

## Different Faces of Civil Society



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# Different Faces of Civil Society

by

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Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree in Philosophy  
Stockholm School of Economics, 1998

## Abstract

Wijkström, Filip, 1998. *Different Faces of Civil Society*, EFL, Stockholm, Sweden.

This is a dissertation in two parts. In addition to the four papers found in this volume, *Different Faces of Civil Society* (EFL, Stockholm, 1998), the major publication is a book entitled *The nonprofit sector in Sweden* (Lundström and Wijkström, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1997). The book is the result of a joint effort by Tommy Lundström and the author. Our points of departure in the book were that Sweden, within previous international research, often was described as a country with a small nonprofit sector. Based on a comprehensive set of first-hand empirical data, the book provides the first systematic, consolidated account of the Swedish sector, its development, legal situation and current position, and previous results are questioned.

The two initial texts found in this volume focus on conceptual tools. The first article, *The Swedish Nonprofit Sector in International Comparison* (Wijkström, 1997, *Annales of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 625-663) is based on a critique of the dominant US/economics perspective found in mainstream nonprofit literature. It is argued in the article, that earlier attempts to understand the Swedish nonprofit sector have been biased by a cultural ethnocentrism. The purpose of the article is to broaden the understanding of this part of society by using a socio-economic approach. The second paper, *Hate groups and outlaw bikers: part of civil society?*, addresses the issue of definitions. The aim of the paper is to test two existing definitions of organizations in civil society. This test is conducted on two extreme forms of organization, the white hate group and the outlaw motorcycle club. It is shown that – according to existing definitions – both of these organizations, in their ideal-typical form, can be regarded as civil society organizations.

The final two essays are more explorative and the author has taken the freedom to experiment. In *Strategic dilemmas for Swedish popular movement organizations*, the object of study is the Swedish popular movements (*folkrörelserna*) and an experienced sense of crisis in some of the organizations within these movements (PMOs). It is argued that a number of major external shifts have had a profound impact on the traditional Swedish PMOs. Underlying reasons for the reactions of the PMOs are discussed and some interpretations of the effects are presented. In the final essay – *Outlaw biking in alternative frames of interpretation* – an even more limited and empirically derived phenomenon is taken as point of departure. The study focuses on outlaw biking and approaches this social phenomenon from three different angles with the help of metaphorical *images* derived from the outlaw literature. The purpose was not to develop a best possible frame for the study of outlaw biking, but rather to lay bare some already existing images of outlaw motorcycle clubs.

**Key words:** civil society, nonprofit sector, social movement, voluntary association, outlaw motorcycle club, nonprofit management, social capital

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ISBN 91-7258-478-5

Distributed by  
EFL, Stockholm School of Economics,  
Box 6501, SE-113 83 Stockholm, Sweden

To mother who taught me never to give in.  
To father who taught me how to question.  
To my two wonderful and beautiful sisters,  
who are teaching me from life all the time,  
and of course to cute little Ebba.



### *Bara en tanke ...*

Man har i ekonomisk och sociologisk teori närmast som en självklarhet antagit att människan försöker maximera sin vinst. Det är då ett förhållande som man inte behöver förklara. På något sätt har man väl tänkt sig att det är ett grundläggande behov hos människan att maximera sin vinst, eller att detta på något sätt ingår i människans natur. Och man har menat att det är *rationellt* att försöka maximera sin vinst.

Vad som däremot *behöver* förklaras är avvikelser från det teoretiska idealet "den ekonomiska människan"; om någon *inte* försöker maximera sin vinst, så framstår det som någonting besynnerligt som kräver en förklaring: det är *irrationellt* att inte försöka maximera sin vinst.

Om detta kan man lämpligen fråga sig: Varför i helvete det då? Varför skulle det inte kunna vara ett precis lika naturligt grundantagande att människan *inte* försöker maximera sin vinst? Och *om* nu någon går in för att maximera sin vinst – visst kan *det* framstå som ett fenomen?

### *Just a thought ...*

It is in economic and sociologic theory assumed, almost as a given, that humans try to maximize their profit. This is then a condition that need not be explained. It appears that it is in some way conceived as a basic need of the human to maximize her profit, or that it is, in one way or another, part of human nature. And it has been understood to be *rational* to try to maximize one's profit.

What on the contrary *does* need explanation, is the deviation from the theoretical ideal "the economic man"; if someone does *not* try to maximize his or her profit, it stands out as peculiar and demands an explanation: it is *irrational* not to try to maximize one's profit.

About this one could ask: Why the hell is that? Why couldn't it be an equally natural basic assumption that humans do *not* try to maximize their profit? And *if* someone strives to maximize his or her profit – wouldn't *that* appear as a phenomenon?

Johan Asplund, *Om undran inför samhället*  
(Stockholm: Argos, 1970, pp. 120-121, my translation).





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## Acknowledgements

When the extensive research project leading up to this dissertation was launched in early 1993, I hadn't the faintest idea of where it would take me. I had returned from a two-month leave spent with a good friend in West Africa. We had a mutual problem – we knew not where to go from where we were standing – and were using each other as sounding boards. He was working as a volunteer with the Red Cross in Sierra Leone after finishing studies in economics at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE). I was on a leave of absence from the Centre for Management and Organization Studies at SSE, and was seriously reconsidering my decision to stay in academia. Result: My friend left his volunteer position with the Red Cross while I decided to stay at SSE. Thanks, Jan, for your African hospitality, good advice and the delicious onion and potato soup that only you know how to cook.

The support provided me by Professor Sven-Erik Sjöstrand throughout the research has been absolutely essential. I doubt I could have found it anywhere else. Sven-Erik has never discouraged me from trying new approaches, but instead offered creative advice from new angles. Even though we have from time to time had differing opinions, his support has never wavered and he has always displayed confidence in my capacity and the direction of my work. Sven-Erik has provided academic freedom in its true sense, both in terms of an unusual theoretical openness and in the shielding institutional umbrella he has created at the Centre.

Professor Bengt Jacobsson and Professor Bo Sundgren have also been sources of scholarly support and intellectual challenge. I am genuinely grateful for the advice and encouragement they, together with Sven-Erik, and from their respective fields of experience and interest, have offered me continuously in their capacity as members of my supervisory committee.

As an apprentice, eager to learn the practical tricks of the academic trade, I have had the opportunity of working closely with a number of experienced scholars. Under their gentle supervision, I have slowly begun to understand the charm of academic craftsmanship and its fascinating mazes and pitfalls. During the process, they have also become personal friends.

First and foremost among these friends are, of course, Tommy Lundström. He has been an invaluable traveling partner on the odyssey-like endeavor of almost epic saga-writing of which our monograph eventually took the character. With a huge amount of patience, only found in a true Norrlander, and with an impressive working capacity, Tommy firmly stood by my side in many challenging encounters with a wild stream of data. Data that poured in from the world outside our ivory tower and obstinately refused to take the form we had anticipated. Together, we rode out storm after storm and, finally, managed to bring this ship to shore. Long after our formal joint commitment had ended, Tommy has always willingly read and commented on my texts, offered advice in personal as well as career matters and – with a wry laughter – shared some new insight into the crazy world of academia. You are a true coward deep down in your heart, Tommy, but I will never forget the towel you stole from you-know-where for my 30th birthday party. Thanks also, for sharing a good piece of advice from a senior researcher in the last minute (via e-mail on Friday, April 17, 1998):

By the way, have you understood that you might be held responsible for what I have written in Chapter 7? Maybe you should check what it says and ask me if you find anything stupid. Another strategy might be to point at me each time you get a tricky question and say: "He wrote that, I didn't."

