7***	3.1***

Source: Cultural changes in the Netherlands 2000 (face-to-face survey 18+).
Notes
Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=0.001 (two-tailed); n=1,589.
a Has 'strong' or 'normal' interest in politics (44%).
b *Rejects* the statement 'People like me have no influence on what government does' (46%).
c Would (possibly) try to do something if Parliament passed an unjust Bill (51%).
d Was involved in a collective action for a local or (inter)national matter in the last two years (30%).
e Would definitely vote if there were Parliamentary elections (77%).

Tabk 9.11 Effects of church attendance and trade union membership on collective action[a]: adjusted odds ratios

		+ *socio-demographics*	+ *political interest*
Attends services once a month or more	1 .7***	1.6***	1.6***
Is a member of a union	1.8***	1.8***	1.6***
Female	–	1.0	1.1
50 and older	–	1.3	1.1
Secondary school and higher	–	1.7***	1.4**
Has 'strong' or 'normal' interest in politics	–	–	2.2***

Source: Cultural changes in the Netherlands 2000 (face-to-face survey 18+).
Notes
Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=0.001 (two-tailed); n=1,589.
a Was involved in a collective action for a local or (inter)national matter in the last two years.

cent of the respondents are members). In the following Tables 9.11 and 9.12 we compare the effects of trade union membership with those of church attendance on the two participation indicators of Table 9.10.[13] Political interest is used as a control variable in the following analyses.

The positive effects of church attendance and union membership do not disappear after controlling for socio-demographic aspects, and only the union-effect on voting turns into insignificance when political interest is added (but the effect of church attendance actually appears to become stronger).

Figures 9.3 and 9.4 gives a more lively impression of the importance of

Table 9.12 Effects of church attendance and trade union membership on voting[a]: adjusted odds ratios

		+ *socio-demographics*	+ *political interest*
Attends services once a month or more	2.1***	1.6***	1.9***
Is a member of a union	1.6***	1.6***	1.3
Female	–	1.1	1.2
50 and older	–	1.4**	1.6**
Secondary school and higher	–	2.2***	2.2***
Has 'strong' or 'normal' interest in politics	–	–	5.6***

Source: Cultural changes in the Netherlands 2000 (face-to-face survey 18+).
Notes
Significance: *=<0.05, **=<0.01 and ***=0.001 (two-tailed); n=1,589.
a Would definitely vote if there were Parliamentary elections.
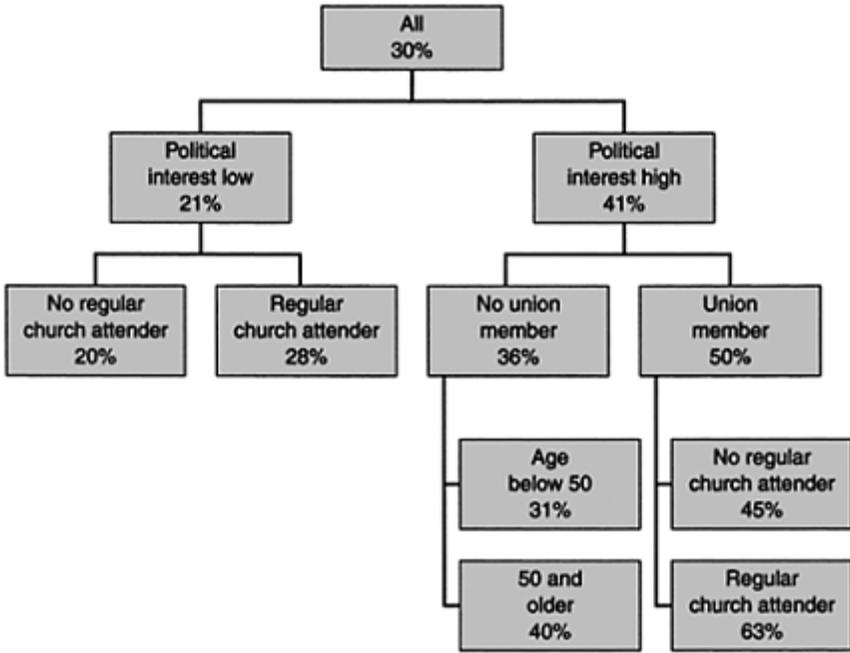
Figure 9.3 Participation in collective action (Chaid analysis of the data and
variables from Table 9.11+church membership).

church involvement and union membership. Church membership is added to the variables
from Tables 9.11 and 9.12 and with a chi^2 automatic interaction detection (chaid)
technique we search for population groups with strongly different political participation
rates.

Participation in collective actions appears to be a matter of additional
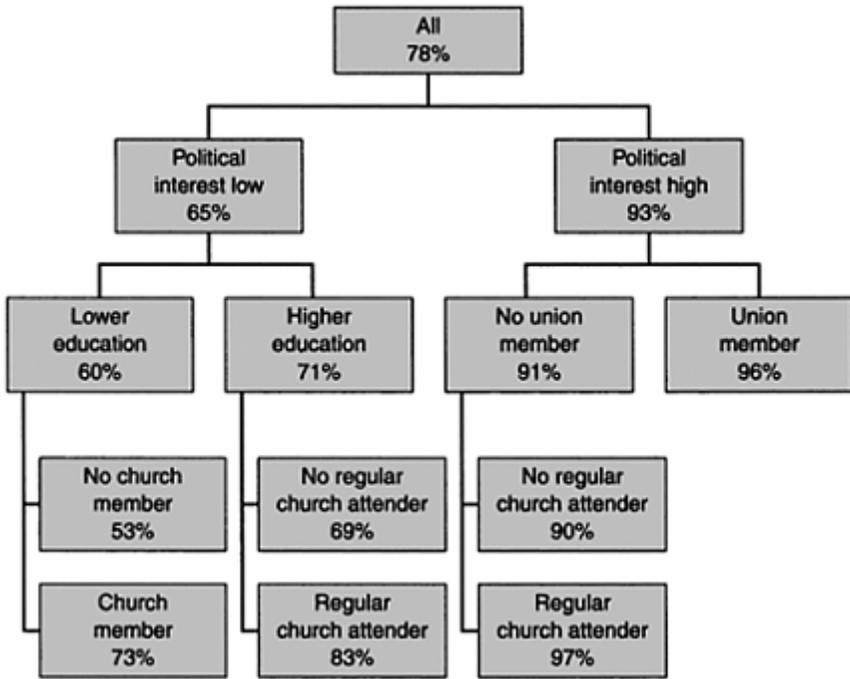
Figure 9.4 Intention to vote (Chaid analysis of the data and variables from
Table 9.12+church membership).

effects: when people are interested in politics, and when they are also trade union
members and go to church, they are far more likely to be politically active.

As regards the intention to vote, however, church involvement appears to be important
in particular for people with a lower level of education or political interest. The fact that
church attendance compensates to some extent for low political interest/aptitude is
somewhat reminiscent of what Verba *et al.* (1995) claim regarding the compensatory
function of church participation for the social participation of the less socially privileged
groups. However, we might also be dealing with ceiling effects here: for those who are
politically interested and well educated, the (verbal) willingness to vote is already very
high and church attendance cannot add much to it.

Discussion

From a historical point of view, religion—often in the form of a militant Calvinism—has
played a prominent part in the development of national identity and dominant norms and
values, as well as civil society and modern political institutions in the Netherlands. This
applies to the sixteenth century, in the days of the revolt of the Calvinist northern parts of
the country against the Spanish occupation. The Regents and higher classes for the most

part saw the revolt as a national war of liberation, in which religion should unite the nation under the supervision of the leading authorities. But in the view of the orthodox Protestants (religious revolutionaries, Calvinist clergymen and a large part of the common people) the fight against Spain was primarily a fight for a biblical religion that was purified from Roman Catholic elements; the authorities should stick to the Word of God and they should conform to the teachings of the Church. If necessary, congregations should interfere with political decisions because they have the ultimate sovereign power. In the resulting Republic of the United Provinces (1648) strong anti-absolutist feelings were cherished and there was no bureaucratic centre or established church, which made the *Republiek* an exceptional case in early modern Europe. Gradually a social order arose in which different religious groups all had a different but acknowledged place.

The significance of religious inspiration in the modelling of society also applies to the period of French domination from the end of the eighteenth century, when the separation of Church and State was established. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 (and officially established in the Constitution of 1848) the role of the churches was restricted to what was seen as their proper task: the moral education of the individual citizens. The churches of the Reformation were closely tied to the new nationalism of the nineteenth century and they played an important public role in Dutch society. The wind of change that blew through the country resulted in a very strong reinforcement of the position of the protestant clergy. At the end of the century the influence of the churches on political life and society came to an unparalleled level during the period of pillarization (*c.* 1880–1970), when, as a result of successful mass mobilizations, orthodox Calvinists, Catholics and Socialists created a vast number of cultural, political, educational and economic organizations and institutions, that were all based on a clerical or ideological foundation. Philosophy of life, and no longer town or region, became the most important explaining factor for certain patterns of behaviour (Van Rooden 1996; Bax 1990). Until then the churches had parcelled out the religious field between them, but this changed when nonreligious worldviews began to attract parts of the population.

Through the ages, the lure of the associative elixir could be heard in the Northern part of the Low Countries, and over and over again it resonated with the ways in which the Dutch organized themselves religiously. At the beginning of the 1960s the pillarization began to crumble away. At that time the Dutch were one of the most church-affiliated populations in Europe. Over 80 per cent of the population considered themselves as a church member and of these, nearly three-quarters went to church at least once a month. The Roman Catholics and Calvinists, who together made up half the population, were nearly all in church at least one, but usually three or four, Sundays per month. In the 1950s the Dutch accounted for hardly 1 per cent of the Catholics in the world, but they supplied 17 per cent of all the missionaries. The Dutch Province of Limburg had the highest priest density in the world. Christian political parties got more than half the votes, as they had always done since the introduction of the general male suffrage in 1918 (Kruijt and Goddijn 1962).

Many things have changed since pillarization reigned supreme. In recent decades most Western countries show a decline in church membership and in church attendance. In the Netherlands the decline took place on an unprecedented scale and with an unprecedented speed. Today more than half of the population consider themselves as not a church

member. Since the 1960s one of every three Dutchmen has left the church of their parents, and they did not join another religious group, but from that moment on decided to belong to no church whatsoever. Among those who continued to see themselves as church members, there are clear signs of a rapid decline in their commitment with attending divine services or subscription to church doctrines. In present-day Holland the churches and institutionalized Christianity no longer have a monopoly on signification and social orientation models, if indeed they ever did. Nowadays, they face stiff competition in the ideology market from a wide range of alternative philosophies, other (quasi-) religious movements and secular ideologies—particularly, since the 1980s, the New Age movement. In a secularized and multi-cultural country like the Netherlands, many feel that the Christian churches can no longer make special claims and demand a different treatment than the Islam or other religions and philosophies of life. The variation and possibilities for individuals to select elements from very different religious and nonreligious traditions in today's 'divine supermarket', for the moment and according to their own views and needs, has decidedly increased.

More than one hundred years ago, in his reaction to the Dreyfus debate, the French sociologist Durkheim already foresaw a relocation of the locus of the sacred to individual freedom and dignity. 'It is a religion', he wrote, 'in which man is at the same time believer and God' (Durkheim 1898). The history of Dutch religion in the second half of the previous century has provided much evidence for Durkheim's prediction. At the end of the eighteenth century the future Dutch Grand Pensionary Schimmelpenninck cited in approval: 'Sur la Religion la morale repose, Et sur les moeurs la liberté' (De Bruijn 1998:98). According to many, in present-day Dutch society the sequence has been inversed. The successful New Age movement can be seen as exemplary for the trend towards religious individualization, as observed by Durkheim. Unlike traditional Christianity, this movement propagates a combination of focus on the self and 'positive thinking' drawn from the Human Potential Movement, which is a modern illustration of Malinowski's proposition that the universal function of magic is to ritualize the optimism of man (Malinowski 1954).

All too easy, it has often been suggested that the New Age movement is associated with a lack of social engagement. However, if we disregard the official ideas of the movement and the views of the 'professionals' (therapists, authors, teachers etc.) active in those circles, and concentrate on individual members or sympathizers, then this suggestion is, generally speaking, incorrect. Dutch people who are intensive consumers of New Age 'products' appear in various respects to be no less socially engaged (as for instance volunteers, providers of informal help or political activists) than the average Dutch person or the average church member. They are also more engaged than non-believers and supporters of humanism (Becker *et al.* 1997).

Secularization and the rise of alternative movements have not resulted in the irrelevance of the churches from the perspective of social capital and the democratic quality of Dutch society. The functions of the Church for local community life have been well documented (e.g. Ammerman 1997; Becker 1999). But what about its relevance for public debates and democratic political commitment? Considering its pretensions—that it knows the way to salvation and spiritual welfare of people and society—the Church cannot be expected to be indifferent about the lives of the people and the development of

society. In the Church's view, religion is not only a matter of importance on Sundays, as a form of leisure activity, but also on Mondays, for the more public life. Separately or together (e.g. in the Council of churches), churches often give public messages to the government or society in general. And, as we have seen, there are many who also expect the Church to play a part in public discourses and to raise its voice in current social and political debates. Nearly 50 per cent of Dutch non-church members see the Church as a reliable source of information with regard to social and political affairs—a much higher figure than for the Dutch political parties, for example.

Many Dutch people (and Dutch politicians too) expect the Church to make statements about such social and political questions, not primarily as a religious institution, but above all as an institution that is concerned with the morality and values of society. Besides such public functions that are ascribed to it, the Church still exerts a less visible but no less important influence in several spheres of Dutch society. Ministers and priests are employed on a daily basis in the army, in prisons, in hospitals. Churches often take the initiative in setting up aid posts, are active in regenerating urban districts and in the care sector, for instance in helping addicts. Regular churchgoers are active in proportionally large numbers in voluntary work and unpaid informal care.