In the difficult craft of writing articles for academic journals, I've had a superb ciceron in the shape of Yohanan Stryjan. With delicate balance and a sound measure of vitriolic humor, he has given me the very first useful (and painful) lessons in this complicated and time-consuming task. Thanks, Yohanan, for granting at least some of my hardest-earned contributions the doubtful status of 'theoretical emergency solutions'.

Professor Mark Lyons, at the University of Technology in Sydney (UTS), had the kindness to invite me as a visiting scholar. I stayed with him at his Centre of Australian Community Organisations and Management (CACOM) at the School of Management (UTS), during the major part of 1997. Apart from the opportunity to live in and get to know one of the most beautiful cities in the world, the stay also provided me with an opportunity to shift perspective and delve deeper into the international literature on nonprofit and civil society research. It has also been a pleasure to learn from and work closely with you Mark. You are a true scholar in this field of research, and I hope that we will be able to work together again in a not too distant future.

Professor Lester M. Salamon and Professor Helmut K. Anheier have successfully gathered a number of skilled persons in their 'The Johns Hopkins International Nonprofit Sector Research Project'. I've often been helped and impressed by the high-quality work provided by the group of people in this network of researchers from all over the world. Professor Jaques Defourny – for his encouragement and support in helping me publish on the international arena – and Professor Gil Clary – for sharing with me his experience in psychology – have both been of importance in broadening my field of vision. The practical and friendly help and advice offered me by Christine Dussart at CIRIEC has also been invaluable.

A very important part of my research context has been a number of past and present members of the Centre for Management and Organization Studies. Thanks, Anna, Annelie, Birgitta, Charlotte, Dag, Daniel, Freddy, Gunnar Å, Johan St, Johan Sö, Jörgen, Lena, Markus, Peter, Pia, and Constable Gunnar. Special thanks to Inga-lill, for the almost three hour long spontaneous two-person seminar on my manuscript; to Mats – for your help in sorting and re-sorting the different pieces of my 'dissertation puzzle' in a never-ending line of new and always more exciting configurations; and to Erik Swartz – *Ekon.dr. Direktör Stf chef Executive Development* (quoting from his card) – for arranging so that KAW will be available on the day of my dissertation. Finally, Ingrid, I am deeply grateful for the swift secretarial services you have provided me with over and over again, not the least in the final phase when I desperately needed your support.

Dear Emma, your effort in the final rush has improved the quality of this acknowledgement substantially and surely eliminated any mispeled words. You are such a very special person and such a close friend. Although you have this fascinating tendency to disappear when I need you the most, I am so happy that you and Eero have bestowed upon me the honor of being part in the up-bringing of the most valuable little thing in your lives, my godson Eliel Aslak Antonius Puh. I will try to teach him that motorcycles are fun and helmets boring, but he will probably end up as a rave dance star anyway; I don't have any motorcycle and he is glued non-stop to MTV.

Several other persons have freely shared from their vast experience with me during the project and this acknowledgement to only a few of them must be seen as directed to them all. The persons active in the Nordic Network for Research on the Nordic Nonprofit Sector as well as those found in the Association for Cooperative Studies all deserve a thanks for their comments on different texts of mine over the years.

I would like to thank Erik Amnå, Anders Aspling, Claes Arvidsson, Joi Bay, Johan von Essen, Jonas Hartelius, Bjarne Ibsen, Jan-Håkan Hansson, Magnus Karlsson, Lars Lagergren, Christer Leopold, Bertil Lindberg, Björn Lindvall, Curt-Olof Mann, Anna Meeuwisse, Ylva Norén, Sven Nygren, Lars-Erik Olsson, Sissel Seim, Dietlind Stolle, Jan Ström, Lars Svedberg, Emil Uddhammar and my father, Per-Olof Wijkström, for valuable comments and good advice volunteered in different phases of my work. A very special and deeply felt thanks goes to Professor Kurt Klaudi Klausen, who had the kindness to act as 'shadow opponent', and with gentle hands provided me with sound scholarly guidance in a critical moment of my writing.

Kelly Vegh Olsson has, once again, been able to peruse my texts. This time with *no*, and I repeat *no*, time margins. Thank you!!! This acknowledgement would not be complete without the expression of gratitude towards the Stockholm School of Economics, expressed in one huge "Thank you!" to Azad. A special thanks also to the libraries at SSE, at UTS in Sydney and at Stockholm University. Their staff have been extremely helpful.

It is possible to count them in thousands; all the members, volunteers, employees, representatives, managers, leaders and other people in the non-profit or voluntary world of Sweden that have actively contributed to the development of this research. We've met in seminars and workshops, at conferences and lectures, in formal and informal meetings, discussing small and large issues of the sector. We have exchanged letters, chatted over the e-mail and spoken over the phone. The amount of information that has been exchanged over the years is impossible to estimate, and its value for my research is impossible to overestimate. Especially considering the massive effort provided by all the people who took their time to complete, with great speed and accuracy, the many thousands of questionnaires sent out.

It is, of course, not possible to thank each and every one of these persons here. Instead, I mention only a few of the most frequent supporters and contributors found in the Swedish nonprofit sector over the years. This would truly have been an impossible undertaking without your support. Many thanks => Vanja Befrits (SOS Barnbyar), Nini Engstrand, and all the others at Lottorna, Torsten Friberg (IOGT-NTO), Katarina Grut (Institutet för Social ekonomi), Hans-Olov Jönsson (IDEA), Per-Olof Jönsson (KOOPi), Lennart Karlberg (Riksidrottsförbundet), Per Lagerström (Accent), Anders Lundin (Bosön), Bodil Långberg (BRIS), Magnus Måhl (NTF), Kenth Naucleur (Arbetsgivaralliansen), Mikael Santoft and Bengt Wallin (SISU), Jon Stenbeck (LR), Jan-Olov Söderberg (KFUK-KFUM) and, of course, once again, all the members in XI Volleyball Association.

To conclude this display of the importance of personal contacts and information exchange with people in the Swedish nonprofit sector, I'd like to thank Alec, Harry, Kenta and all the others out at Basta Arbetskooperativ, and Truls at Roo Gård/Krinolinen (Länkarna Johanneshov). You have provided me with valuable insight into a very special face of the Swedish sector, that of self-help drug rehabilitation among former heavily addicted drug addicts.

The major part of funding for our project has come from two well-known and highly respected grant-providers in Sweden: the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (*Riksbankens Jubileumsfond*) and the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (*HSFR*). Considerable and necessary support have kindly also been provided by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Public Administration, the Swedish Institute, Silfvéns stipendiefond and the Swedish Red Cross.

My family and an extensive network of friends in Sweden as well as in Australia have provided me with all the joyful distractions necessary to survive in the at times strange and always demanding world of academia. I might have been a bit absent-minded and spread myself thin from time to time during the course of this project, but, to all of you, I just want to say: "Don't lose your faith – I'm still alive and kicking – though somewhat older and definitely more confused."

To end this lengthy acknowledgement in the spirit as it was begun, I would like to direct my last words to Lars Pettersson, National Director of the Swedish Red Cross. Without your help, Lars, acting midwife for the project, this dissertation of mine would not exist. Few people in the world of nonprofit or voluntary organizations in Sweden are as knowledgeable or well-read in the field of academic management and organizational literature as you. You have been a true supporter of our work throughout the process and always been willing to offer a helping hand or piece of advice, and have become a good friend along the way. I started this more than five year long journey with the indirect help of an old friend in the Red Cross and would not have been able to conclude it without the more direct help from a new friend in the Red Cross.

Filip Wijkström  
Stockholm in April, 1998





## Different Faces of Civil Society

This is the cover for a dissertation in two parts. The main aim of the cover is to provide a short presentation of the aim, structure and overarching logic or rationale behind the work carried out and leading up to my dissertation. In addition to the cover, the reader will find one of the two parts in this volume: one consisting of four separate but related texts. The four texts all spring out of a larger research project. The major publication of that project is a book, which constitutes the other part of the dissertation.<sup>1</sup> The book is the result of a joint effort by Tommy Lundström and the author.

Our points of departure in the book were that Sweden, within previous international research, often has been described as a country with an extremely small nonprofit or voluntary sector. Based on a comprehensive set of first-hand empirical data, the first systematic, consolidated account of the Swedish sector, its development, legal situation and current position, is provided. The book consists of altogether seven chapters, where the first introductory as well as the final concluding chapter are written by the two authors together.

Chapter 2, on definitions and conceptual matters, was written by me as a remedy for a persistent confusion on how to define this sector or what it contains. This mission is continued and expanded in the first two texts found in this volume. The third chapter of the book – on the history of the sector, as well as the sixth on the changing relations between the public and the nonprofit sector in Sweden, were written by Tommy. Chapter 4 on the legal situation, linking back to the discussions on definitions found in Chapter 2, and the fifth chapter – where the majority of empirical, quantitative data is reported – were written by me.

The book was part of our contribution to a larger international, comparative research project. Together with researchers in twelve other countries, a joint analytical framework was developed. This work was based on the understanding that – despite the diversity and complexity of the institutional landscape found in the modern world:

... we have come to accept the existence of two grand complexes of organizations [...] into which it has become conventional to divide social life:

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<sup>1</sup> Lundström, T. and F. Wijkström (1997), *The nonprofit sector in Sweden*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

the *market* and the *state*, or the *private* and *public* sectors. [...] No such agreement prevails, however, about the existence, let alone the precise contours, of a third complex of institutions, a definable "third sector" occupying a distinctive social space outside of both the market and the state.<sup>2</sup>

### **On the choice of frames and tools**

It is my belief that the perspectives and analytical tools we choose to study social phenomenon command the picture we have of the world and the different relations within it. By extension, these choices also have an impact on our results, as well as the frames of reference in which we interpret them. However, to be able to achieve anything at all, I believe that we must – at least temporarily – fix our instruments and, consequently, to a certain degree also our objects of study. Although a critical attitude could be perceived already in the first part of my work, and then especially in Chapter 7, the book is an expression of exactly such fixing: we have assumed that there is something called a nonprofit sector in society, and that it is possible to reach an understanding of this something through the study of inter-subjectively shared mental schemes.

### **The different texts found in the second part**

In the other part of the dissertation, in the four texts found in this present volume, it is time for a temporary break, a time for reflection. The overall aim of these four contributions is to move beyond the more quantitative emphasis found in the first part. In the first two papers, as well as in Chapter 7 of the book, I have tried to distance myself to enable critical analysis of the effects and results of the perspective and analytical tools chosen in the book.

The major conclusion from this reflection is that there are some obvious problems inherent in our choice of instruments: (a) we have put many and vastly differing types of empirical phenomena into one and the same conceptual box; (b) we have chosen to study several dimensions of these phenomena simultaneously; and (c) the phenomena are analyzed in a contextual framework, developed within a wider international and cultural diversity.

In the first two texts, I have focused on conceptual and theoretical tools. These are tools that we – as students of nonprofit or voluntary organizations, social movements, civil society, etc. – have used in our enterprise

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2 Salamon, L. M. and H. K. Anheier (1997, p. 1) *Defining the nonprofit sector. A cross-national analysis*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

to delineate, model and understand phenomena found in this part of society.<sup>3</sup> In the final two essays, I have, in the light of this more critical approach, taken the freedom to experiment some. This has been done using an explorative and highly speculative approach and through playing with some alternative – although rudimentary developed – new analytical frameworks. In the essays, focus is shifted. Instead of dealing with conceptual tools, I have in these two texts chosen to address a couple of more limited and empirically derived phenomena.

### **On conceptual and analytical tools**

The first article is entitled *The Swedish Nonprofit Sector in International Comparison*<sup>4</sup>, and is basically a critique of the dominant perspective found in contemporary mainstream nonprofit or voluntary literature. This perspective has been developed in a very specific Anglo-Saxon cultural setting and has, in my opinion, too narrow a legal/economic basic approach. The critical track in this article is found earlier in Chapter 7 of the book. However, with the support of a firm base in empirical data, the critique is greatly expanded.

The critique is carried out chiefly through the analysis of the sector along two main traditions or paradigms. These two traditions could be understood as one nonprofit or voluntary sector approach and one civil society approach. It is argued in the article, that earlier attempts of international researchers to understand the Swedish sector have been biased. The main purpose of the article is to broaden the understanding of this part of society by using the establishment of a socio-economic approach.

The second paper, *Hate groups and outlaw bikers: part of civil society?*, springs from the work with concepts and definitions that I have been engaged in throughout the research project. More specifically, the basis for this conceptual work is presented in Chapter 2 of the book (pp. 14-51). The paper takes as its point of departure the difficulties met when trying to work with conceptual models from different fields and disciplines. But the text also feeds from the frustration I have experienced when dealing with various definitions. The definitions seem, on the surface, to be

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the social construction of a nonprofit sector or a civil society in itself is an instrument by which to enhance certain facets or dimensions of society; dimensions not as easily detectable with other mental constructs, e.g., through the introduction of a state, a governmental sector or a for-profit company.

<sup>4</sup> I am deeply grateful to CIRIEC and Blackwell Publishers for allowing me to reprint the article. It was originally published in *Annales of Public and Cooperative Economics* in December 1997 (Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 625-663).

objective and 'true'. However, when scrutinizing them – as well as applying them in practice – the definitions appear to contain clearly normative attitudes. This practice is not a problem *per se*, but seldom or never are these positions or standpoints clarified.

The aim of the second paper is twofold. First, two existing definitions of organizations in civil society are tested. The test is conducted on two types of organizations – white hate groups and outlaw motorcycle clubs. They were chosen since they seemed – with their very existence – to challenge what many researchers, explicitly or implicitly, have understood to be part of civil society. It is shown in the paper that, according to the definitions used, both of these ideal-typical organizations fall under the concept of a civil society. Secondly, mainstream research on third sector organizations seems to hold a considerable lack of empirical data and conceptual understanding of these phenomena. The paper is also an attempt to bring them forth as relevant objects of study.

In this test of definitions, my intention has not been to strive for any kind of true, optimal or ultimate definition of what a civil society organization is. I do not even believe it is possible to reach such a definition. Neither has my aim been to show that the definitions we now use are useless and should therefore be abandoned. Instead, we have been able to see that the definitions we do use to capture civil society organizations are not unproblematic. Or at least that they cover more organizational types than what we normally might associate with the concept of civil society.

I do believe that we, as students of social phenomena, need definitions to be able to study, compare and communicate our findings within, as well as between, specific cultural settings. In this process, however, it is important that we remain aware of the limitations and specific characteristics of the tools we apply. This is necessary partly to better understand the phenomena studied, but also to be honest to our readers. Other students as well as various decision-makers depend on the material we provide through our research, and it is our responsibility to be at least ourselves aware of, and also to communicate, the taken-for-granted conceptions ingrained in our conceptual apparatus.

### **Two explorative essays**

The third text found in this volume, *Strategic dilemmas for Swedish popular movement organizations*, has the objects of study the traditional Swedish popular mass movements (*folkrörelserna*) and an experienced sense of crisis in some of the organizations within these movements. The

essay addresses some crucial changes in today's society and their impact on popular movement organizations. It is argued that two major external shifts in the relations between the nonprofit sector and the public sector, on the one hand, and between the sector and the citizens, on the other, have had a profound impact on traditional Swedish PMOs. Underlying reasons for the reactions of the PMOs are discussed and some interpretations of the effects are presented.