So we need to be cautious to conclude from the shrinkage of church life that the churches are absent at the public stage of society or in the personal life of Dutch citizens.[14] We need also to be cautious, however, in regarding facts like these as counter-evidence to the secularization of society. It is very likely that many attach a public role to the Church not because of its religious characteristics, but because they see the Church as an institution which should be engaged in the values and morality of society just like, for instance, Amnesty International or Greenpeace. As such, the Church is seen (by citizens and by the government) as only one type of organization among several others that give their viewpoints in societal matters.[15]

Religion is about spiritual welfare, salvation, meaning, and models for the right way of living; politics is about law, order, social security and (distribution of) means of existence. While the Church may be inclined to interpret developments in society *sub specie aeternitatis,* in the daily reality of politics things are approached *sub specie temporis*. In addition, the actual impact of Church statements on modern society is easily exaggerated. First, empirical evidence shows that it is mainly church members (and especially the most committed members) who have positive expectations about the public role of the Church. Second, the Church itself is divided in its social and political views. Now and then the Church raises a public voice, but the different churches seldom speak in unison. Third, there are often major differences between the official viewpoints of the Church (as formulated by clergymen or the organizational elites in the Church hierarchy) and the views of ordinary members (Hadden 1969; Quinley 1974; Everts 1983:127–77; Johnstone 2000). In the mainstream churches, in particular, various groups within the same church frequently have very different opinions.[16] This applies to questions of war and peace, moral issues (such as abortion or euthanasia), or questions relating to the just organization of the economy and society. The Church hardly ever raises its public voice on behalf of all or nearly all its members, but usually on behalf of those of its members who are in power. In the fourth place, as a rule, people inside or outside the Church tend to expect it to provide a moral legitimization of their own views on social and political

developments, rather than to operate as an autonomous and critical institution, in line with the prophetic tradition in Christianity.

However, in spite of all this, from the precarious position of the mainstream churches in modern societies one should not draw the conclusion of the loss of any religious or social commitment too hastily. This was also the view of Durkheim. On 18 January 1914 he spoke about the consequences of his *magnum opus* in the sociology of religion at a meeting of the *Union des Libres Penseurs et de Libres Croyants pour la Culture morale*. In those days, too, some commentators had expressed their concerns about what they saw as the inevitable decline of religion and its repercussions for society. At the end of his speech Durkheim directed himself explicitly to the worried believers. There is no reason, he said, to fear that the heavens will ever become quite empty; for it is we ourselves who fill them. And so long as there are human societies, they will provide from within themselves great ideals for men to serve:

> Non, il n'est pas à craindre que jamais les cieux se dépeuplent d'une manière définitive; car c'est nous-mêmes qui les peuplons. Ce que nous y projetons, ce sont des images agrandies de nous-mêmes. Et tant qu'il y aura des sociétés humaines, elles tireront de leur sein de grands idéaux dont les hommes se feront les serviteurs.

> (Durkheim 1919:103)[17]

Notes

1 As the present Pope once corrected Lord Ralf Dahrendorf, talking about the role of the Catholic Church in civil society in Poland in the 1980s: 'The Church does not belong to civil society but to sacred society' (Dahrendorf, oral communication).

2 According to Weber, the priesthood is related to a congregation, while prophets are not primarily focused on the forming of a particular group, but try to influence the life and behaviour of everybody by means of their word or their example. The formation of congregations only arises when a prophecy institutionalizes itself and a durable priestly office is established. The open community around the prophet then becomes a more or less closed religious community. The priests become a separate group of individuals who professionally care for the cult of the gods on a regular basis for the religious community (Weber 1976:268–85). In contrast to the priests, the prophets put less emphasis on the cult, focusing more on social-ethical duties and the faithfulness to Jahweh. They aim to bring about a consistent pattern of behaviour, in which a position is consciously taken against the world from the perspective of some value system. The priests, for their part, are always primarily interested in systemizing the religious doctrine, as expressed among others things in a canonizing of sacred documents which contain the original revelation, and in the formulation of dogmas that are believed to interpret the meaning of the canonical documents in an authentic way. The typical power instrument of priests is 'spiritual care': the religious education of individuals. The main resource of the religious prophet is the 'sermon' (Weber 1976:283).

3 Secularization is an important aspect of the process of modernization of societies. Several dimensions can be discerned with regard to secularization, such as a shrinkage of the range of religion, a decrease in individual religiosity, and changes with respect to the content of religion in the sense of a stronger emphasizing of *das Diesseitige* (Isambert 1976; Dobbelaere 1981, 1985, 1987). For the subject of this chapter, it is especially the decrease in the range of religion that is relevant. In the course of the process of modernization more and more social aspects or areas of life and society (economics, science, politics) have broken away from the religious framework, which in pre-modern times gave direction to everything (Luckmann 1967, 1975; Wilson 1976; Luhmann 1977; Bruce 1992, 2001). As a result, religious legitimizations for the foundations of economic, scientific, or political actions disappeared; henceforth these activities found their justification in themselves. The economy and the polity developed 'secular' norms, which increasingly restricted the validity of the Church norms to the specifically 'religious sphere', while its 'global' claims were generally neutralized to the status of mere rhetoric. The other side of this is that religion was gradually pushed back to a sphere of its own: a religious subsystem arose. In this connection it has been stated that an 'enchurchment' of Christianity has taken place (Kaufmann 1979).

4 The theme of the relevance of religion for politics and society only became current after the Church and the State had had to give up their monopoly position during the process of modernization in their respective domains of religion and society.

5 Great Britain is not included in the EVS figure, because the British questionnaire included a one-step instead of two-step question about belonging to a denomination (resulting in a higher percentage of 84 per cent). The most recent Eurobarometer with a question about belonging 'to a particular religion' and attending religious services was EB 50.0 (Autumn 1998). The international pattern of belonging-attending figures is about the same as in Figure 9.1: NL 42/36; SE 66/40; DK 81/45; DE 73/43; AT 89/57; GB 60/33; IE 97/85 FR 67/27; IT 92/74; ES 85/54; and PT 92/60. The figures for attending are somewhat higher because there is no monthly category and we have to distinguish between 'a few times a year' and more vs. once a year or less. The 'belonging' figures appear to be somewhat higher for some Catholic and lower for some Protestant countries.

6 All sorts of explanations have been given for the differences between countries in terms of church commitment, of which we will take no notice here. Differences have been related among other things to the pace, level and duration of (economic) modernization processes; a country's level of social security and social services; the multiformity of its 'religious economy'; the proportion of Catholics compared to the proportion of Protestants in the population; the relationship between State and Church; and characteristics of the national culture (Verweij 1998; Martin 1978:3–69; Dobbelaere 1981:49–60; De Graaf and Neef 2000).

7 If we had excluded 'some confidence' as a positive answer, the relative position of the Church would have been somewhat better in several countries. According to questions about trust in a longer list of institutions in the *Eurobarometer* questionnaires, 'the Church' has a better standing, at least compared to the European Union and political parties. Also according to this survey, trust in the Church turns

out to be relatively low in the Netherlands. Denmark and Great Britain have relatively more trust in 'The' (Anglican, Scottish, Lutheran) Church of the *Eurobarometer* than in the churches and religious organizations of the *International Social Survey Project*.

8 In the Netherlands in recent years the public might have heard and read about the Catholic Church being against abortion rights for raped Bosnian women or the promotion of the use of condoms in HIV-threatened areas in Africa, or about a Dutch bishop who regularly attacks the government on social issues and has become an important advocate of the poor.

9 There is more reason than usual for doubting the international reliability of the measurements. Compared to other surveys, the figures for France are implausibly high, those of Denmark and Germany and probably also Austria seem to be somewhat low. The categorization of areas of voluntary work is not optimal (several times the 'residual' category is the largest category). In the Netherlands and Sweden we know that sport is the biggest single sector of volunteering; this is now included in the 'residual' category. Another important area of activity—things people do for schools and other organizations related to (their own) children—might be subsumed by many respondents under the 'charitable activities' category.

10 However, in Portugal the small minority of people who do not belong to a church volunteer more. The national difference between churchgoers and others is a consequence of the difference in the much larger group of Catholics.

11 The decline of the church led *inter alia* to a reduction in the electoral base of the Christian political parties (Te Grotenhuis 1998). At the 1994 general elec– tion the biggest Christian party (CDA) suffered the greatest loss in its history, just like the party that sprang from that other late nineteenth-century movement, the socialists (PvdA). That year, for the first time in nearly 80 years, a cabinet was formed without any of the Christian parties.

12 Concern about the effects of the decline of the church on the social and ethical dimension of society is however not restricted to the Netherlands. Compare for instance: Bovay 1993.

13 Trade union membership is thus being compared with church attendance and not with belonging to a church. Although membership as such is closer to the latter, union membership is generally based on a positive decision, which comes closer to active involvement in a church than just being entered in a register. A more serious problem is the bias of unions as employee organizations, but this is all we have in our dataset.

14 Secularization is not a uniform and straightforward process. In the past decades some smaller, very orthodox religious groups in the Netherlands have been very successful in recruiting new members. As in the Unites States, in Putnam's terms, these groups are very strong on bonding but rather weak in bridging social capital (Putnam 2000:77–9).

15 The *God in Nederland* survey showed that a large and ever-growing number of Dutch citizens no longer see the Church primarily as an organization in which religion is experienced and shaped, but as a moral institution with functions in the area of public morality. This means there is a tension with the classic claim of the

Church that it knows the way to salvation of people and society, on the basis of what it considers to be God's intentions with human life. In addition, according to Carter, religion is often trivialized when it enters the public arena: 'treated as an unimportant facet of human personality, one easily discarded' (Carter 1994:xv).

16 A recent survey revealed strong differences among the various sections of the Dutch Roman Catholic Church (priests, church workers, administrative executives and ordinary believers), not only in religious beliefs and Church view, but also in attachment to a public role of the Church (Bernts and Peters 2000).

17 'No, there is no reason to fear that the heavens will ever become quite empty; for it is we ourselves who fill them. (What we project in them, are enlarged images of ourselves). And so long as there are human societies, they will provide from within themselves great ideals for men to serve' (transl.: Lukes 1973:516).

10
Women's power under threat? Voluntary organizations in transition[1]

Dag Wollebæk and Per Selle

To study changes in local organizational society in Norway is also to study social change. This is so for two reasons: first, Norway is a nation of organizers. Even though the growth in organizations and members has stagnated in recent years (Wollebæk and Selle 2002), the vast majority of the population are still members of at least one organization (Wollebæk *et al.* 2000). Membership, volunteering and the number of organizations are extensive in international comparison (Sivesind *et al.* 2002).

Second, local organizational society is *open and dynamic* compared to other central social institutions. It is easy to establish a new association and easy to wind it up. However, the entire population of organizations does not change overnight. Some reorganize in response to external pressure, while others survive for a time without such changes. A rapid turnover of cultural and political expressions coexists with remnants of 'the old' organizational society. Thus, the voluntary sector is characterized by an interplay of change and continuity.

For these reasons, social changes surface and may be studied in Norway's organizational society, but considering voluntary organizations as mere reflections of their surroundings is to underestimate their function. They have been and to a certain degree still are important catalysts to social change. Organizations with origins in the labour movement, the agrarian movement, the counter-cultural movements (temperance, Christian mission and language purity), and the organizations in health and social services were key players in the mobilization of the grassroots that characterized the processes of democratization, nation building and the development of the welfare state in Norway (Rokkan 1987). Moreover, they were cultural and social institutions that created a sense of security and coherence for individuals.

Many of the politically and culturally significant organizations in that period were predominantly female. While men often constituted the leadership (which was in line with prevailing notions about what women and men were suited to do), most or all members were women with considerable influence on organizational practice. In many rural societies, temperance and Christian mission associations, women were ideologically influential and often nearly sole providers of culture and leisure activities. In addition, temperance organizations were influential in the formation of Norwegian alcohol policy and social policy, and the laymen's organizations played an important role in the regulation of the relationship between Church and State.

The social and humanitarian organizations were more significant in practical and political than in cultural terms. They were important political players, particularly with

regard to welfare policies. They influenced public opinion, and acted as watchdogs vis-à-vis the government. What is more, they were omnipresent, while temperance and mission organizations had strongholds only in certain regions. Social and humanitarian associations were for quite some time considered to be a natural part of any given local community.

The traditional women's and men's organizations were based on *complementary gender roles*. Women and men were considered to be fundamentally different, and there were clear ideas about which roles the two could and should assume (Gordon 1990; Hernes 1982). Such complementary gender patterns are often linked to hierarchical structures in which women's areas of responsibility are subordinated to men's. A common view is, therefore, that women were relegated to 'soft' areas of society that men were indifferent to, since they did not affect the fundamental balance of power between the sexes (Blom 1979). Similarly, men are seen to have systematically excluded women from the 'hard' areas of the political arena, where the real decisions are made. Women's 'absence' from, say, political parties, the labour movement, and defence policy is thus interpreted as an expression of male dominance, while their 'presence' in health and social policy is considered less important from a power perspective.

Women's organizations have commonly been treated as expressions of a (patriarchy-) constructed ideology that erroneously links women's interests to unpaid work for others, thereby concealing women's real interests as a group. Voluntary work has been seen as an extension of women's functions in the home, and not an expression of real power for women (Blom 1979).

There is, however, no necessary link between complementarity and hierarchy (Sklar 1993; Skocpol 1992; Skjeie 1992; Selle 1994; Melby 1995). An alternative perspective is that women and men have had different areas of responsibility, but that women's areas have also been of great importance.[2] The areas in which women's organizations have had a major impact, such as health care, social issues and education, were and are fields in which decisions concerning fundamental aspects of life are made. In the period prior to the Second World War, participation in these organizations may have been a more expedient means of promoting women's interests than participation in labour unions or political parties. The latter were organizations in which women had less opportunity to set the political agenda due to under-representation in the general membership and in group leadership (Hernes 1984).[3] As most would agree that interest organizations and social movements in general have an impact on public policy, it would be odd if some of the largest organizations failed to exert such influence.

The traditional view of women's organizations as extensions of women's roles as housewife and caregiver (described accordingly as private, system-conservative and apolitical) may result in a diminishing significance of these organizations in the social and political arenas. Even though such organizations have often been engaged in activities similar to those of the domestic sphere, they reached into the public sphere by virtue of organizing and maintaining outward-reaching activities (Hernes 1984). Their significance surpassed the local level through affiliation with national projects with political or ideological objectives (Selle 1994; Skocpol 1992; Sklar 1993; Clemens 1999). Organizations dominated by women were not as apolitical or absent from the public sphere as many would have it. On the contrary: they were highly political and visible

(Melby 1995, 1999; Selle 1999).