The final essay – *Outlaw biking in alternative frames of interpretation* – also takes a more limited and empirically derived phenomenon as its point of departure. The outlaw motorcycle clubs used to test the definitions in the second text of this volume reappear, albeit the focus have shifted from definitions and conceptual issues to an empirical phenomenon. What in the earlier text was background has thus become the foreground in this essay. While studying the different empirical accounts of these organizations and their very special world, I became puzzled. What kind of an animal are they? An attempt at a 'determination of species' proved to be problematic.

My purpose of this second explorative essay has not been to develop a best possible frame for the study of outlaw biking, but rather to lay bare some already existing images of outlaw motorcycle clubs. Each perspective highlight important aspects of the phenomenon, but also neglect key features visible from other angles. To be able to *read* complex organizational phenomena, one must first be able to reframe, to shift focus and understand the phenomenon *as if* it was something else. My undertaking in this final essay is spurred by a recent debate on the reduction of social insecurity and the contribution and reproduction of trust and social capital in society, within and from different types of organizations. A preliminary and speculative discussion on these organizations and their role in society is attempted.

In a conceptual dress inspired by Habermas, it might be possible – admittedly with the help of broad strokes of the brush and once again by being highly speculative – to understand certain dimensions of the two different phenomena analyzed in the last two essays as responses to a 'colonization of the lifeworld by the machine world'.

The first essay could be seen as partly addressing the effects on the traditional Swedish mass movements by an experienced higher degree of bureaucratization, commodification, professionalization, consumerism and managerialism, where the influences from 'rational' models and ways of thinking are obvious. The effects on the organizations by these

processes of change could be interpreted as a 'crisis'. In the second text, on the outlaw biking culture, a different process could be traced. Instead of yielding to the colonization of the 'rationalism' of today's society, these organizations – in a similar fashion as could be noted in the growing number and influence of religious sects today<sup>5</sup> – could be interpreted as part of a counter-culture, seeking to establish or maintain an alternative cultural context.

None of these two last explorative essays is to be viewed as a finished piece of work and both contains several parallel, sometimes contradicting, alternative theoretical and conceptual routes. Although the issues addressed in the two essays concern more limited social (organized) phenomena within the larger concept of a civil society, it is my belief that we hardly are able to produce a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena on the basis of one single theory.<sup>6</sup> I have therefore been experimenting with a number of differing theories, analytical frames and tools from various scholarly disciplines. In this, they represent a response – a subsequent next step – both to my work with the quantitative data in the book and to the more conceptual work of mine in the first two papers in the present volume, but also in the book's second chapter on definitions and concepts. In a way, these two essays could very well be understood as vehicles to accommodate and develop some of my main suggestions and advice for future research.

## **Brief on civil society and its organizations**

To end this introductory cover, I will give a brief personal account of my view on the role of a civil society and its organizations.<sup>7</sup> There is an ongoing debate, including academic as well as more political contributions, on the constitution and role of a civil society.<sup>8</sup> There is no consen-

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5 For a view on this development in Sweden, see Frisk, L. (1993) *Nya religiösa rörelser i Sverige. Relation till samhället/världen, anslutning och engagemang*, Åbo Academy Press, Åbo, and Nylund, K.-E. (1998) *Att leka med elden*, Sellin & Partner Bok och Idé AB, Stockholm.

6 See Ahrne, G., C. Roman and M. Franzén (1996, pp. 13-44) *Det sociala landskapet. En sociologisk beskrivning av Sverige från 50-tal till 90-tal*, Bokförlaget Korpen, Göteborg, for a comprehensive discussion on this perspective.

7 For a comprehensive summary and analysis of civil society and political theory, see Cohen, J. L. and A. Arato (1992) *Civil Society and Political Theory*, The MIT Press, Cambridge (Ma).

8 For voices on civil society found in the Swedish debate, see, e.g., Ahrne, G. ("Civil Society and Civil Organizations", in *Organization*, Vol. 3, No 1, 1996, pp. 109-20), Antman, P.

sus on, nor clear definition of, what civil society is, and differences in the constitution as well as in the content of civil society can be noted. One such important difference between various perspectives seems to pertain to the role of organizations within civil society, whether or not there is something else than organizations found in civil society. For my work, however, it will be sufficient to state that the majority of nonprofit, voluntary and social movement organizations seems to constitute important elements in most contemporary understandings of a civil society.

Some observers seem to have a taken-for-granted normative understanding of 'harmony' and 'consensus' in society as a main function or overall goal of social movements and civil society. It is argued that there is a basic and wide-spread positive ring associated with the concept of a social movement: "The label "social movement" has gained an extraordinary appeal among social scientists, political activists and the general public. It has been eagerly appropriated both in research and political rhetoric as an ideal "hurrah! word" ..."<sup>9</sup> Take, for example, the statement: "It is our thesis that social movements constitute the dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies."<sup>10</sup>

I do not share this normative understanding. Instead, I believe that one very important role (among others) for the organizations populating this part of society is to bring forth, make visible and contrast the thinking of individuals or groups with different understandings of what life and society is all about; to display and cater to all the differing opinions of what should be the overall goals in society and the acceptable means to get there. Disagreement, conflict, politics, divisions and splinter factions all have an equally important and natural part to play in this process as have consensus agreement, unification, harmony and understanding.

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(*Systemskifte*, ed. Carlssons, Stockholm, 1993, pp. 21-80), Lidskog, R. ("Sociologins objekt eller politikens begrepp? Reflektioner kring begreppet "civilt samhälle"", in *Sociologisk Forskning*, No. 1, 1995, pp. 31-55), *Sociologisk Forskning*, (Thematic issue on civil society, No 2, 1994); Therborn, G. (*European Modernity and Beyond. The trajectory of European Societies, 1945-2000*, Sage Publications, London, 1995, pp. 304-333). For an analysis of the more political debate on civil society and the welfare state in Sweden, see Meeuwisse, A. (*Debatten om välfärdsstaten och det civila samhället*, forthcoming).

9 Pakulski, J. (1991, p. xiv) *Social Movements. The Politics of Moral Protest*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

10 Cohen, J. and A. Arato (1995, p. 492) *Civil Society and Political Theory*, The MIT Press, Cambridge (Ma).

Civil society is, in my opinion, per se nothing 'better' or 'finer' than the rest of life and society. Along basically the same reasoning found in the writings of, for example, Alberto Melucci, though without the normative slant towards an expansion of citizenship and a strive for overall democratization found in his work, I see civil society and its organizations very much an arena or a public space where similarities and differences in taste and values are brought to the surface and also acted out. Melucci writes: "The main function of public spaces is that of rendering visible and collective the questions raised by the 'movements'."<sup>11</sup>

Also in my eyes, this is the prime forum where civic virtues, individual or collective taste, everyday norms and values, as well as formal and informal institutions in society are made visible, interpreted, questioned, challenged, negotiated, reformulated, changed or confirmed in a never-ending process. "Social power in today's complex society rests, to a high degree, in the production, control and acquirement of knowledge and symbols".<sup>12</sup> In an interaction between individuals, our understanding of society is continuously (re)created and reshaped. In this way, civil society and its organizations can take on the function of "an unregulated relief between state and market", as we have argued elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> In this interpretation, civil society functions as a kind of sanctuary for pluralism and diversity of human thought and action, a role I believe essential in any society to stay viable.

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11 Melucci, A. (1988, p. 259) "Social Movements and the Democratization of Everyday Life", in Keane, J. (ed) *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, Verso, London.

12 Thörn, H. (1997, p. 218) *Modernitet, sociologi och sociala rörelser*, Göteborgs universitet, Gothenburg.

13 Lundström, T. and F. Wijkström (1997, p. 133), *The nonprofit sector in Sweden*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.