Women's organizational participation changed along with their positions in society in the years following the Second World War. Today, women are in principle equal participants in professional and public life. Over the last 20 years Norway has become accustomed to seeing women as leading politicians and professional athletes and, albeit to a much lesser degree, in top positions in business. Similarly, men, not least through the efforts of women's organizations, have also gained a broader range of opportunities. Even though wage statistics and time budget surveys show that there is still a long way to go before we reach real equality between the sexes, there are few who would not agree that significant progress has been made in the right direction. The division between typical male and female jobs still exists, but it has become less marked. Although there are still significant gender differences in choices of educational paths, complementary gender roles are being diminished in most areas of society.[4]

These pervasive changes surface in local organizational society. In this chapter we aim to illustrate this by examining data from the project entitled *Organizations in Hordaland* (POH). The project surveyed all organizational life in rural municipalities in the county of Hordaland in 1980, 1990 and 2000 (Selle and Øymyr 1989; Wollebæk and Selle 2002), and completed a systematization of the Nazi registration of all voluntary organizational life that started in 1940 (Leipart and Selle 1983).[5] Even though the data has only been collected from one of Norway's 19 counties, we believe the developments we discern here are also valid for the remainder of the country.[6]

We will consider realignments between and changes within all-female organizations, predominantly female organizations, mixed organizations, predominantly male organizations, and all-male organizations. By predominantly female or male organizations we mean organizations in which over two-thirds, but not all of the members are women or men respectively. Mixed organizations are those in which over one-third of the membership is male, or over one-third female. All-male or all-female organizations have solely male or female members.[7]

In the first part of this chapter, we consider how the developments outlined above were manifested in organizational change in the post-war period until 1990 (Selle 1998; Selle and Øymyr 1995). In the second part of the chapter, we present a detailed analysis of the short-term changes of the 1980s and 1990s.

One prerequisite for considering organizational society as a reflection of society at large is that an organization's *generation* is attributed considerable significance for its form (Stinchcombe 1965). The claim is that situational constraints determine the form that an organization takes at the time of its establishment. This basic structure prevails, largely unaffected by external change. At the same time, ideological and organizational changes in society cause a selection of organizations, as described in the theory of *population ecology* (Hannan and Freeman 1989). There is a kind of inertia in this selection process, as much of the old is carried over into the new and functions as a counterweight to change. But, as earlier generations of organizations are gradually weakened, they lose their hold on social development. It will be clear further on that while many organizations adapt to a greater extent than the generational perspective assumes, the general picture concerning organizations based on complementary gender roles is one of decline, both in terms of numbers and importance.

1940–90: Expansion and differentiation

The post-war period up until 1990 was one of growth for voluntary organizational life. The total number of voluntary organizations in the county of Hordaland increased from approximately 3,000 in 1940 to nearly twice that number in 1990. In 1940 the number of inhabitants per organization was 49, while in 1990 it was 33 (Selle 1998); growth in other areas of the country was equal in size if not greater. National surveys show that the number of memberships per person nearly doubled in the period.[8]

In the period from 1945 to 1960, public health organizations with broad objectives expanded alongside the Norwegian welfare state. Examples of such organizations include the Red Cross, the Norwegian Housewives' Association and the Norwegian Society of Rural Women. Organizations with all-female memberships were very common. A reasonable estimate is that approximately 45 per cent of all new local organizations established in the 1950s were for women only.[9] Membership in the largest of the all-female organizations, the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association (NKS), peaked in 1962 at over 260,000. The growth within this field was no doubt facilitated by the fact that female participation in the workforce was at a historical low between 1946 and 1960 (Central Bureau of Statistics 1994).

Thus, during this period we may speak of a gender-segregated organizational society in which women and men participated in activities corresponding with role distinctions elsewhere in society. When women and men were members of the same organization, their roles were often differentiated. Men frequently managed local organizations that were predominantly female in membership. This was a typical feature of the Christian mission movement and some, but not all, of the largest humanitarian organizations, the exception being the NKS which has always had exclusively female leaders. Cultural and leisure organizations comprised only a modest proportion of the total around 1960, and they were primarily concentrated in and around urban areas.

The 1960s represented a watershed in Norwegian voluntary organizational life, with interrelated changes in its gender profile and purpose as the most significant developments. Only 18 per cent of the organizations established in the 1960s were all-female. This percentage fell to 12 per cent in the 1970s. The majority of new associations had a proportional gender mix or a majority of male members (Selle 1998:164).

The fastest growing activities centred around recreation and culture, provided by musical groups, hobby associations, sports clubs and associations for children and young people. This shift in content suggests that most people had more time and money to spend. Average net income more than doubled in the years between 1960 and 1980 after a more sluggish growth in the early post-war years (Central Bureau of Statistics 1994), paving the way for the pursuit of recreational and private interests as basic material needs were now taken care of. Simultaneously, a shift in structure occurred; with the exception of sports clubs, most of the new leisure associations were independent of the broader popular movements that had previously provided recreational activities within their realm.[10] The latter finding highlights that leisure activities were no longer primarily vehicles for promoting larger causes or ideologies, but also attributed intrinsic value.

While organizations advocating group interests expanded in the health and services

sector, organizations with broader and other-oriented objectives lost ground. Other predominantly female popular movements, i.e. temperance and Christian mission, also suffered recruitment problems and lack of innovation, the latter as part of a general secularization process running parallel with the changes in sex roles and increasing affluence.[11] Previously clearly outwardly directed organizations became more introverted as their support and importance diminished (Selle 1998).

Female participation in the workforce increased again from the 1960s onwards. The more differentiated role of women brought with it the desire and opportunity for purposes and methods more in line with the self-image of modern women. The increasing organizational participation of both women and men, and particularly women's new preferences, thus moved the centre of activity away from traditional social humanitarian and religious organizations towards sports, leisure and hobby activities. It is fair to say that the changes from the 1960s onwards reflected and reinforced an ideological development towards stronger individualism in organizational society (Selle and Øymyr 1995).

Women entered en masse the rank and file of previously predominantly male domains. Developments in organizational leadership, on the other hand, were equivocal. Women assumed leading positions in organizations that already had a majority of female members, particularly temperance and humanitarian organizations, but to a lesser degree major local mission organizations. The historically predominantly male organization types changed little in terms of leadership; the percentage of female officers increased, but at nowhere near the same rate as the percentage of female members.

Alongside changes in organizational objectives and gender composition came changes in *organizational structure*. More or less until 1980, Norwegian organizations shared one organizational structure consisting of a local level, most often anchored in a school district or village, a national level and often a county or regional level in-between. Virtually all organizations were based on individual membership and internal democracy. This democratic-hierarchical structure was a function of the fact that organizations had national and political objectives even though most of their activity took place in local communities. It is not a coincidence that most voluntary organizations chose the same structure as the political parties that emerged in the same period.

This structure contributed to organizational continuity. Representatives from regional or national bodies could intervene in critical periods, and the loyalty of members was strengthened by the sense of belonging to a larger cause. At the same time, ties to a central national level provided the opportunity to bring local matters to national attention. The democratic– hierarchical organizational form was thus a democratic channel from the local level to reach out as well as a device of integration and socialization.

In the course of the 1980s this picture changed. First, many national organizations began to place less priority on the organization of local branches. Several of the new organizations formed in the period were purely national and had no democratic structure, local foundation or members in the traditional sense.[12] Second, purely local organizations became more and more the general rule, as many of these had neither national nor political objectives. The 1980s witnessed the birth of the neighbourhood association, a type tied to *smaller* geographical domains than the village, and more often than not independent of a national organization.[13] Third, a process of centralization in local

government organization impacted upon local organizational life. Small communities lost many of their previous functions and institutions (e.g. school, post office, local shop). At the same time, communications improved and co-operation and contact between villages became easier. These developments both necessitated change and enabled local organizations to adapt. Thus, organizational identity became less tied to the village community.

The integrated hierarchical organizational society, with its roots in rural communities and affiliations with national movements, was thus challenged by the *two-part organizational society*. The local level became increasingly anchored in either an area of local development or neighbourhood, the municipality as a whole or several municipalities. At the same time, many national organizations loosened their ties to the local level. In general, the ties between the levels became weaker and the national organizations gained strength at the expense of the local organizations (Selle 1998).

The traditional organizational model did not disappear; a majority of the local organizations were still democratic-hierarchical in 1990. But the model's hegemony was a thing of the past; modern organizational entrepreneurs could choose more freely between alternative models. The changes were, on the one hand, structural and functional, in that new objectives could more rationally be achieved by new means. On the other hand, there was also a cognitive shift. The view of how to organize became increasingly differentiated.

In conclusion, local organizational society around 1990 distinguished itself from organizational life in 1940 in fundamental ways. First, the *range and content* of activities changed. New areas were opened up for voluntary work. The objectives of such work became more private and individual; activity was more frequently directed towards the organizations' own members and less often towards the (local) society around it. Second, the *gender composition* changed dramatically, and acted as one of the main driving forces behind the process described above. Finally, *organizational structures* changed. The leading position once held by the democratichierarchical model was challenged. These processes were results of substantially increased affluence in the population, secularization and a shift away from complementary gender roles related to increased female participation in new areas in society, not least in the workforce, from the 1960s onwards.

The 1980s and 1990s: the new organizational society emerges

What direction have developments taken in recent years? What role do women play as innovators and catalysts to change? These questions will be addressed in what follows. We follow the threads outlined above, examining changes in purpose, gender composition and structure.

Changes in purpose

Table 10.1 shows the overall changes in the composition of the local organizational society between 1980 and 2000. It is organizations for the handicapped, neighbourhood

organizations, leisure and sports associations, and economic organizations that have experienced the most extensive growth in the period.[14]

By contrast, the more explicitly ideological organizations, such as the counter-cultures, mission, temperance and language purity organizations, suffered considerably. The mission associations, many of which consisted of eight to ten elderly women, were most severely hit. This was no doubt linked to a continuing process of secularization.[15] More importantly, however, being all-female and small in size rendered them particularly vulnerable to extinction in a period when complementary gender roles were considered increasingly illegitimate throughout society.

Some of the organizational types most closely linked to the counter-cultures, e.g. secular and Christian organizations for children and young people also experienced decline. These organizations held their own throughout the 1980s, but ran into serious difficulties in the 1990s. It is interesting to note that this is the only leisure activity in which women have traditionally assumed much of the leadership responsibility (Fortun 1988; Selle and Øymyr 1995). The humanitarian organizations also lost ground in the period.

In conclusion, organizational life in 2000 is characterized by growing organized individualism (Selle and Øymyr 1995). Neighbourhood organizations forward the interests of a group of people within a very limited geographical area; organizations for the handicapped, as opposed to the broadly based humanitarian organizations, work on behalf of a group of people with a specific agenda; economic organizations articulate the interests of property owners and participants in the labour market; while organizations in the areas of culture and leisure activities, sports organizations, choirs and other musical organizations provide opportunities for members to cultivate their own personal interests. For most of these organizations, there has been continuous growth, while for others, i.e. organizations for the handicapped and neighbourhood organizations, the growth began in earnest in the 1990s.

Changes in the gender composition

How closely is this related to changes in women's priorities? Table 10.2 demonstrates that many of the changes in the relative positions of organizational types from 1980 to 2000 may be attributed to changes in women's

Table 10.1 Composition of local organizational society in Hordaland in 1980, 1990, and 2000 (19 of 33 rural municipalities)

	1980		1990		2000		Development, number of organizations		Change in per cent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	1980–90	1990–2000	1980–2000	1980–2000
Organizations for the handicapped	26	0.8	40	1.2	82	2.5	14	42	56	215.4

Area/neighbourhood organizations	102	3.2	185	5.6	281	8.6	83	96	179	175.5
Culture and leisure	293	9.3	361	10.9	426	13.1	68	65	133	45.4
Sports	208	6.6	250	7.5	302	9.3	42	52	94	45.2
Economic	407	12.9	449	13.5	560	17.2	42	111	153	37.6
Choir/music	319	10.1	346	10.4	343	10.5	27	–3	24	7.5
Political	177	5.6	169	5.1	162	5.0	–8	–7	–15	–8.5
Humanitarian	289	9.2	276	8.3	238	7.3	–13	–38	–51	–17.6
Children/youth	477	15.1	456	13.8	347	10.6	–21	–109	–130	–27.3
Language purity	21	0.7	22	0.7	15	0.5	1	–7	–6	–28.6
Christian organizations for children/youth	269	8.5	279	8.4	168	5.2	10	–111	–101	–37.5
Temperance	54	1.7	49	1.5	33	1.0	–5	–16	–21	–38.9
Mission	513	16.2	434	13.1	304	9.3	–79	–130	–209	–40.7
Total	3,155	100.0	3,316	100.0	3,175	100.0	161	–141	20	0.6

Note

Five municipalities have been excluded due to a lack of registration for 1998. In addition, eight municipalities were excluded due to inadequate registra-tion at one or more points in time. This is done in order to guarantee the most reliable picture possible of the changes in overall composition, and has no effect on the relative positions of the various types of organization.

Table 10.2 Gender composition of organizations in Hordaland, 1980 and 2000 (28 of 33 rural municipalities)

	Percentage of female members		N	% difference	N (1980–2000)
	1980	2000			
Organizations for the handicapped	57	58	73	1	19–73
Area/neighbourhood organizations	47	49	108	2	14–108
Culture and leisure	37	39	344	2	137–344
Sports	32	35	292	3	135–292
Economic	24	39	317	15	127–317
Choir/music	52	59	362	7	238–362
Political	38	41	110	3	73–110
Humanitarian	76	73	259	–3	244–59
Children/youth	50	51	234	1	176–234
Language purity	42	49	14	7	18–14
Christian organizations for	61	54	125	–7	118–25

children/youth				
Temperance	66	59	36	–7	35–6
Mission	80	72	273	–8	213–73
Total	47	46	2,547[a]	–1	1,528–2,547

Note

a The increase in N from 1980 to 2000 reflects the fact that we have gender composition data for more organizations in the latter registration.

participation patterns. All of the most successful organizational types have increased their percentage of female members. Female representation has also grown in political (including parties) and economic organizations, which are particularly important from a power and democracy perspective. This indicates that the political status of women and men is becoming more equal and that the gender gap in political activity is narrowing (Raaum 1995; Bergqvist 1999).

By contrast, the percentage of female members is reduced in the organization types that are struggling the most. The exception is the minor language-purity category and organizations for children and young people, where changes are minimal. The greatest shift has occurred within Christian mission and social/humanitarian work. Female membership has thus decreased more than male membership within four of the six organizational types that are in clearest decline, and has increased more than male membership within all expanding types. In spite of these changes, the largest of the most successful organizational types, i.e. sports, culture, leisure and economic organizations, are still dominated by men, even though women's participation is increasing.

So far, we have established that there has been a shift in women's participation pattern that has contributed to the growth of a primarily leisureoriented organizational society. How has this occurred? Are women forming new organizations of the 'modern' type, or are they entering pre-existing, previously predominantly male structures? Given the insights of the generational perspective outlined above, the answer to this question is highly relevant to the understanding of the changes in women's representation.

Figure 10.1 shows the gender composition of new and 'dead' associations since 1980, and alignments within surviving associations. Examining the differences between new and 'dead' associations first, we see that all-female associations constitute a mere tenth of the organizations formed after 1980, compared to almost half of the new organizations in the 1930s and 1950s. Conversely, all-female organizations represented a third of the organizations that were wound up in the period. Three-quarters of the female organizations that were shut down were Christian mission organizations and social/humanitarian associations (not shown). The two categories were equally affected.[16]

Organizations that are predominantly female, but not all-female, were not nearly as severely hit, and represent 17 per cent of all new associations. This proliferation took place in fields other than the traditionally chiefly female areas. Activities in the areas of music, culture and art prospered, while new mission organizations and social/humanitarian organizations comprised a marginal percentage of new organizations.

Most new organizations, however, feature either a proportional representation of

women and men or a majority of male members. The proportion of predominantly male organizations is twice as high among new organizations than among dead ones.

New vs. 'dead' organizations 1980–2000

	All-male	Predominantly male (66%+)	Mixed	Predominantly female (66%+)	All-female
Dead (N = 644)	9%	11%	30%	16%	33%
New (N = 1,158)	12%	22%	40%	17%	10%

☐ Dead (N = 644) ■ New (N = 1,158)

Surviving organizations 1980–2000

	All-male	Predominantly male (66%+)	Mixed	Predominantly female (66%+)	All-female
1980 (N = 891)	9%	22%	41%	8%	21%
2000 (N = 1,487)	8%	17%	37%	16%	22%

☐ 1980 (N = 891) ■ 2000 (N = 1,487)
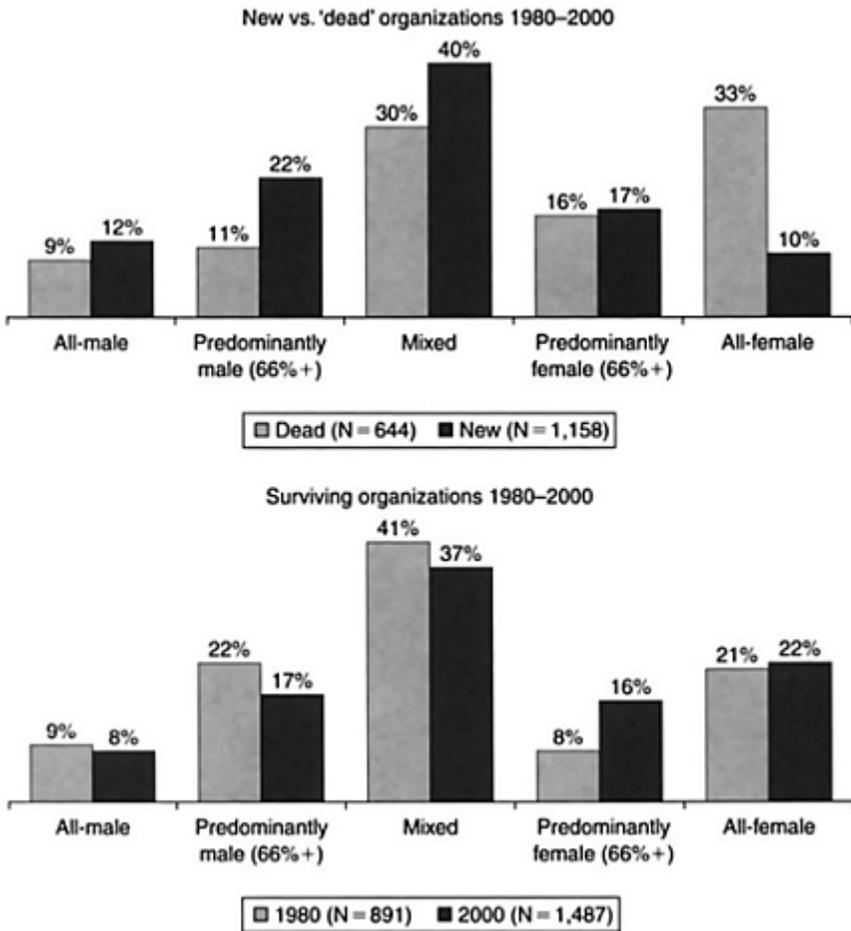
Figure 10.1 Gender composition and the dynamics of change.[17]

There are only minor differences between the development in the 1980s and 1990s (not shown in Figure 10.1). The only dissimilarity is a decrease in the founding rate and slight increase in the extinction rate of all-male organizations in the 1990s.[18] This suggests that the weakened legitimacy of genderspecific organizations no longer applies only to all-female associations.

The development in surviving organizations is in the *opposite* direction, *away* from male dominance towards proportionality or female dominance (see right-hand side of Figure 10.1). In all of the main categories, with the exception of the humanitarian organizations, either the percentage of organizations dominated by women has increased, or the percentage of organizations dominated by men has fallen (not shown in Figure

10.1). The most comprehensive changes were found in sports clubs, musical groups, culture associations and hobby clubs. Among choir and musical groups there has been a shift from male to female dominance.

Table 10.3 depicts the changes within surviving organizations in more detail. It shows that while only one in nine all-female organizations have recruited male members, more than half of all-male organizations have opened up for women.[19] Most of these organizations are either trade unions for traditionally male professions or masculine activities such as shooting, boating, hunting and fishing. Forty per cent of predominantly male organizations have a higher percentage of female members. These organizations are primarily involved in sports, music and politics. Those organizations that have switched from mixed membership to female predominance are spread over a wider range of activities.

The all-female organizations have changed the least in terms of gender composition, with the exception of the opening up to men of the odd association for homemakers or for traditional handicrafts. This suggests that all-female organizations are *closed* to a greater extent than all-male organizations. All-female organizations most often remain female and few predominantly female organizations become all-female. There are similar examples among all-male organizations (e.g. The Free Masons, men's choirs), but these constitute a marginal segment of the organizational community compared to the all-female organizations.

In short, the segregated organizational society is leaking at both ends. The organizational types enjoying most rapid growth have either a relatively proportional gender division, or a majority of male or sometimes female members. But only rarely do we find members of only one sex. Segregated organizations are more likely to 'die' than are mixed organizations. Furthermore, new organizations are most often initiated by men, while women enter the organization at a later stage, resulting in increased female membership among surviving organizations. Given the assumption that the defining traits of an organization are determined 'at birth', these findings raise questions about the extent to which women decisively determine the form and content of the new organizational society.

The development in the distribution of leadership positions may cast

Table 10.3 Changes in gender composition among surviving organizations 1980–2000

	Increased % men	No change	Increased % women	Total
All-male	–	44	56	52
Predominantly male	7	53	40	108
Mixed	6	74	19	223
Predominantly female	28	65	7	43
All-female	11	89	–	148
Total	9	70	21	–
N	50	404	120	574

light on this question. Table 10.4 shows that while women are entering predominantly male organizations as members, equality in leadership is further away. The proportion of female leaders fell slightly from 1980 to 2000 due to the loss of all-female organizations and increased frequency of male leadership in social/humanitarian and Christian associations. If we calculate using a weighted mean, thus 'controlling for' the changes in the relative positions of the various types of organization, we then find a considerable rise in the proportion of female leaders. Thus, women have strengthened their positions in some of the expanding organization types. This does not, however, compensate for the loss of predominantly female organizations when we consider the total number of female and male leaders.

The percentage of female leaders has tripled in sports organizations and more than doubled in economic organizations over the past 20 years. Women are also much better-represented in the leadership of political organizations. In musical activities, women have moved from a minority to a majority position in terms of members, and this development is reflected in an even distribution of female and male leaders. Even so, five of six sports organizations, three of four economic organizations and two of three culture and leisure organizations have male leaders. In all of these categories women are clearly underrepresented in the leadership relative to their percentage of membership. But even though men are still dominant in most areas, the increase in female leadership, particularly in the areas of politics and economics, is comprehensive and consequential.[20]

Increased female representation among the members does not automatically entail equal representation in the leadership. It is not unusual that predominantly female organizations have a male leader, but the opposite is rare. Within those organizations that we refer to as 'mixed',

Table 10.4 Percentage of organizations with female leaders, 1980 and 2000

	% female leaders		% difference
	1980	*2000*	
Language	15	14	–1
Sports	5	16	11
Economic	10	24	14
Political	16	29	13
Culture and leisure	26	32	6
Choir, music, theatre	35	50	15
Temperance	57	59	2
Children, youth	54	61	7
Christian mission	73	64	–9
Social, humanitarian	86	72	–14

Total	47	44	–3
Weighted mean	38	42	4

the clear majority of the leaders are men.[21] This is particularly evident among large organizations, which presumably are more visible and significant in their local communities than are smaller organizations.[22]

In sum, while women are slowly approaching equal representation in the memberships of growing organization types, men still dominate in terms of leadership. But in both political, economic and sports organizations women have strengthened their positions noticeably over the past 20 years.

Changes in organizational structure

Above, we have documented how changes in men and women's priorities affect the rise or demise of different activities and purposes. But have they influenced the form as well as content of organizations? Do men and women organize themselves along the same patterns as earlier? Who initiates change?

Table 10.5 compares two defining traits of voluntary organizations in 1980 and 2000: the geographical area that they cover, and their affiliation with a national organization. Table 10.5 shows that predominantly male, predominantly female and mixed organizations are becoming increasingly similar. Gender categories are increasingly irrelevant in the explanation of variations between organizational types. The new organizations are all moving in the same direction, irrespective of gender composition. However, new and old organizations differ the most in the predominantly female category.

One of the clearest developments within this category is that women's organizations are transcending village communities. Most of the new organizations of this type cover larger geographical areas than the village, and this model is less common among new predominantly female organizations than among organizations with a proportional gender mix. The latter category is affected by the growth of neighbourhood associations, whose area of coverage is *smaller* than the local community as such. There is, in other words, simultaneous movement upwards and downwards in scale.

Among predominantly male organizations, a shift occurs with the new organizations of the 1990s. Organizations based in villages are rare now, and organizations that cover several municipalities represent 29 per cent of the new organizations. Many of the new organizations represent rather marginal interests, thus creating a need to recruit members from larger geographical areas.

The decline of village organizations is, on the one hand, a result of a general process of centralization. Small local communities have lost key functions over the last two decades. At the same time, improved communications have facilitated geographical expansion. This, in turn, makes it easier to establish organizations which cater for more unusual interests.

Table 10.5 Characteristics of dead, new and surviving organizations (1980–
2000) by gender composition (28 of 33 rural municipalities)

	Predominantly male[a]				Mixed					Predominantly female[b]					
	Surv. 1980	Surv. 2000	Dead	New. 1980s	New. 1990s	Surv. 1980	Surv. 2000	Dead	New. 1980s	New. 1990s	Surv. 1980	Surv. 2000	Dead	New. 1980s	New. 1990s
Geographical area															
Village	48	43	49	38	22	69	62	72	50	45	79	75	80	45	42
Entire municipality	40	42	35	43	50	29	32	26	34	41	19	22	19	50	58
Several municipalities	11	15	16	19	29	2	6	3	16	14	3	3	1	5	8
Total	267	377	100	173	217	365	543	160	208	242	257	556	255	119	183
Affiliated with national organization															
Yes	87	79	78	71	64	84	83	66	68[a]	55	94	89	75	71[a]	54
Total	266	368	100	124	212	361	530	151	163[a]	235	244	538	237	91[a]	175

Notes
a Both all-male organizations and predominantly male organizations,
b Both all-female organizations and predominantly female organizations.
Abbreviation: Surv.=surviving.

On the other hand, this change has been greater for the predominantly female organizations than for the mixed organizations. Only among the former can we speak of a *qualitative break* with the old model, reflecting a qualitative change in the role of women. Women's areas of activity are not to the same extent restricted to the immediate local surroundings. This indicates that predominantly female organizations are becoming more broadly represented and visible in the public sphere, given that the organizations maintain a significant degree of outwardly directed activity.

The new predominantly female organizations differ from both the surviving and dead ones in that a much smaller percentage is affiliated with a national organization. This occurred as late as the 1990s, while predominantly male organizations began their process of independence much earlier. Among the newest organizations, i.e. those established in the last five years, a *minority* is linked up to national networks, and this is equally frequent for predominantly female and predominantly male organizations. The traditional hierarchical organizational model has fallen out of favour, and Norway is in the process of developing a *two-part* organizational society, which is reminiscent of that found in the Anglo-American and Continental European contexts (Selle 1998; Heitmann and Selle 1999). This implies a break with traditions originating with the first popular movements, and may result in comprehensive changes in the relationship between centre and periphery in Norwegian society.

Both of the changes outlined above have been initiated by predominantly male organizations, while women's organizations have followed suit. Women's organizations are now less frequently associated with national organizations than are predominantly male organizations. They are no longer champions of the traditional organizational form, as was the case until the 1980s.

Table 10.5 also shows that surviving organizations are more often linked to national networks than dead organizations were. As argued above, affiliation to a national organization increases an organization's chances of survival, while independent local branches are often short-lived enterprises. An increased turnover among predominantly

female organizations is therefore a probable result of the development.

To conclude, new predominantly male organizations, and to a certain degree new mixed organizations, challenged the hierarchical model before 1980. The predominantly female organizations upheld the traditional structure for a longer time. Now, the new generation of women's organizations elects the same organizational structure that the predominantly male organizations initiated. At the same time, as women have increased their membership in organizations that were previously predominantly male, they have also adopted an organizational form similar to the one found in men's organizations.

Women's own organizational society is gradually disappearing, with respect to both content and form. Whether this is to be considered a loss or a gain, not only for women but for society at large, depends on one's perspective. But there should be no doubt that these developments are the expressions of profound social change.

Conclusion

After 1960, the number of organizations and multitude of activities in the Norwegian organizational society has increased. The ascending activities are more geared towards leisure interests, more inwardly directed and less ideological than those which are in decline. The local level has become increasingly independent of the national level. These developments have gained momentum over the last ten to 20 years, resulting from increased female participation in the labour force, growing affluence, and secularization.

This alters the function of voluntary organizations as intermediary structures in the civil society. First, their role as social, identity-creating institutions may diminish as they relinquish ideologies to rally round, and participation becomes more random and non-committal. Practice becomes the overarching institution: the specific activity is more important than the framework within which it is carried out. Elsewhere, we have noted this tendency in the increasing divide between voluntary work and organizational activity, and in the fact that organizations have increasingly shorter life spans (Selle and Øymyr 1995; Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen 2000; Wollebæk and Selle 2002). Second, the organizations' role as an intermediate democratic structure between the individual and the political system may also be diminishing. Their role as a corrective to state and market and as a critical public is depleted through the rise of inwardlydirected activity.

For a long time, women represented a counterforce to this development. However, as the values and preferences of women have become increasingly similar to those of men, the birth of new women's organizations has slowed and recruitment has failed. They have become more peripheral in the public conception of organizational life. As these counterforces now surrender their power, it is likely that the movement towards a new organizational society with different characteristics from the one we know, will gain momentum.