## THE SWEDISH NONPROFIT SECTOR IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

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Received May 1996; final revision accepted July 1997

**ABSTRACT:** *The previous picture of the nonprofit sector in Sweden has been biased by a narrow US perspective. Mainstream nonprofit literature seems to neglect work carried out in the important but more complex tradition of the civil society. In this article, recent cross-national data reflecting both these paradigms are presented. This gives us a better picture of the Swedish sector and highlights limitations of earlier approaches, not only for our understanding of the Swedish sector but also of the sector elsewhere. To continue the quest for the raison d'être of the sector, not only are more cross-national data needed but we must also develop a multidisciplinary framework in which to understand the data.*

### 1 Introduction

Is there a viable third sector in Sweden? The question is raised by John Boli, an American sociologist who has studied the Swedish sector (Boli 1991). He wonders whether such a sector exists at all in Sweden and poses this question from the understanding that the organizations

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\* *Résumé en fin d'article; Zusammenfassung am Ende des Artikels; resumen al fin del artículo.*

The author is grateful for comments made by Tommy Lundström at the University of Stockholm and Mark Lyons at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The text has also benefited greatly from discussions at two seminars on earlier versions, at the CIRIEC Congress in Lisbon, Portugal, May 1996, and at a CACOM seminar, at the School of Management at UTS, in May 1997. Also the comments made by two anonymous reviewers have helped substantially in sharpening some of the arguments. The usual caveat applies.

are so bound to and dependent on the state that their independence can be questioned (p.95). In another study, a second American researcher, economist Estelle James, supports this view of a high dependence upon government. She states that nearly two-thirds of the Swedish sector's revenues come from government sources (James 1989b, p.38). James (1989a, p.9) further concludes that 'Sweden has only a small nonprofit sector' and that the sector plays only a minor role as producer of private and social benefits.

The depiction of the situation in Sweden by both Boli and James is not unique. On the contrary, they give a typical representation of the picture of Sweden that seems to have prevailed internationally. In the nonprofit literature, Sweden has often been used as a deviant example of the importance of the sector in society. Researchers point out that Sweden is the only country in western Europe that does not allow tax deductions for private contributions to nonprofit or voluntary organizations (Simon 1990, p.35). Sweden has further been of interest to researchers because of a supposed negative attitude in society towards charity (James 1987, p.404, 1989b, p.54) or because Sweden, according to the calculations of the United Nations, has such an extremely small sector, measured in relation to the total wages of employees and operating surpluses of the organizations, that in size the Swedish sector can be more closely compared to that of Cameroon or the Ivory Coast (Anheier et al. 1992, pp.18–20). Also, the fact that health services provided under the auspices of third sector organizations in Sweden are very limited compared with those in Germany seems to arouse wonder (Anheier 1990, p.47). Even researchers in neighbouring Scandinavian countries state that the Swedish sector is weaker than that of Denmark and Norway, without presenting the criteria used for this comparison (Kuhnle and Selle 1992, p.4). The only time the nonprofit sector in Sweden has attracted international attention in this field of research because of its extensive size is when the per capita number of memberships of voluntary organizations is studied. The scale of the Swedish sector can in this respect be compared to that of the sector in the United States – the land of the nonprofit sector *par excellence* – which seems to confuse the observers (Boli 1992, p.241).

In this article a number of measures of a Swedish third, nonprofit or voluntary sector will be presented<sup>1</sup>. There is a focus on economic size, structure and financing of the sector, but also data on memberships and

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1 Since there is not yet any agreed upon term, the three terms will be used interchangeably and synonymously in this article.

volunteering are discussed. In the end, some shortcomings of the earlier dominant paradigm in nonprofit studies are highlighted.

## 2 On previous research – two paradigms?

The third sector has experienced increasing attention internationally. Despite the resulting increase in literature, the sector has been of limited interest to Swedish researchers and, as illustrated above, the interest in the Swedish voluntary or nonprofit sector from other researchers has – at best – been of a ‘hit-and-run’ character.

The nonprofit or voluntary sector in Sweden has received some limited attention in national political and academic debate, but this interest has focused on either the earlier popular mass movements (*folkrörelserna*) or the special-interest organizations. This research has been limited to the historical development of the labor, temperance and free church movements, or has focused on the political influence of the organizations in specific fields, for example in the labor market, but also in agriculture and alcohol policy formulation. From a Swedish popular mass movement perspective, the first line of research has resulted in the general understanding that the earlier movements, through a comprehensive system of study circles and adult education, have been of vital importance to Swedish society as schools for democracy and citizen participation (e.g., Lundkvist 1977, Johansson 1980, Ambjörnsson 1991, SOU 1996). In another and more critical tradition, a second line of research has been able to demonstrate the highly corporativistic nature of Swedish society in its analysis of special-interest organizations (e.g., Lewin 1992, Rothstein 1992, Micheletti 1994). Thus, research studying two dimensions of the impact of the sector in society – the importance for enabling citizens to an active participation and the political influence on government through lobbying – has traditionally been strong in Sweden.

Most of the recent international academic interest in this sector has been of another type. This research has mainly concentrated on the sector as a service producer (e.g., Hansmann 1980, Rose-Ackerman 1986, 1996, Powell 1987, Weisbrod 1988, James 1989a, Ben-Ner and Gui 1993). These studies have often used the American nonprofit concept even though interesting research has been carried out under more European concepts like the French *économie sociale* (e.g., van Til 1988, Defourny and Monzón Campos 1992, Quarter 1992, Archambault 1997) or the British notion of a ‘voluntary sector’ (e.g., Davis Smith et al. 1995, Kendall and Knapp 1996). This line of research emphasizes the

(economic) contributions of the nonprofit sector in the provision of traditional welfare services like health care, compulsory education and social services, rather than stressing the role of the sector as a 'voice' for special causes or organized interests, or its importance in the creation and reproduction of social capital.

To a large extent, much of this mainstream nonprofit research has also originated in a narrow US or UK context (Ware 1989, James 1997) and the studies are firmly rooted in a legal/economic paradigm (Lyons 1996). Only in a few Swedish studies has the nonprofit or voluntary sector in this tradition been viewed as mainly complementary to or as a compensation for state welfare services (Bohm 1985, SOU 1993b, Amnå 1995, Loord-Gynne and Mann 1995, Statskontoret 1995, Stryjan and Wijkström 1996). In the other Scandinavian countries, however, research concentrating on the sector as welfare provider has grown considerably in recent years (e.g., Lorentzen 1993, Habermann 1995, Klausen and Selle 1995, Henriksen 1996, VOLUNTAS 1996).

As also identified by Lyons (1996), the most important alternative intellectual discourse to this legal/economic approach in the study of a third sector is the maze of literature on civil society found in the work of, for example, Keane (1988a, 1988b) or Cohen and Arato (1992). In this diversified tradition of scholarly work there has recently been a rapidly growing literature on social capital, initiated by the work of Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993). Another interesting field of research related to this civil society tradition is the study on social movements (e.g., Jenkins 1983, Social Research 1985, McAdam et al. 1988, Melucci 1989, Pakulski 1991, Morris and McClurg Mueller 1992). Important bridges can be established between this civil society research and earlier work on the importance of the Swedish popular mass movements. One such link is the idea that the democratically run associations in this sector, in a more or less organized fashion, at least indirectly are important sources for 'civic-ness', solidarity and people's engagement in society at large.