What does this mean for women's position in the voluntary sector and in democracy in general? On the one hand, increased representation of women in economic organizations (including labour unions) and in political parties entails more direct political influence. Women are no longer relegated to a distinct segment of the organizational society, whose direct links to political institutions were often, but certainly not always, weak. Women's

individual freedom to choose the purposes that they wish to engage in or work for has increased. Women no longer primarily join organizations whose aims are linked to the traditional image of women's roles.

However, though the exclusion of women is less systematic than it once was, men are still in the majority in the politically oriented organizational types. The gender gap has been narrowed considerably, but it is still there (Raaum 1999). We cannot determine here whether it is a lack of motivation, a greater workload resulting from the combination of paid work and home responsibilities, or some other cultural barrier that is preventing women from participating in organizational life to the same extent or in the same central positions as men do. We do not know whether reduced underrepresentation of women in economic interest organizations and political parties gives women new political power as long as they still represent a minority in both membership and leadership positions. The question also remains as to whether increased representation of women in local leisure activity-related initiatives can compensate for the loss of important national movements in terms of political influence at a national level.

Furthermore, it is to an increasing degree individual women, rather than women as a social category, who act. Thus, the decline of the predominantly female movements may imply a loss of female power in the voluntary sector, if we consider women as a *group*. The organizational society has changed from one in which women dominated certain areas while men dominated others, to one in which women are in a minority in most parts of organizational life. In conclusion, women may become less visible in organized activity.

The loss of an organizational society for women has consequences beyond organizational life as such. The traditional women's organizations have historically been an important node in a female network of political activity and influence. As Hernes (1984) showed with data from the 1970s, participation in women's organizations was tightly linked to political participation. Members in women's organizations more often took part in local and national campaigns than did non-organized women and women in the predominantly male labour unions. The vast majority of members in women's organizations were often members of more than one organization. They were also highly overrepresented in political positions and on the election ballots of the political parties. Thus it is an important political infrastructure and 'school of democracy' that is now eroding. We do not know the degree to which it will be replaced by something else.

Most of us do not desire a return to the traditional gender role pattern that served as the foundation for the traditional gender-segregated organizational society. However, the new organizational society is not free of male dominance. Even though the horizontal gender distribution, i.e. the complementary organizational society, is greatly diminished, we still find strongly gendered hierarchies within many organizational fields. Complementary gender roles seem to have retained a hold in the new and prosperous organizations in the areas of sports, culture and leisure pursuits.

After 30 years of participating in these activities, women are nowhere near achieving equal representation. However, developments are moving along that track. We do not know how fast or how far the development will go. But we do know its direction.

Notes

1 Thanks to Nina C.Raaum and Nina Berven for thorough and critical remarks. Thanks also to Kristin Strømsnes and Tommy Tranvik for helpful comments.

2 The point is not, of course, that one or the other is completely right. While there was hierarchy in some fields, there was more equality or complementarity in others.

3 Hernes also claims that women's organizations created non-traditional alliances between women of different political persuasions and with different kinds of affiliation with the labour market.

4 Norway still has one of the most gender-segregated working communities in all of Europe, and the difference between boys' and girls' educational choices is particularly large in Norway.

5 POH is a collaboration between the University of Bergen, the Cultural Affairs Section of the Hordaland regional government and the local government authorities in Hordaland. In 1980, 4,500 organizations were registered. Each of these organizations received a comprehensive questionnaire, to which approximately 2,500 responded (Leipart and Selle 1984). The next registration took place in 1988 (Selle and Øymyr 1989), this time without a questionnaire, though important information concerning organizational structure and membership was collected. In 1998/99 new data were gathered as part of the *Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project* (Wollebæk and Selle 2002). On this occasion five of 33 local communities opted out of the project. All registered organizations received a questionnaire, to which 60 per cent responded. Registration was thus carried out in 1979/80, 1988 and 1998/99, which we refer to in the interest of simplicity as 1980, 1990, and 2000 in what follows.

6 Two other counties, Buskerud and Finnmark, were also included in 1940 and 1990. The range of different types of organization was significantly narrower in 1990 than it was in 1940 in the three regions (Selle and Øymyr 1995:115, 150). Hordaland is slightly different in that counter-cultural organizations are relatively stronger there and there is a greater degree of organization for children and young people, which are precisely the activities that demonstrate the greatest decline. Hordaland is becoming increasingly representative of the country at large, and for this reason the contrast between the old and the new is particularly visible here. Individual surveys have also concluded that differences in voluntary organization with regard to location and population density are diminishing (Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen 2000: fn. 8).

7 In this chapter we do not distinguish between organizations that actually exclude either men or women and organizations which are open to both but have only male or female members.

8 The estimate is based on the *Election Survey* of 1957 (Leipart and Sande 1981) and the *Survey on Giving and Volunteering* (Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen 2000). In 1957 the average number of memberships in voluntary organizations varied from 0.65 in the eastern, western and northern parts of Norway to 0.87 in the south (Selle and Øymyr 1995:180). In 1998 the average Norwegian belonged to 1.3

organizations and the regional differences were all but eliminated (Wolle bæk, Selle and Lorentzen 2000).

9 As there was no registration between 1940 and 1980, the figure is based on those organizations registered in 1980 that recorded having been established in the 1950s. Even so, this measure will not capture those organizations that were established at the same time but wound up prior to 1980.

10 Many of the new local leisure organizations nevertheless chose an organizational form that linked them to national organizations, despite their independence of the popular movements. This underlines the importance of *generation.* In the early expansion phase of the leisure sector, hierarchical structure was still predominant in organizational life, and the newly established organizations often elected this structure even if the nature of their activities suggested that a national supraorganization was superfluous. Today most leisure organizations stay clear of national organizations. Alternative models are more accessible, in both a structural and cognitive sense. We might even claim that many leisure organizations established in the early expansive phase chose the 'wrong' organizational form and that they have carried this feature with them into today's organizational society. Very few organizations that belong to national networks will loosen those ties once they are established.

11 The Norwegian State Church lost 197,000 members between 1950 and 2000 (http://www.kirken.no/Bakgrunn/OM_kirkestatistikk.cfm). From 1950 to 1978, the net loss was 70,000 members, as about 80,000 disappeared between 1978 and 1987, while 47,000 left the Church after 1987 (*Nettavisen,* April 7th, 2000).

12 The clearest evidence of this development is found in the environmental movement. None of the new organizations formed in this area in the 1980s had local branches, ordinary membership or internal democracy in the most common sense (Strømsnes and Selle 1996). Developments in this sector are representative of a more general process.

13 Organizations that covered smaller geographical areas than the village existed prior to the development of the modern organizational community. They are described in the literature as 'barn-raising' type initiatives, or various other types of voluntary local initiatives (Try 1985; Aarsæther and Røyseland 2000).

14 The figures for 1980 and 1990 have been corrected on the basis of information given in the 1998 registration for organizations that we know were left out at the time. We have no corresponding corrective for the 2000 figures, which are likely to be somewhat higher than indicated in Table 10.1.

15 Survey data show a modest decline in religiosity in the period. For example, the percentage 'not believing in God' increased from nine to 12 from 1991 to 1998, while the percentage believing or knowing that God exists decreased from 45 to 42 per cent. The proportion who pray daily decreased from 17 to 13 percent (Lund 1999).

16 In addition to the organizations whose demise we have had confirmed, we have reason to believe that an additional 488 organizations have disappeared since 1980, as they were not registered in either 1990 or 2000. Of the total, we have information on the gender composition in 1980 for 120 of them, and the main tendency here

corresponds closely with the overall trend among dead organizations.

17 We have excluded five municipalities in which there was no registration in 1998. For organizations wound up in the period from 1980 to 1990, information was taken from the 1980 survey. For organizations formed between 1980 and 1990 and organizations wound up between 1990 and 2000 our information is based on the 1990 survey. For organizations formed beween 1990 and 2000 our data is from the 2000 survey. Where we lack information for 1990, we have supplied additional data from 1980 (dead organizations 1990–2000) and from 2000 (new organizations 1980–90).

18 All-male organizations represented 9 per cent of extinct organizations in the 1980s, compared to 11 per cent in the 1990s, and 15 per cent of new organizations in the 1980s compared to 11 per cent in the 1990s.

19 The dynamics here are similar to those of the labour market. The number of gendered jobs is falling as women enter arenas that were previously male, but men are not entering traditionally female professions (Nordli Hansen 1995:17).

20 This tendency was also evident in the period from 1960 to 1980 (Selle and Øymyr 1995).

21 Among the predominantly female organizations, 34 per cent have a male leader, while 10 per cent of the predominantly male organizations have a female leader. Of the mixed organizations, 61 per cent have a male leader.

22 Fifty-seven per cent of mixed organizations with fewer than 20 members have a female leader, compared to 44 per cent of the organizations with between 21 and 50 members, 34 per cent of the organizations with 51–100 members and 30 per cent of those with over 100 members.

11
Civic communities and multicultural democracy

Meindert Fennema and jean Tillie

In 1963, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba published their groundbreaking study about civic culture in five nations. They demonstrated a clear correlation between active engagement in voluntary associations and subjective political competence (Almond and Verba 1963:320). The Tocquevillean argument was corroborated:

> If the citizen is a member of some voluntary organization, he is involved in the broader social world but is less dependent upon and less controlled by his political system. The association of which he is a member can represent his needs and demands before the government. It would make the government more chary of engaging in activities that would harm the individual.
>
> (Almond and Verba 1963:301)

Almond and Verba stress the fact that even in interest groups the individual citizen has to combine one's own political demands with the demands of other citizens. By doing so the democratic citizens learn to overstep their own private interest already at a very early stage of the political process (Almond and Verba 1963). The political culture approach in political science has in the 1970s and 1980s been marginalized by the resurgence of a Marxist and structuralist approach to political life and by a narrowly-defined rational choice paradigm. Yet in the 1990s, the interest in civil society and its role in the wellbeing of democratic governance has reemerged (Cohen 1999) and its renewed popularity has been greatly enhanced by the work of Putnam (1993). The work of Putnam, in turn, has created a heated debate on nearly all aspects of his research but particularly on the causal model that is implicit in *Making Democracy Work*. Is it true that civil society creates strong and democratic governance or may it also be the other way around (Tarrow 1996)? Is it true that voluntary associations create civic virtue or is it the other way around and do we find virtuous citizens in associations because of a process of self-selection (Stolle 2000)? Do all voluntary associations add to democratic governance or only some (Levi 1996)? Do we also find the beneficial effects of civic community in an ethnically or religiously divided society (Cochrane, Chapter 3 of this volume)? How do we define social trust and how does social trust relate to political trust (Hardin 1999; Offe 1999; Warren 1999)?

These questions are highly relevant. They do not, however, undermine some of the empirical findings that point to an undeniable link between voluntary associations and democratic governance. Van Deth has convincingly demonstrated that members of voluntary associations *do* have a more favourable attitude to democracy and show more

political interest (Van Deth 2000). For Belgium, Billiet and Cambré have found the same positive relationship but much a weaker one than they had expected and it is also more differentiated. Sports organizations and youth organizations in Belgium did not seem to contribute to political trust and political interest (Billiet and Cambré 1999). Hooghe (1999) has shown, however, that the relationship between being a member of a Belgian voluntary association and political interest becomes stronger if past membership of voluntary associations is also taken into account. Voluntary associations apparently create at least some civic competence that lasts a lifetime. In this chapter we do not go into all the questions that are raised in the discussion on voluntary associations and democracy. We just want to unravel the theoretical argumentation that is often used to underpin this relation (Section 2). We find three different paradigms in which the relationship between voluntary associations and democracy is analysed. We also want to stress the importance of civic elites for democratic governance. We will argue that even uncivic associations may contribute to democratic governance. And finally we will argue that even in ethnically divided societies, voluntary associations may contribute to the working of democracy.

Why voluntary associations are good for democracy

The role of social trust and cooperativeness as a component of civic culture cannot be overemphasized. It is, in a sense, a generalized resource that keeps a democratic polity operating.

<div align="right">(Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba)</div>

The members of any political elite provide society with governance and in return they claim certain privileges. The legitimacy of these privileges will find expression in the degree of citizens' trust in the governing elites. In a democratic society the voters monitor both the amount of privileges and the quality of governance. The paradox of democratic governance is that the better equipped citizens are to monitor the elites and require good governance, the more able they are to provide collective goods for themselves by means of voluntary associations. These voluntary associations form, so to speak, a countervailing power to the government. Active members of voluntary associations form a large network, because they tend to have many acquaintances in common. A common acquaintance *C* of *A* and *B* means that *A* can contact *B* through C if in need for resources that *B* commands. It also means that *A* knows that *B* will be informed about his goodwill and co-operative behaviour as well as about his record of defection or betrayal. It is therefore rational for *A* to co-operate rather than defect *B* if it wants to make use of *B*'s resources in future.[1] Voluntary associations thus form the molecules in a civic community. But without overlapping membership at the mass level or at the elite level such voluntary associations cannot form a civic community.[2] At the elite level overlapping membership of the boards of voluntary associations form a network of interlocking directorates that is crucial for the maintenance of a civic community.

It has been demonstrated that members of a certain community prefer relations with

those members that have a higher number of acquaintance relations (Lin 2001). For this reason, centrality in a civic community network tends to be cumulative. This is how a community elite is formed. Elites can contribute to the creation and maintenance of social capital of the community by organizing networks of horizontal and vertical relations. Horizontal relations are often based on informal and voluntary reciprocity. Vertical relations are more difficult to maintain on a voluntary basis, because of the implicit imbalance of such relations. Hence vertical relations are more often than not institutionalized and enforced. Schools, enterprises and military organizations are typically based on vertical relations, even though horizontal relations also exist in these institutions. No society, not even a pure democracy, can maintain itself without a certain amount of verticality. Yet even vertical relations imply a certain amount of voluntariness. That is the message of Talleyrand's dictum: 'You can do anything with bayonets, except sit on them'. And in any relation that implies some form of voluntariness, trust is an essential element of its maintenance. Even though trust is more typical for horizontal relations, even vertical relations cannot be maintained without a certain amount of trust. The pupil needs to trust his teacher, the worker needs to trust his manager, the soldier needs to trust his commander and the citizen needs to trust his government.

Trust is related to accountability and accountability is increased by democratic institutions and by horizontal communication. Through the monitoring of reputations civic communities make individuals comply with the norms of that community. Gossip is one of the means to keep the members of the elite in line. The capacity to gossip is often more evenly distributed than property, power or income (Wittek and Wielers 1998). It is the last resort of democratic governance if all democratic institutions have broken down.

But what exactly is it that makes these associations so crucial for democracy? In the first place, so it seems, it is their *voluntary* character. As an alternative to loyalty, members of voluntary organizations always have the option of exit and that gives their voice a natural strength. Since each member can withdraw from it, the free will of the associates is the bottom line of the voluntary organization. Their support can never be taken for granted; potential members must be 'seduced' to join. Forced cooperation can do the same trick, as is shown in aristocratic or communist societies. But in such societies citizens are not free and independent. An elected government can also enforce co-operation for a common goal, but that would easily lead to democratic despotism. In both cases—in aristocratic or communist societies and in centralized state-oriented democracies—vertical relations predominate, whereas in a society made of voluntary associations horizontal relations predominate. This brings us to the second aspect of voluntary associations: the importance of *horizontal* relations for democratic governance. Putnam has argued that in societies where vertical relations predominate, co-operative skills and generalized trust cannot develop because of the dependency that is inherent in vertical relations (Putnam 1993:88). Members of voluntary associations learn to argue, they learn to compromise and to come to joint decisions. This civic competence is crucial for democratic governance.

There is clearly a paradox working in democratic governance. On the one hand, a democratic government is appointed by the people and should therefore act as its agent. However, to make the government act as its agent the citizens apparently need more than just a vote. They need to have associations that provide governance independent of the

democratically elected government. These associations make citizens more competent to handle their own affairs and to monitor the government. This was demonstrated by Almond and Verba at the macro-level as well as on the micro-level. Membership of voluntary associations was more frequent in the well-established democracies, like the US and the UK, than in new democracies like Germany, Italy and Mexico. Members of such organizations considered themselves more competent citizens than nonmembers, while active members considered themselves more competent than passive members. There appeared to be a relation between subjective civic competence and actual political participation.

What they did not show was how far civic engagement and political participation also leads to *better* government. We are indebted to Robert Putnam for his demonstration that good governance in Italian regions is related to the number of voluntary associations, to electoral and political participation and to political trust (Putnam 1993). Civic engagement appears to be crucial in the explanation of governmental performance. Thus, and this is the third reason for the importance of civil society for democratic governance, we would argue that voluntary associations increase the citizens' capacity to *monitor* the government. Putnam's thesis looks like the last element in the corroboration of Tocqueville's analysis of democratic governance. It relates the structure of civic community to political participation and political trust and sees good governance as the dependent variable.

So far we have argued that civil society is made up of many interconnected voluntary associations. But is this also true of voluntary associations that do not defend the liberal values of the democratic polity? Roßteutscher (2002) argues that voluntary associations may just as well foment a political culture that is anti-democratic and thus undermines democratic governance rather than supporting it. Referring to the nationalist associations at the turn of the century in Germany, she argues that voluntary associations may very well amplify an authoritarian and nationalist political culture. Roßteutscher makes a point that is very relevant to the present multicultural societies. Indeed, many ethnic associations have a nationalist orientation and are not particularly favourable to democratic values. Why then should these associations contribute to the democratic process? The answer is twofold. First, as Roßteutscher herself argues, these associations may contribute to the democratic process if the environment is sufficiently civic. Voluntary associations tend to amplify the mainstream political culture. This is so, Roßteutscher argues, because most members of voluntary associations are only moderately interested in politics and they will only pick up the most visible and audible political discourse. Only if the mainstream political culture is democratic, can voluntary associations contribute to democracy. In short, civic engagement is not in itself democratic but within democratic governance it tends to become so. However, we would add, this is only the case if these voluntary organizations are not sectarian, i.e. only if these associations are not fully isolated from mainstream society.

What then if voluntary organizations are anti-democratic, authoritarian and isolated from mainstream democratic society? Even then, we would argue, such organizations provide their members with some tools of civic competence. This is so because all voluntary associations, even the most hierarchical ones, have a culture of deliberation. Almost by definition, members of associations debate amongst themselves, which in turn

tends to lead to increased levels of political interest. So the art of deliberation, that is such an important element of civic competence, is learned also in voluntary associations that are inimical to parliamentary democracy. This is what makes (former) members of revolutionary movements such competent citizens.[3] Second, if these associations operate in a democratic framework they will learn to profit from accepting the 'rules of the game'. Nothing adds more to a process of de-radicalization than participation in democratic institutions. We can illustrate this point by reference to the internal struggle within the Turkish Islamic organizations between the old and the young guard that took place during the 1990s. The old guard rejected the political culture in the Netherlands and wanted to stay away from Dutch politics while the younger generation advocated an active participation in politics because they conceived it to be beneficial to the association's mission (Sunier 1995).

In conclusion, even illiberal and sectarian associations that are isolated from a mainstream democratic culture may contribute to the democratic process, or at least they do not necessarily frustrate it. The democratic process is by no means blocked if a substantial number of people do not share democratic values, as long as they do not refuse to live according to its procedures. In our perspective, democratic rule requires full freedom of public expression not only as a fundamental right of citizens but also to allow the decision-making process to function properly. Hence the existence of voluntary associations that do not share the values of liberal democracy does not in itself undermine democratic governance. Furthermore, by organizing a group of citizens they will articulate those citizens' interests and moral values. Democracy should be able to deal with deep moral conflict (Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Fennema and Maussen 2000).

Before we advance our exploration of the relation between civil society and democracy, however, we have to look at the Tocquevillean argument more closely, because the causal connection between voluntary associations and democratic governance is not as simple as it appears. Rather than one simple causal model, we can excavate three different causal models underneath the general argument. The first model focuses on interest mediation and articulation. It argues that voluntary organizations can better articulate their members' interests and present them in the political arena. Thus the governing elite is better informed about the preferences of the citizenry and the group can force the government to be attentive to its needs. This *interest articulation model* fits well into an input-output approach of democratic governance (Easton 1965).

The second model focuses on civic competence of individual citizens and holds that voluntary associations generate civic competence among its members. This is so because members of voluntary associations learn to argue in terms of a (more) general interest and learn to trust each other. By increasing the quality of its citizens, the associations indirectly increase the democratic content of the central government. Civic virtues teach citizens to contribute to the common good even if such contribution would be detrimental to their short-term private interests. The virtuous citizen is well aware of the fact that a free rider strategy is ultimately self destructive because if all citizens refuse to contribute to the common good, collective goods are impossible to obtain. He is therefore willing to contribute to the common good on the condition that others make the same sacrifices. In this case, strategic trust and civic virtue overlap. This *civic culture model* fits well into a cultural approach to democratic governance (Almond and Verba 1963).

The third model emphasizes the members' ability to collaborate and the associations' capacity to solve the collective action problem of the group without resorting to the State. This in itself does not increase the democratic content of the State's output, but it does so indirectly by increasing the group's autonomy vis-à-vis the State and thus its potential to monitor the State. The more independent of the State the citizens are, the better they can control the central government. This monitoring capacity in turn increases the democratic content of the central government. This *social capital model* fits best into a principal-agent analysis of the political process (see for a somewhat similar approach, Edwards and Foley 2001). In Figure 11.1 we have visualized the three models.

In the remainder of this section, the arguments upon which each of the models rests will be presented in more detail.

Interest articulation through voluntary associations

> *An NAACP official telephoned the Library of Congress and told the chief librarian that the library had 18,000 books with the word 'nigger' in them and that all the books had to be removed in a week. 'But' protested the librarian, 'we have 50,000 volumes with the word "bastard" in them'. I know', says the official, 'but you bastards aren't organized'.*
>
> (The Complete Book of Ethnic Humor)

Eighteenth century democrats were inimical to group formation because they saw such 'factions' as dangerous for the democratic process. In the most famous number 10 of the federalist papers James Madison defined a faction as:

> A number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent or aggregate interests of the community.
>
> (Madison 1788/1961)

Madison, unlike Rousseau, did not see a possibility to remove the causes of faction—which are part of the nature of man—without destroying the liberty 'which is essential to its existence'. He therefore suggested counter-acting their evil effects by having as many factions as possible. Only the

Interest articulation
(*Input–output approach*)

Voluntary
associations

Civic competence
(*Cultural approach*)

Democratic
governance

Social capital
(*Principal-agent approach*)

Figure 11.1 Three causal chains between voluntary associations and
democracy.

interplay of a vast number of interest groups can prevent a faction of the dominant majority from taking permanent control of the government.

Later, pluralist writers have seen more positive sides of interest groups because such interest groups make it possible that ordinary citizens can articulate their interests. In the pluralist view, most citizens prefer to be 'dependent and strong' rather than being 'independent and weak'. Lelieveldt (2000) found in his study of a small town in the Netherlands that voluntary associations have very good access to the local government. He suggests that they have much better access than individuals. Furthermore, he found a relation between the network centrality of voluntary organizations and the political participation of their members. Even though we don't know the causal connection between the network centrality of associations and the level of participation of their members, we assume that it may be useful for citizens to unite in voluntary associations, especially if their interests are not well represented in the political arena. History has shown that interest organizations can be very successful in emancipating minority groups that suffer from oppression, exclusion or discrimination. In Europe, the most successful interest organizations have been the trade unions that have organized and articulated the interests of the workers. Such associations, once established, have of course a tendency to define the interests of their members in a specific way and impose a form of discipline upon them that jeopardizes their individual autonomy. As such they undermine the democratic values they claim to implement. Robert Michels (1962) was one of the first scholars to argue against political parties on these grounds. At closer inspection, Michels's claim only holds when the loss of individual autonomy within the socialdemocratic parties is not offset by the gain in societal equality that the members obtain through these parties. Second, 'individual autonomy' is a construct that should be defined in relation to the political efficacy of the individual citizens. It may well be that the autonomy of citizens who become members of a voluntary organization that is hierarchically organized, decreases and increases at the same time. It may decrease because of the organizational discipline imposed on him or her, but it may increase because of the growing sense of political efficacy that results from joining the organization.

However, if one is forced to become a member of an interest organization because everybody else is organized, or because there is an economic need to do so, then the

freedom to remain unorganized is at risk. This has become an acute problem in societies where corporatism reigns supreme, such as in Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway or Sweden. In corporatism, interest organizations become part of the State structure and loose their voluntary character. The practice of the closed shop in US labour relations is another example of interest organizations that have lost their voluntary character by becoming part of the corporate structure. Whether or not the balance of voluntary organizations tips in favour of democratic governance depends at least partly on the efficiency with which these organizations defend the interests of their members and the openness of such organizations, both at the entry and at the exit.

Civic competence and voluntary associations

> *In democratic countries knowledge of how to combine is the mother of all kinds of knowledge; on its progress depends that of others.*
> (Alexis de Tocqueville)

Liberal democracy crucially depends on the attitudes and competence of its citizens. Such liberal attitudes and civic competences are learned (or *not* learned) in the family and at school (Newton 1999), but they are also acquired in associations that make up civil society. Membership of voluntary associations generates capacities which make citizens feel that they need to do something about bad governance by engaging in a process of political mobilization. Thus, voluntary associations are a hotbed of civic engagement. But why should civic competence that has been built up in one voluntary association spill over to other organizations and to the public space? Why should members of voluntary associations more readily collaborate in a common endeavour which is not part of the mission of the association of which they are members and why should they be more likely to be self-confident in politics and trust their government? In other words, why should dedicated members of a church choir or a bowling club be good citizens? There are two answers to this question. The first is that civic competence is a generalized capacity that is not restricted to the association where it originally developed. This answer stresses the cultural aspect of civil society. It is based on the assumption that the norms and values of a voluntary association have a civic core that has wider implications than the group in which such norms and values are embedded. Voluntary associations create civic competence among their members and these competences are transferred to a wider circle of associational activities that make up civil society. An important aspect of civic competence is the willingness of citizens to work together in an attempt to influence the (local) government. Such civic co-operation does not have to be realized, it is rather a potential influence.

> A citizen within the civic culture has, then, a reserve of influence. He is not constantly involved in politics, he does not actively oversee the behavior of political decision makers. But he does have the potential to act if there is need.
> (Almond and Verba 1963:481).

> Voluntary associations have a socializing effect upon their members. (Former) members of voluntary associations tend to be more positively oriented towards their neighborhood and tend to have a stronger sense of political efficacy and political trust.
>
> <div align="right">(Hooghe 1999)</div>

This brings us to the second, institutionalist answer to the question of what causes—or at least induces—democratic governance. Here the structural side of civic community is emphasized. In a civic community, voluntary associations communicate amongst one another through informal contacts and because their membership and boards overlap. If memberships of voluntary associations overlap, civic competence that is built up in one organization can immediately be used in another organization. However, even if such an overlap of memberships is scarce there can still be a transfer of civic competence if the boards of these voluntary organizations overlap. The civic competence that has been built up in one organization can be activated in another organization because of the overlap in board membership. Interlocking directorates among voluntary associations play a crucial role in the formation of civic community because they create permanent horizontal communication channels between different organizations. They create, however, not just channels of communications. They also express *trust* between organizations because the interlocked organizations have direct access to each other through an interlocking director. As a network of the civic elite these interlocks also maintain the norms and values of the community and add to the cohesion of the community. We would therefore expect stronger civic communities to have more voluntary associations that are horizontally connected through interlocking directorates. Especially if the horizontal relations exist only at the elite level in the form of interlocking board memberships, they can be a crucial element in the formation of civic communities. In segmented societies they are sometimes the only linkages between clusters of associations that have no overlapping membership with other clusters of associations. A network of interlocking directorates, therefore, can produce civic community even in divided societies where there is hardly any overlap in membership of voluntary organizations (Lijphart 1968).

Social capital and voluntary associations

> *Your corn is ripe to-day; mine is ripe to-morrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I shou 'd labour with you to-day, and that you shou 'd aid me to-morrow.*
>
> <div align="right">(David Hume)</div>

Voluntary associations are supposed to generate social trust, without which most forms of co-operation are impossible. Trust is defined here as goodwill among the members of an association which leads to risk taking in the decision to engage in interaction with other members of that associ-ation (Coleman 1990:91 ff). Especially co-operation to produce collective goods needs social trust because the aim of the co-operation is fairly abstract

and does not repay itself directly and immediately to each individual participant.

Social capital at the group level can be defined as the capacity of a group to produce collective goods and pursue common goals (Coleman 1990; Putnam 1993, 2000; Fukuyama 1995). The concept of social capital refers to surplus capacity. Social capital allows x to do what she otherwise would not be able to do. X can either be an individual (x) or a group (X). According to Nan (1999:35) social capital can be defined as 'resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions'. Flap (1999) has operationalized the concept of social capital in terms of network size, the nature of ties and the resources possessed by those in the network. All theorists of social capital seem to share the conviction that the concept consists of two related but analytically separable elements: structure and content. The structural element is often called association and is referred to as x's network or the network X. The content is referred to as trust and can be defined as an attitude of members towards x (often referred to as the *reputation* of x) or the attitude of x towards all members of X *(generalized trust)*. The concept of social capital can be visualized in a network consisting of points and lines of trust relation between these points. It is therefore redundant to speak of social capital in terms of social networks on the one hand and trust on the other, as if trust is an attribute of actors independent from the structure of the network: it is not. Trust is a relational concept that refers either to the network position of the individual in the group or to the network characteristics of the group as a whole. It takes at least two to trust. Trust is always embedded. Already in its earliest formulation, that of Hume, the concept of trust is emphatically relational. According to Hume, there cannot be society without trust. When we speak of a society, we assume that trust among members of that society—even between those that belong to different groups—should be higher than the trust between members and non-members of that society. Organizations seem to us paramount to the building and maintenance of social trust. Indeed, the probability that each man or woman returns the favours that have been done for her in a determinate future will increase if she knows that she is being monitored and that she can be sanctioned if she does not return the favours in due time. But trust cannot travel among organizations unless there are institutional links among these organizations. Civic community building is the creation of trust among organizations.