In summary, despite a growing interest in this part of society in many other countries, a composite picture of the Swedish third sector has been lacking. This lack applies not only to relevant theory and statistics, but also to the fundamental conceptual apparatus, which is itself unclear. At the same time, the Swedish situation as portrayed in international literature tends to marginalize the sector's importance in society, and often is merely anecdotal. To avoid the risk of having too simplified a picture of the sector in Sweden, the understanding reached in the few existing analyses of the Swedish sector found in the two main traditions described above must be combined in a socio-

economic analysis. Whether these two traditions are incompatible (a question addressed by Lyons 1996), or whether it is possible to reach some common basic conceptual and theoretical understanding between them, is of course a larger issue than this article will be able to deal with. In this text I will consider them as two approaches emphasizing two intrinsic faces of the same societal phenomenon, the third sector.

Furthermore, a more comprehensive picture of the Swedish sector is of interest from an international standpoint, since foreign researchers who endeavour to compare countries have difficulty finding a Swedish point of reference. They tend to mistake the lack of national (mainstream) nonprofit sector research, or the sector's structural differences from its counterparts in many other countries, for the existence of a smaller, less significant sector in Sweden. A first step to remedy the current situation is to bring some conceptual order to the study of this phenomenon in a Swedish setting.

### **3 Nonprofit sector definition and classification**

To study the nonprofit sector we need firstly to define what we mean by the concept. Then, to be able to structure the sector in some way, we must also classify different organizations or operations. In the definition used by a group of researchers in an international comparative project in which a Swedish team took part, five key criteria for a nonprofit organization were identified (Salamon and Anheier 1997 pp.33–34). This definition states that a nonprofit organization should

- (i) be formally organized, that is, be institutionalized in some way;
- (ii) be private and thus separate from government;
- (iii) be nonprofit-distributing, that is, not returning any profits or dividends to owners, directors or members;
- (iv) be self-governing, that is, equipped to control and govern its own activities;
- (v) be voluntary, that is, involve some meaningful degree of voluntary participation or contributions.

The organizations in the Swedish sector represent a rich variety in both aim and form (for a fuller description and discussion on these issues, see Lundström and Wijkström 1997). There is no ready-made typology of the third sector in Sweden. As is obvious, the proposed way of defining the organizations in the sector is only one of several.

However, for the purpose of this article, and also to be able to make international comparisons, this structural/operational definition has been used.

One way of structuring the sector is to divide it according to organizational (legal) form. The first and largest part of the sector comprises all the different 'associations'. This is the form used by the great majority of all large popular mass movements (*folkrörelserna*) as well as almost every other small or large voluntary or nonprofit organization engaging a number of individuals as members. Organizations active in sports or recreation, on the Swedish labor market – like labor unions or employers' associations – or involved in politics, international relief activities or religion, are mostly associations. Some 88 per cent of the Swedish sector's expenditures were found in associations in 1992 (Lundström and Wijkström 1995) and the same magnitude is true also for their share of members and volunteers (Lundström and Wijkström 1997).

In this large group of associations the more cooperative-like ones can be identified and classified in two broad types: the larger and older consumer and producer cooperatives on the one hand, and the more recent and often smaller cooperatives active within welfare services – the neo-cooperatives (*nykooperationen*) – on the other. In the neo-cooperative form, enterprises originating out of earlier self-help groups in Sweden have found a way to operate that in many other countries probably would have been found in traditional nonprofit or voluntary arrangements (e.g., Hansson and Wijkström 1997).

Next, the group of 'foundations' in Sweden should be given a heading of its own. The foundations represent a crucial part of the Swedish sector but are poorly researched. Only recently a foundation law was introduced in Sweden for the first time. The operating foundations are found mainly within research and education, culture and welfare services. Funding or grant-giving foundations are also mainly active within research and education, fields in which the foundations are allowed tax benefits. The Church of Sweden, finally, is still formally a part of the state but is actually a clearly separate and autonomous entity. Separation has been debated at least since the mid-1970s and church and state will be constitutionally separated in 2000, according to a *Riksdag* (Swedish parliament) resolution in late 1996. New legislation has been introduced in this case.

Most of the Swedish organizations found in the different groups discussed above qualify as nonprofit according to the structural/operational definition. An important exclusion, however, is the older cooperative federations. These are better considered as regular for-

profit firms in many of their features, or, as Ware (1989 p. 5) expresses it, 'some of the working-class mutual-benefit organizations established in the nineteenth century [have] become major components of national economies, and [are] now largely indistinguishable from for-profit enterprises, both in respect of their business practices and their internal control.' The Church of Sweden is further left out of the all-Swedish tables but its non-sacral activities, such as choirs and child care, are included in the comparative tables, to match the adjustments made in the other countries. (For some other borderline cases of importance, see Lundström and Wijkström 1997).<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that the structural/operational definition does not restrict the concept of a nonprofit or voluntary sector to the altruistic or nonprofit organizations or those serving only non-members, or to organizations that would be tax exempt and eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts under US Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). On the contrary, this definition also includes mutual-support associations and organizations found in the important 'member-benefit subsector,' as defined by Smith (1991, p. 137), in which primarily private goods are sought. In fact, these latter organizations make up the bulk of the Swedish third sector, especially if religious groups are included, as proposed by Smith.

Another task in the challenge to conceptualize a nonprofit or voluntary sector is that of classification. To group the organizations in any useful way for further analysis, we need to identify systematic differences between the organizations. Since existing classification systems, for example, the United Nations International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) or the European Community's General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (NACE), tend to treat third sector organizations as residual phenomena, the group of researchers in the Johns Hopkins international project agreed upon an alternative approach – ICNPO – the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (Salamon and Anheier 1997, pp. 51–100).

This system still has a significant focus on economic activity, which can be considered an important drawback when considering the

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2 For the purpose of international comparisons in this article, the Swedish data have been adjusted and important parts of the Swedish sector are excluded in the comparative tables. Two such exclusions are political parties and the sacral work of religious congregations. In the other countries in the Johns Hopkins International Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, these activities were left out, and only the service-providing arms of these organizations, e.g., education or social work, were included.

existence of the two main paradigms – legal/economic and civil society. This system has clearly been developed within the first of these paradigms, which could result in a less useful classification for the understanding of features central to the second paradigm. However, it is the first comprehensive classification system to focus on nonprofit organizations and their activities and does it with an ambition to be international.

The ICNPO focuses on the direct operations of the organizations and establishes a number of major 'fields' and 'sub-fields' in which to sort the organizations, or rather different establishments of the organizations. In the Swedish version (see Appendix) the sub-field of 'Sports' (120) is found in the main field of 'Culture and Recreation' (1) together with 'Culture and arts' (110) and 'Outdoor recreation' (133). More complex multi-operational organizations like the Swedish Red Cross have been divided according to the main activities of its various establishments. The Red Cross hospital is therefore classified under 'Hospitals and rehabilitation' (320) while its medical education and international relief operations are found under 'Higher education' (220) and 'Relief work' (910), respectively.

Following this logic, the organizations in, for example, the Swedish temperance movement will basically be found in three different main fields. Organizations primarily lobbying government and parliament to influence legislation and policy are found in sub-field 'Temperance organizations' (714) under the main field 'Law, advocacy and politics' (7). At the same time, operations carried out by organizations linked to the movement but dealing more directly with social work directed at alcoholics or drug addicts are instead classified as 'Drug addict care' (413) under 'Social services' (4). Finally, the education found under the auspices of temperance organizations, that is, in educational associations or 'folk' high schools, is classified as 'Educational associations' (231) or 'Residential colleges' (232). This distinction between purely service-producing organizations and special-interest/advocacy organizations is important, but the line is sometimes difficult to draw since many organizations, to varying degrees, act as both.

To understand the economic impact of the Swedish sector in society, the ICNPO classification is used in the following section to map the expenditures and revenues of the Swedish nonprofit or voluntary organizations.



## 4 Expenditures and revenues

Is the Swedish sector smaller and weaker than the nonprofit or voluntary sectors in other comparable countries? This seems to be the previous general understanding in the international academic arena. To verify whether this picture of the Swedish sector is accurate or not, this section will focus on the economic size and structure of the sector as well as on its financing.