Social capital at the group level has a decisive influence on the political integration of immigrants in Dutch society. Tillie (2004) found that Turks in Amsterdam have a stronger sense of political efficacy and political trust than members of other ethnic groups. And even those Turks that themselves do not belong to a Turkish organization show a higher sense of political efficacy and trust even than members of other ethnic groups. He concludes that:

• 'Gates of access' to social capital at the community level are individual determinants of political participation (individual membership of organizations and social activities in the social network of the individual citizen);
• However, *levels* of political participation are determined by social capital at the community level. The higher the social capital at community level, the higher are the degrees of political participation;
• In an ethnic civic community you do not need many memberships to reach high levels of political participation. In a non-civic community many memberships can still result

in low levels of political participation (despite the fact that these memberships explain individual variation in political participation).

In a fragmented society, social trust will be higher within groups than between groups. Thus an ethnically divided society will have low levels of social trust at the national level, yet one may find high levels of social trust within the ethnic communities. It may therefore be useful to look in an ethnically divided society for civic community within ethnic groups rather than looking at the level of society as a whole.

Ethnic communities as civic communities

Much of the debate about multiculturalism has focused on the possibility that voluntary associations and cultural communities may infract upon the autonomy of citizens. Supporters of multiculturalism emphasize the equalizing effect of such organizations that has to be balanced against the price of decreased individual autonomy. However, for the individual citizen the choice seems not to be between voice and loyalty, but between voice through loyalty and no voice at all. Some communitarian defenders of multiculturalism even argue that the notion of individual autonomy is a liberal fallacy and that every citizen needs the backdrop of cultural organization to have an individual identity at all. We don't agree with Taylor (1994:62) that multicultural democracy requires a substantive conception of the good life—in fact we argue the opposite in maintaining that only a procedural democracy is fit to govern a multicultural society (see also Fennema 2004). And yet the point that citizens have a democratic right to seek cultural identities and defend these identities collectively is well taken. We even present the argument that ethnic community building may contribute to the quality of the democratic process. In short we support the pluralist argument that minority groups can best defend their interests through voluntary organizations and by doing so increase the social equality in society and the political efficacy of their members. There are three good liberal reasons for this. First and foremost, ethnic organizations can present the members' interests better than each of the single ethnic citizens would be able to do. Ethnic organizations can function as a megaphone for the demands of the group members, even if the loudhailing device may distort the individual voices. This distortion may be inevitable. Furthermore, it is not without remedy because ethnic organizations in a liberal democracy somehow have to treat their members as free and autonomous subjects and they have to allow for horizontal relations. Horizontal relations have the effect that members of an association not only have the option of loyalty, but also have a *voice* (Hirschman 1970). By expressing voice in their ethnic organizations ethnic citizens practise the art of civic engagement. This is a *second* reason why ethnic associations may contribute to the democratic process. Through horizontal linkages members can *monitor* their boards—even if these boards are not democratically elected. Disapproval of the leadership's policies can be aired and leadership is held accountable to the rank and file. In other words active members of ethnic associations have a possibility to raise their voice within the ethnic associations as well as in the broader political arena of multicultural democracy. *Third,* the network of ethnic associations may create enough social capital to produce the collective goods for which the ethnic group would otherwise

be dependent on the State to obtain.

We assume that trust circulating in ethnic communities will spill over into trust in local political institutions if community leaders are integrated in the political system. This may work bottom up as well as top down. *Bottom up,* the political trust will increase when members of the ethnic community can monitor their ethnic leaders by way of the reputation ladder of these leaders in the community and through democratic procedures. The higher the level of participation of the members of an ethnic group in the ethnic associations, and the higher the trust of the rank and file in the directors of these associations, the higher the quality of multicultural democracy.

T*op down,* political trust will increase if the leaders are able to 'spread' their trust in, and their commitment to, the political institutions through the network of interlocked ethnic associations. Of course, ethnic leaders will only do so if they consider political institutions as efficient and fair. If the government has an open ear for the demands of ethnic groups this will also increase the political commitment of ethnic leaders to the political institutions. Good governance itself creates political trust among citizens (Levi 1998; Rothstein 1999), but it does so in a two-step flow of communication (Katz 1957).

Ethnic myths and collective memories

We assume that political participation is related to the degree of ethnic community because individual members can more easily get access to the political arena through the ethnic networks and because social trust increases the self-confidence and political efficacy of the individual members of the community. But why should this civic community have an ethnic identity? Why is it that the civil society in a multicultural society is organized along ethnic lines? Our answer is simple: a civic community needs a founding myth and immigrant groups can more easily adhere to a founding myth that is related to their country of origin than to a myth that has little meaning and history for them. Hence an ethnic myth that harks back to the country of origin is often a safer way to integrate in a new society than a strategy of individual assimilation into the founding myth of the host society.

But how do we explain the need for a founding myth? It is very difficult to imagine that social trust is the automatic product of the enlightened understanding of self-seeking individuals. As Rothstein has shown (Rothstein 1999), social trust must be 'produced' by collective memories, that is, by specific constructions of the past that are sometimes deliberately created to forge a cohesive community. Essential parts of these collective memories are historical sites and traditions, which are more often than not 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm 1990; Galema 1993). In the case of most migrant groups these traditions are derived from the national culture of the country of origin. Some authors have pointed out that this 'ethnic culture' is quite often out of touch with realities both in the country of origin and in the host country. Steinberg has even called it 'a myth' (Steinberg 1989). Even an ethnic myth, however, can be very helpful to create social trust among the members of the ethnic group because it creates a shared identity. According to Smith, myth making is even an integral part of the formation of a nationalist ideology (Smith 1986:192). And in the foundational myths of nations 'chosen traumas'

and 'chosen glories' play a crucial role. A chosen trauma refers to an event 'that invokes in the members of one group intense feelings of having been humiliated and victimized by members of another group' (Volkan and Itzkowitz 1994:7). In the myth of liberation, which is the core part of a national myth, such chosen trauma is always there.

A chosen glory, inversely, refers to an event that induces in the members of the group intense feelings of having been successful or having triumphed deservedly over the members of another group. Chosen glories bolster feelings of self-esteem and trust while chosen traumas tend to lower the group's self-esteem. Yet once a chosen trauma has been established, reactivating that trauma may paradoxically raise the group's selfesteem and its ability to act collectively in an unconscious or conscious wish to repair what has been done to their ancestors and release themselves from the burden of humiliation that has become part of the group's identity (Volkan and Itzkowitz 1994:9). The myth of national liberation in that sense is a release of the chosen trauma. It is a way to cope with that trauma.

A radiant past is an asset to the group's self-esteem. A Turkish politician in Amsterdam expressed this very eloquently: 'We Turks are proud, and we have been raised proudly, because we have colonized other countries. This is also true for left-wing people. I have noticed that Turkish people are very self-confident, wherever they are.' (Cadat and Fennema 1998:107). Turkish politicians use their ethnic culture as a shield against Dutch dominance: 'They (*the Dutch,* MF/JT) know everything about them (*the Surinamese,* MF/JT), thus they can more easily dominate them than they can dominate us. We say "We are Turks" and they have not a clue about our culture and our outlook.' (Cadat and Fennema 1998:109). In other words, the lack of knowledge about the Turkish culture was seen as an asset of the Turkish community in the Netherlands rather than a liability. Knowledge about ethnic minorities is like penetrating the cultural domain of an ethnic enclave. It is a painful infraction upon the ethnic group's ethnic identity and autonomy. The Turkish elite saw the ethnographic knowledge of the Dutch anthropologists and historians about the Surinamese and Antillean communities as a means of colonial domination even after the loss of empire. The history the Turks claimed for themselves not only was relatively unknown to the Dutch, it was also a history of conquest and dominance over other countries. This made the Turks feel proud of their own past and filled them with confidence in their collective capacities.

There is reason to believe the collective memory of Turks in Amsterdam (who immigrated as 'guest workers' to the Netherlands) contains more elements that can bolster social trust than the collective memories of Surinamese and Antilleans (whose immigration was a result of the Dutch decolonization process). Earlier research has shown that the ethnic leaders are well aware of these differences. A Turkish member of the town council stated: 'Surinamese people are never sure of themselves, they lack self-confidence.' Surinamese leaders, on the other hand, did not show a lot of ethnic consciousness. A Surinamese politician expressed this by saying: 'We have always been Dutch, except that we lived overseas' (Cadat and Fennema 1998:102). Also some members of the Surinamese elite in the Netherlands referred to the lack of cultural self-esteem among the Surinamese. A Surinamese sociologist expressed this lack of self-confidence as follows:

What cultural history do we, descendants from slaves, have? On what can we look back? What is there to be proud of? The only thing we have is 400 years of slavery. We don't have a history to look up to.

(Oomen2001:13)

Here we see that the chosen trauma is so overwhelming that chosen glories cannot balance such a painful experience. There is a tendency to forget the painful past: rather than being balanced by a myth of liberation, the trauma of slavery is rejected as a chosen trauma. But in the common history of black people from the former colonies the history of slavery looms so large that it is difficult to reject slavery and forced labour as a chosen trauma, without rejecting a common ethnic background altogether.[4]

This lack of ethnic consciousness—and the lack of self-confidence that goes with it— may partly explain the differences in ethnic organization between the Turks and the Surinamese. There are three reasons for that. First, the Surinamese residents in the Netherlands refrain from joining ethnic organizations. So the process of interest articulation is hampered. Second, if they join they tend to be passive rather than active members; they often choose to play the role of the victim and thus develop little civic competence. Third, through lack of trust, the Surinamese organizations do not communicate or coordinate their activities.

The psychological make-up of the descendants of slaves may account for the lack of trust amongst each other, without which no social capital can be created. Although trust is always embedded, the attitudinal predisposition for trust is such that trust has always a generalizing aspect. Distrust has the opposite qualities. Distrustful people only trust their closest friends and relatives and even these are not to be trusted (Vargas Llosa 2000).

Conclusions

We have argued in this chapter that voluntary associations contribute to the quality of democracy and more specifically that ethnic associations promote multicultural democracy. They can do so in three ways. The first is to fulfil a representative function for individual citizens who are too weak to represent their interests and ideas single-handedly. The voluntary organization is a megaphone for the individual member. This function is most visible in the case of interest organizations, such as trade unions. But so-called cheque-book organizations (Maloney 1999) may also serve as a megaphone for their members. Such organizations tend to be political in that they are oriented towards the State. A second function is one of civic education and socialization. Organizations that create civic competence amongst their members can be of many kinds. Social organizations that require a fair amount of participation of their members tend to generate civic competence amongst their members. Organizations, such as church choirs, football clubs or hunters' associations hardly ever have the creation of civic competence for their members in their mission statement. However, they are sometimes, incorrectly, seen as irrelevant for the creation of political competence and participation. It is not that birdwatching societies aim at making democracy work, as some critics of Putnam seem to conclude from his work. Civic competence is an unintended result of their existence. This

is even true for associations with an uncivic mission such as sectarian or extremist organizations.

The third function of associations we see is the solution of the collective action problem of the community. We see this function in all organizations but it is particularly strong in welfare organizations and organizations that are oriented to community work. It is this function that has been subject to ample analysis of rational choice theorists (Hirschman 1970). It will be clear that most organizations contribute to all three functions mentioned above, but not to the same degree (Warren 2001).

It is very difficult, however, to measure the contribution individual associations make to the democratic attitudes of their members. We contend that it is even theoretically impossible because the contribution of voluntary associations to democratic governance critically depends on their numbers and the structural relations they maintain amongst each other. These structural relations may exist within the rank and file through overlapping memberships, but they may also exist on the elite level in the form of overlapping board membership. Both forms of overlap add to the horizontal relations that are crucial for the functioning of civil society. It is our contention that without such overlapping memberships, a civic community cannot exist. Most work on civil society had neglected the networks that exist among voluntary associations and thus made themselves vulnerable to the criticism that there is little proof for the assumed beneficial effect of voluntary associations. Also in the operational definition of social capital the network aspect is often neglected in favour of the measurement of trust as an attitudinal variable (Stolle 2000). To avoid such an attitudinal approach, we have focused on the civic community as an independent variable rather than on individual voluntary associations. Civic community is defined as the number of voluntary organizations *plus* the overlap between them, especially the overlap that is created by the network of interlocking directorates among them.

What has been said for a civic community in general also goes for an ethnic community. We have therefore argued that the better an ethnic group is organized through horizontal as well as vertical linkages, the better it can present its common interests vis-à-vis the State. And *vice versa,* the more civic competence we expect its members to possess, the better the ethnic group is able to solve its own problems even without the intervention of the State.

Finally, we have argued that the existence of a civic community—whether ethnic or non-ethnic—cannot be fully explained with a rational choice perspective. Like any other community, an ethnic community would never be able to exist without a founding myth. The content of this founding myth, in turn, has an impact on the quality of the ethnic community as civic community. We should therefore not neglect the analysis of the founding myth of an ethnic community. At the same time, however, we should realize that the question of whether or not an ethnic community can be considered as a civic community not only depends on the contents of its founding myth but also on the voluntariness of its associations. In the case of Northern Ireland, for example, one may ask whether the support of Catholic and Protestant organizations is fully voluntary (Cochrane, Chapter 3 of this volume). Finally, horizontality of its networks both at the personal level and at the level of voluntary associations is always at stake in a situation of civil war. Violent conflict and war may form the basis of future social capital, as Putnam

(2000) suggests, however, it kills civil society while you are at it.

Notes

1 In network concepts, active members of voluntary associations form a large distance-two network: every member can reach another member through a third member at the highest.
2 The conceptual relationship between voluntary associations and civic community has been elaborated in Fennema (2004).
3 In the Dutch parliament a room is named after the communist MP Marcus Bakker. As a Member of Parliament his prestige was very high because of his debating skills, his knowledge of the constitution and his dedication to the parliamentary work.
4 When we consider the definition of cultural trauma by Sztompka (2000:452), we see that slavery fits it very well: (a) it was a sudden and rapid change; (b) it was radical, comprehensive and deep; (c) it was perceived as imposed, exogenous, as something we ourselves have not contributed to and (d) was something unexpected, unpredicted, shocking and repulsive. What we have described here as cultural trauma can be described in terms of loss and injury. It is the loss of traditional structures, of political and social order, the loss of 'shelter in which a man may give to his life a semblance of meaning' (Germino 2001). Even the memory of Africa has faded away in the collective memory of the descendants of slaves, after so many generations. Yet the injury of slavery has remained and expresses itself at the individual level in a low self-esteem. Hence the observation by a Turkish politician that 'Surinamese are Dutchmen with an inferiority complex'. It is, in a nutshell, the same conclusion that has been drawn by the Antillean psychiatrist Fanon (1952/1975). Related to the low self-esteem is the tendency to externalize problems. Once one has come to see oneself as a victim, all predicaments of the group are blamed to outside forces, e.g. racism is the explanation for all failures of the members of the group. Sometimes even a conscious and organized effort of the racist enemy is assumed as in the case of AIDS, which by many African-Americans is seen as a biological warfare of the CIA and the FBI against the black race (Turner 1993). We find the same discursive structure among Palestinians to account for their predicament (Bar-Tal 1990). Conspiracy theory is the social science of traumatized people.

Conclusion

12
The associative elixir

Lure or cure?

Sigrid Roßteutscher

It has been the aim of this volume to address one major gap in the current debate about associations' role in and for democracy: to put the associative cure into context. Too often, particular lines of thought, particular theoretical traditions and evidence from particular settings have been used to formulate rather general and universal claims. Therefore, it was the shared belief of all contributors to this book that context matters. The authors of this volume examined context in three different guises: the macro-context of the political system (Part I), the meso-context of the associative world (Part II), and the micro–context of social life (Part III). What started as a commonly-held belief, found clear support as the book progressed. In fact (with maybe the exception of one single chapter), all authors came up with strong evidence for the relevance of contextual conditions.

In short, this book is based upon the presumption that the associative elixir might not be healthy under all circumstances and in all its guises. It had been the task of the individual chapters to specify the conditions under which the effect of the elixir is seriously diminished (or greatly improved). Clearly, it has not been the aim of the volume to come up with a general answer of whether associationalism is lure or cure. By contrast, it has been the shared belief of the authors of this book that such a concluding answer is not available because the answer will (i) crucially depend on the particular political context one looks at; (ii) will be determined by the nature of the social relations dominant in a given society; and (iii) the answer might not be the same for all types of associations even under identical political and social contexts. As the authors in this volume demonstrated, there are indeed many social and political contexts which impact on the effects of the associative elixir—to the extent that effects can be highly welcome, very modest, close to nil, but outright negative as well.

The associative elixir is of little use in Wellhofer's pre-Fascist Italy with massive poverty, high electoral volatility and weak democratic institutions. Its effects are negative in Cochrane's Northern Ireland scenario of a deeply divided people; and positive for one specific actor in Smismans' EU setting, but highly questionable regarding the EU's democratic prospects *in toto*. With respect to the associative level, Maloney and Roßteutscher could show that several organizational features positively influence the social capital generation while others are a direct hindrance to the production of voluntarism and activism. Clarence *et al.* demonstrated that organizations' size and local embeddedness matter; and Korkut found clear evidence for the decisive (and negative) impact of associational elites' values and habits. Regarding the micro–level of social life,

Molenaers showed how unequal social relations produce a similarly unequal civil society. Both Selle and Wollebæk and de Hart and Dekker documented the close relationship between social change (gender issues and division of labour in one instance, secularization, in the second) and the nature and prospects of civil society in general.

In short, authors of all three parts demonstrated that the shape, density and democratic role of the associative sector is determined and influenced by particular contextual conditions. Context matters significantly! What are the repercussions of such a conclusion for the usefulness of the associative elixir? If context matters, and if—as historians tend to believe—each single context is unique, one must doubt the potential salutary impact of any cure which is not composed of ingredients especially designed to fit one (and only one) particular patient. If this is correct, the prospects for associationalism in general look rather grim. The authors in this volume did their best to deconstruct or de-compose the myth of *the* civil society, *the* association, *the* democracy. As a logical consequence, there cannot be anything such as *the* associative cure. In this respect, the authors in the volume were highly successful. In this concluding chapter, I will now try to 'pick up the pieces', and examine whether we cannot find some more general rules behind the particularity of single context effects and unique contextual experiences and features.

This territory is mapped by (re-)addressing some significant themes, which crosscut the sectional borders of the book. These themes resonate with crucial assumptions common to most advocates of associationalism. In doing this I will focus on three major topics:

• the link between the civil society sector and the health of democracy;
• the possibility of crafting civil society institutions;
• the role of associative elites.

Subsequently, I will discuss these persistent major themes within associative theory, together with some comments on how and why the arguments in this book respond to them, and how they relate to the project of associationalism as a whole.

Linking the civil society sector with the health of democracy

It is interesting to note that the most outspoken advocates of associationalism in this book come from, and use evidence from, the Netherlands, one of the firmly established Western democracies; and one of the democracies where the 'art of association' is great. Moreover, the Netherlands is a country of which many believe that it had been highly successful in mastering the political and, in particular, economic burdens that trouble contemporary representative democracies and welfare states. Fennema and Tillie in Chapter 11, therefore, suggest an associative cure to a phenomenon that has high political relevance to all countries in the Western world, and its metropolitan areas, in particular: increasing ethnic diversity (and tension) resulting from ongoing migration from poorer parts of the world.

Moreover, it is also telling to see that the suggested cure resonates deeply with an older Dutch tradition in overcoming the potential conflicts of a culturally and religiously

divided society: thorough pillarization and closed confinement of the rank and file within pillars, coupled with intensive dialogue and co-operation at the elite level across pillars. De Hart and Dekker in Chapter 9 documented the dramatic and rapid collapse of the Dutch religious pillars with their related associative universes. It is fair to say that both the speed and the silence, or lack of conflict, with which these pillars crumbled, indicate that the cultural tensions that once led to their construction are no longer acute. In other words, the Fennema-Tillie solution to the challenges of multiculturalism is deeply anchored in the Dutch way of solving problems of inner-societal conflict and cultural division. Pillarization has been (and according to Fennema and Tillie still is) a highly-esteemed device against system breakdown, inherent in the logic of Dutch representative democracy.

Why is such a solution not available to the societies described by Wellhofer, Cochrane, Korkut, or Molenaers in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 8 respectively? Wellhofer, Korkut and Molenaers analyse democracies with a recent history of system transition from some form of autocratic rule (monarchy in the case of Italy, and communism or socialism in the case of Romania, Hungary, Poland and Nicaragua). Although the three authors address different problems, none of them suggests that associationalism provides the cure. All authors express stark caveats: the impact of civil society on democracy's prospect is doubtful, to say the least. Why?

The Dutch solution is recourse on former successful solutions. Associative democracy in the variant of pillarization is inscribed into the memory of Dutch democracy. Such a democratic memory does not (and cannot) exist in the transitional societies of Eastern Europe or the Third World. Democracy is too young, experiences are too few, and there had not been the time nor the opportunity to build up a country-specific and democratic way to react onto certain fundamental problems. This is not to say that individuals and elites in newly established democracies operate in an empty space, void of memory and experiences. Moreover, and the case is most clearly demonstrated by Korkut's analyses of organizational leaders in Eastern Europe, there is a rationale behind actors' behaviour. These leaders clearly follow a script. However, in the absence of democracy-inherent devices, actors resort to an older script: patterns of behaviour and a range of attitudes which actors experienced as rational and adequate—the script of the former non-democratic regimes.

Drawing a conclusion from the diverse pieces of evidence presented by Wellhofer, Korkut and Molenaers, it is clear that one of the major problems of democracies in transition is the likelihood that actors and elites use democratic devices in a pre- (even anti-) democratic spirit. In this respect, the associative sector might only be a prime example for a more general rule. If this is so, then one of the central assumptions of associative theory is questionable: civil society cannot cure defect or fragile democracies. If democracy is deficient (or only weakly established), and if the major protagonists have not fully endorsed democratic habits and values, the voluntary sector will be of little aid to the consolidation process. If democracy is strong as in the Dutch case, however, associations offer a very helpful device against problems and crisis phenomena. Based on our (admittedly inconclusive) evidence, the strength of the civil society sphere and the health of democracy are closely related. However, the causal direction of this link, i.e. the path from civil society to the health of democracy, is highly questionable.

The possibility of crafting institutions

In pluralist thought, there has been the strong conviction that each interest and each concern will find its organizational representation naturally and without interference by government agency. Empirical research has taught us that this is a heroic assumption with little resonance in the real world of associations. The universe of associations is biased and there is an entire range of interests and concerns, which hardly ever gets organized. Moreover, throughout history, government decisions left their traces on the shape and role of the voluntary sector. Seemingly purely bureaucratic legislation such as rules concerning access to public money, conditions for public registration, and whether and in which roles associative agents are involved in welfare delivery, had a huge impact on a country's civil society. More recently, advocates of associative democracy, in particular, took a more offensive stance: the 'right' sorts of associations should be crafted deliberately. As Chapter 1 outlined, there is little agreement about what the 'right' association might be. Nonetheless, throughout this book several chapters have, more or less directly, touched on this issue of crafting institutions. Both Smismans in Chapter 4 and Molenaers in Chapter 8 assess the potential democratic legitimacy of inventing a civil society sphere through external action. In both instances, the authors come to rather sceptical conclusions. In the case of Molenaers' Nicaraguan villages, external funding bodies unfamiliar with the local conditions, run the risk of achieving the opposite of what they aimed for: to cement and increase existing inequality in power and wealth. In Smismans' EU scenario, one actor, the Commission, pushed for an establishment of civil society agents in the decision-making circles around itself. However, in Smismans' reading, the democratic legitimacy of this project is slim. In this respect, Smismans' Chapter 4 corresponds neatly with Molenaers' observations in Chapter 8. In both instances, the external funding bodies in the case of Nicaragua and the Commission's action in the context of the EU, the artificial creation or implementation of civil society organizations and relationships, led to a re-definition of insiders and outsiders, benefited certain actors one-sidedly and gave room to ample suspicion about the democratic legitimacy of the civil society project.

Moreover, Maloney and Roßteutscher were very sceptical about the possibility of artificially crafting institutions because their evidence showed that there is no such thing as the 'ideal' association. In contrast, different types of associations provide different types of output. If one also considers that Maloney and Roßteutscher examine only two (i.e. promotion of activism and volunteering, delivery of services) from a long list of desirable achievements of the voluntary sector, it is clear that many diverse associative features contribute to the cure. Therefore, it is highly likely that all attempts at crafting institutions would end with sub-optimal results.

The role of associative elites

In the current associative turn, in general, and amongst social capitalists, in particular, there is a strong concern with and a clear preference for associations, which are

horizontally organized, void of hierarchical structures, and have an internal constitution, which favours democratic decision-making. Only under such conditions, we are told, civic virtue develops and participatory spirit blossoms. It is, of course, a truism that even such ideal vehicles of inner-group democracy frequently possess mechanisms of a division of labour to increase the organization's general capacity to reach its aims (whatever this might be in detail): in many organizations there are chairs, boards of directors, and there might be employed personnel, etc. In the current search for the ideal association there is a certain neglect of the potentially powerful and significant role of elites. Korkut in Chapter 6 and Clarence *et al.* in Chapter 7 shed some light on this seemingly forgotten issue. Both chapters, and Korkut's in particular, tell us that there is a significant gap between the presence of formal structures of democratic decision-making, on the one hand, and the way associative leaders apply these formal elements. To a large degree, elites have a free hand in deciding whether formal democratic rule gives rise to a participatory group culture, or whether it is used to organizing passive consent and restricting 'real' decision-making to the inner elite circle. There is some further evidence to this point in Maloney and Roßteutscher's analyses of diverse associative traits (Chapter 5). Among the long list of organizational features that impact significantly on an associations' capacity to promote activism and volunteering, there are two insignificant outliers: (i) the implementation of mechanisms of group internal democracy; and (ii) the formal degree of institutionalization, i.e. the sophistication of a group's internal division of labour. In short, the presence or absence of formal procedures of democratic decision-making, the presence or absence of hierarchical structures within an organization, have very limited impact on the social capital production within organizations. It is up to the elites to use these formal channels in a participatory spirit—or not.

The three themes discussed here—the link between civil society and the health of democracy; the fallibility of crafting institutions; and the role of elites—all refer to a dimension which has not been discussed systematically within this book: political culture. Our evidence suggests that all three links are dependent on a pre-existing democratic culture, both at the mass and elite level. The success of the associative elixir is greatest in societies where both the rank and file and the leaders have endorsed central democratic values and habits; in societies where social relations are not too unequal. These conditions are met in the exclusive club of highly-developed Western democracies. Here, the cure delivers the best results. However, it is also these societies where the cure is least needed. If, by contrast, democratic culture is weak or if anti-democratic culture predominates; if social inequality is very high as in Nicaragua or pre-Fascist Italy, the prospects of the associative cure are slim. Unfortunately, it is these societies where the cure is needed most urgently.

In conclusion, associationalism somehow resumes the role of a newly (re-) discovered medicine against a serious and contagious illness that celebrated astonishing and unexpected healing effects, resulting in enormous popularity around the world. However, in the course of its further and longer application, and in light of further in-depth research, a couple of serious side-effects become apparent, some of them more dangerous than the potential beneficial results of the cure. These days, after the initial euphoria has passed, and we learn more and more about the 'dark side' of associationalism, it seems wise to take the potentially negative side effects into account—just as a responsible

doctor would balance the curing effect of the prescription very carefully against possible negative side effects prompted by the particular constitution and lifestyle of each single patient. This is not to say that we should refrain from the associative cure *in toto*. However, as sociologists, political scientists and practitioners, we should carefully and critically examine, case-by-case, whether the social and political context of a given society is in the right shape to permit the beneficiary effects of associationalism to flourish.

Without doubt, associations are a very important ingredient of democracy. There is not (and there cannot be) any democracy worth its name that doesn't give its citizens the right to freely associate with each other. Although the conclusions of the chapters in this volume were more often sceptical than outright enthusiastic, none of the authors suggest that we are better off without them (with the partial exception of the particular case of Northern Ireland). However, we better refrain from the idea that associationalism might be a cure against all sorts of ills of modern society. We should resist the lure of associationalism and give civil society its adequate space both in democratic theorizing and practical politics: as one major and indispensable brick in the construction of democracy—amongst others. No cure, and no lure, either, but one of the central cornerstones in the democratic edifice.

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