### 4.1 Sector structure (expenditures)

One way to present the structure of the Swedish sector is to map the share of operating expenditures for each ICNPO field. The Swedish third sector had operating expenditures of 60 billion SEK in 1992, but in what type of activities did they engage? Table 1 presents the distribution of annual operating expenditures among different ICNPO fields. The table is headed by organizations active in culture and recreation (e.g., sports associations or nonprofit choirs), followed by labor and business organizations, including in Sweden traditional labor market organizations like the labor unions and the employers' associations, but also professional associations and business or trade associations. In third place come organizations devoted to education and research, consisting of the popular mass movements' educational associations and folk high schools but also the so-called free schools, which provide primary or secondary compulsory education.

**Table 1 – Operating expenditures of the Swedish sector by ICNPO field**

Field	Share
Culture and recreation	22.8%
Labour and business	21.0%
Education and research	13.3%
Development and housing	8.8%
Law, advocacy and politics	7.7%
Social services	7.4%
International activities	5.8%
Religion	4.2%
Health care	2.7%
Philanthropy	2.5%
Not Elsewhere Classified (NEC)	2.1%
Environment	1.7%
Total	60 billion SEK

Source: Lundström and Wijkström (1997).

In the middle of the table come four fields comprising between 5 and 10 per cent of the sector – development and housing (including organizations for regional development but also tenants' associations); law, advocacy and politics (with pensioners', women's and handicapped people's organizations, political parties and ethnic and minority associations); social services (including both general social services like elderly care or child day care and specific services such as drug rehabilitation or services for the handicapped); and, finally, international activities. International activities encompass organizations like the Swedish Red Cross and Save the Children. However, if these traditional international relief organizations also run hospitals, social care centres or educational institutions in Sweden, these operations have been separated out and placed under their respective headings.

Finally, the four smallest fields of the sector in Sweden are religion, health care, philanthropy, and environment, which all, together with the group of 'not elsewhere classified' (NEC) organizations, each have less than 5 per cent of the Swedish sector's total operating expenditures. Of the NEC organizations, the Swedish voluntary defence organizations are the largest single group.

#### 4.2 The core domains of the welfare state

To the surprise of many, researchers as well as others, the economic importance of the Swedish nonprofit sector compared with gross domestic product (GDP) is well in line with the situation in other industrialized and developed countries. In 1992, the third sector in Sweden had an annual turnover of approximately 60 billion SEK (about US\$10 billion) which, after adjustments made for religion and politics in line with the other countries, amounts to about 58.3 billion SEK. In that year, the Swedish GDP was 1,437 billion SEK and the sector's total operating expenditures therefore equalled 4.1 per cent of GDP. In Germany and the United Kingdom, the operating expenditures of the sector equalled 3.6 per cent and 4.8 per cent of GDP, respectively (Table 2). While the data for Sweden are from 1992, the other countries in Table 2 present data from 1990.

It is interesting to compare the structure of the Swedish sector with sectors found in other industrialized countries. In Sweden, the added nonprofit or voluntary activities in the traditional core domains of the welfare state – education and research, health care and social services – generate about a quarter of operating expenditures in the sector, even if the extensive work carried out by educational

**Table 2 – Nonprofit sector operating expenditures in eight countries expressed as a percentage of GDP in each country**

Country	Share of GDP
Hungary	1.2%
Italy	2.0%
Japan	3.2%
France	3.3%
Germany	3.6%
Sweden	4.1%
United Kingdom	4.8%
United States	6.3%

Sources: Lundström and Wijkström (1997), Salamon and Anheier (1996a, p. 38).

associations and folk high schools is included (Wijkström 1996, 1997). In comparable countries, the economic size of these three fields taken together is two or three times larger as a proportion of the total operating expenditures of the sector (Table 3). While the nonprofit or voluntary sectors in the other developed and industrialized countries in economic terms are dominated (57–85 per cent of total operating expenditures) by organizations active in the core domains of the welfare state, the sector in Sweden is dominated by organizations in the field of culture and recreation together with labor and business associations.

**Table 3 – Operating expenditures for the core domains of the welfare state (education and research, health care and social services) of the sector in eight countries**

Country	Welfare state core domains
Sweden	27%
Hungary	30%
United Kingdom	57%
Italy	62%
France	68%
Germany	70%
Japan	81%
United States	85%

Sources: Lundström and Wijkström (1997), Salamon and Anheier (1996a, p. 148).

### 4.3 Independence – sources of revenue

The independence of the nonprofit or voluntary sector in different countries is often debated. In fact, one important aspect of this sector in many attempts to define it is its independence from other sectors in society. As shown earlier, the previous general understanding was that the Swedish sector was more dependent upon the public sector than the sector in other countries (James 1989b, Boli 1991).

One way of viewing this independence (or dependence) is to study the composition of different sources of revenue. In Table 4 the revenue distribution is presented for the Swedish sector for three main sources: government (local or regional as well as national) revenue; private gifts and donations; and self-generated or earned income, including membership dues and fees. About 29 per cent of the Swedish third sector's income can be traced to governmental sources. In this, all different forms of monetary subsidies or grants as well as regular contracts and third-party payments from government are included. This is clearly a different finding from earlier attempts to estimate the financial transfers from government to the sector in Sweden. With data from 1979, James (1989b, p. 38) found that 65 per cent of the sector's revenues came from government (local or central) sources, that is, more than twice the share presented here, which is an issue I will return to later in this article.

Returning to Table 4, we can see that only 11.5 per cent of the total income is received from private donations, such as gifts and corporate sponsoring, while nearly 60 per cent has been generated by the organizations themselves in different activities, for example second-hand sales or entrance fees to their events, but also in membership dues or fees. On average, nearly half the self-generated incomes is membership dues or fees (30 per cent of total revenues), thus representing a major source of income to many organizations. In a Swedish context, this money is often similar to regular gifts from members to support the organization and not meant to ensure the

**Table 4 – The distribution of revenue sources for the Swedish sector**

Revenue sources	Share
Earned income	59.7%
Donations income	11.5%
Government income	28.8%

Source: Lundström and Wijkström (1997).

**Table 5 – The revenue sources of the nonprofit sector in eight countries**

Country	Government sources	Earned income	Donations
Germany	68%	28%	4%
France	59%	33%	7%
Italy	43%	53%	4%
United Kingdom	40%	48%	12%
Japan	38%	60%	1%
United States	30%	52%	19%
Sweden	29%	62%	9%
Hungary	23%	57%	20%
Average	41%	49%	10%

Sources: Lundström and Wijkström (1997), Salamon and Anheier (1996a, pp. 150–2).

members' actual access to various premises or different membership benefits. Some organizations even call this 'support membership'.

It is interesting to note that the sector in Sweden is one of the least dependent on government revenue when compared with the sector in some other countries, and is considerably below the unweighted average for the eight comparison countries (Table 5). What is the explanation for this low degree of public financing of the overall sector in Sweden? In Tables 4 and 5, only aggregated figures for the whole of the Swedish sector are presented. Of more interest is the distribution between various revenue sources for organizations in different fields. In Table 6, this picture is presented and it shows considerable differences between fields<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to note that the figures concerning government support presented here refer only to monetary subsidies, and thus do not include the very important subsidies such as free access to public (often municipal) facilities like arenas or sports centres. Nor is the value of beneficial tax treatment calculated.

The single most important finding in Table 6 to the discussion here is the very different financial situation for the core domains of the welfare state when compared with other fields. Swedish voluntary or nonprofit activities within the fields of health care, social services and education and research are largely financed with government money.

<sup>3</sup> In Table 6 the revenue distribution for political parties (law, advocacy and politics) as well as religious organizations is presented, but the revenue distribution for these organizations is not reflected in Table 5, where international comparisons are made.

**Table 6 – The revenue sources of the Swedish nonprofit sector by ICNPO field**

ICNPO field	Government	Earned	Donations
Health care	87.1%	11.6%	1.3%
Social services	70.7%	19.8%	9.5%
Education and research	53.7%	42.1%	4.2%
International activities	49.1%	14.1%	36.8%
Law, advocacy and politics	30.9%	46.7%	22.4%
Culture and recreation	25.3%	62.7%	12.0%
Religion	18.4%	18.4%	63.2%
Philanthropy	14.7%	81.5%	3.8%
Environment	13.9%	61.2%	24.9%
NEC	12.4%	80.4%	7.2%
Development and housing	10.8%	88.9%	0.3%
Labour and business	5.3%	91.5%	3.2%
Average	28.8%	11.5%	59.7%

Source: Lundström and Wijkström (1997).

Thus, the explanation for a lower degree of public financing of the Swedish sector in comparison with other countries is not that Swedish organizations in general are more successful in their own income-generating activities, nor that Swedes are more generous or altruistic. Rather, the explanation is that the fields most heavily financed with public money (the core domains of the welfare state) are among the smallest of all the fields of the Swedish sector. The situation is the opposite in the other countries, as shown in Table 3. In Table 7, where

**Table 7 – The public financing of nonprofit services in the 'core domains' of the welfare state**

Country	Education	Health care	Social services
France	73%	84%	60%
Germany	70%	84%	83%
Hungary	7%	12%	12%
Italy	49%	72%	60%
Japan	11%	96%	65%
Sweden	54%	87%	71%
United Kingdom	64%	23%	26%
United States	21%	36%	51%
Average	44%	62%	54%

Sources: Lundström and Wijkström (1997), Salamon and Anheier (1996a, pp.150–2).

the income distribution for the core domains in eight countries is shown, we can see an overall high public financing of these fields.

In all these three fields, the public sector money set aside for the third sector in Sweden exceeds the eight-country averages, but these fields of the Swedish sector are far from the best financed with public money when single fields are compared between countries. For example, in France, 73 per cent of the income for nonprofit educational organizations is contributed by public sources (Sweden: 54 per cent); in health care, as much as 96 per cent of the resources in the Japanese sector is provided by the public sector (Sweden: 87 per cent); and as much as 83 per cent of the German private nonprofit social services are financed by public money (Sweden: 71 per cent).

To understand the economic dependency of the sector upon government in any given country, it is not enough to study only the share of total revenues coming from public sources. Two other important areas, where we at present lack data, especially of a comparative character, are the in-kind support provided to nonprofit or voluntary organizations by government, such as subsidized recreation facilities or meeting halls, and the value of the tax relief present in most countries. To be able to compare the full economic support from (and dependency on) government between countries, the value of these two support forms must also be estimated.

## 5 Members and volunteers

Economic measures alone can never provide a complete picture of the voluntary or nonprofit sector in any society. Therefore, to present another face of the Swedish sector, two non-economic measures are introduced: numbers of members and the amount of volunteer time provided. In this way, the alternative research paradigm found in the more disparate civil society tradition will be addressed. Taken together with the economic data, these non-economic measures can be seen as a first attempt at a more comprehensive socio-economic approach needed to understand the Swedish third sector.

### 5.1 Members

A distinct feature of the third sector in Sweden is its high degree of membership among the population, both in absolute numbers and in comparison with other industrial nations. According to Swedish studies, fewer than one out of ten Swedes is completely without any

formal membership of such organizations (Petersson et al. 1989, Häll 1994), and in 1986 it was estimated that Swedish associations had 31 million members, which meant that the average Swede then was a member of four organizations (SOU 1987). Membership is thus a concept central to understanding the Swedish sector, but the membership dimension also contributes to the identity of individuals, even though the importance of membership still is a less well understood form of affiliation than for example employment or kinship (Ahrne 1990, p. 126).

Association membership among the Swedish population has increased in the twentieth century. With regard to the older popular mass movements, this is especially true of labor unions, as well as the sports movement, while free churches and the temperance movement have suffered substantial decreases in membership, as well as in political influence (Lindblad and Lundkvist 1996). A growing number of 'identity' organizations, such as associations for pensioners, handicapped persons, tenants and immigrants, have also attracted increasing memberships (Engberg 1986). A special group of these identity organizations is found in the rapidly expanding patient or client movement, viewing themselves as customers or consumers of public health care or social services, for example in care for children and elderly people (Möller 1996).

Some of these more recent organizations can be classified under a larger umbrella concept sometimes labelled 'the new social movements' (*Social Research* 1985). This new social organizational category is still seeking and redefining its borders; Keane (1988b, p. xi) broadly refers to the group of people engaging in them as 'participants within the new social movements of black people, pacifists, women, gays and lesbians, ecologists and others'. These new social movements have gained momentum in Sweden during the last 20 to 30 years. However, there are some indications that these newer movements might differ in important aspects from their earlier counterparts in Sweden. The formation of these new organizations may even be seen, in part, as a critique of the institutionalization of the older popular mass movements in Sweden (Thörn 1991, 1996).

These newer organizations are not always as formally structured as their predecessors. Often, they do not have a written organizational charter and sometimes they even lack a formal list of members. Some of the 'organizations' form networks and the members might be found in more fluid membership arrangements, as described by Smith (1992), thus contesting the view that 'Organizational affiliation is a formal category and very clear-cut' (Ahrne 1990, p. 134). It is probably possible



to say that memberships of these newer organizations differ in character from those of the earlier movements, at least in the way the membership in these earlier organizations now has come to be understood.

Even though many of the new associations have links to large international movements (e.g., environmental movement) they are often surprisingly small and operate on local level. In some respects they could be compared to neighbourhood organizations (Milofsky 1987). Because of this neighbourhood focus, their different way of organizing, the alternative forms of membership sometimes found, and since many of them are not found in official registers, it is difficult to obtain accurate membership estimates. Traditional methods and measurements have been developed specifically for the earlier popular mass movements in Sweden and therefore probably underestimate the importance of these newer movements.

## 5.2 Democracy and openness

People's engagement as members of voluntary or cooperative organizations in the Swedish public debate is sometimes said to be of fundamental importance to democracy and welfare. As expressed in a public report from the mid-1980s, 'People's engagement in associations is a fundamental part of Swedish democracy. This engagement plays an important role in the renewal of Swedish welfare' (SOU 1987, p. 14, my translation). In the Swedish public debate, as well as in the fiscal treatment, the internal democracy and the external transparency of the popular mass movements and their organizations are extremely important. It is sometimes even argued that the single most important basis for the existence of a popular mass movement organization in Sweden today is in fact the existence of internal democracy based on voluntary and unremunerated – *ideella* – members (Thörn 1996, p. 20).

The importance of this engagement in membership is not only true of the internal identity and overall legitimacy of this part of the Swedish sector and its associations in society. The popular mass movements are also celebrated for the positive external effects they are understood to have had on democracy and welfare at large (e.g., Lundkvist 1977, Johansson 1980, Ambjörnsson 1991). Two of the most important requisites of a popular mass movement organization (also required for more favourable tax treatment) in Sweden are that it should be open to everyone and that it should function in a democratic way, which means that all members should have the same opportunity

to propose action and have an impact on decisions (Svedberg 1981). This view is also repeated and supported by a whole series of public reports on the topic (e.g., SOU 1987, 1988, 1992, 1993a).

In Swedish legal praxis, the case of Greenpeace Sweden can be used as an illustration of how deep these principles of democracy and openness are in fact rooted. Greenpeace Sweden was partially denied, by the local tax authorities (LTA) in Gothenburg, its previous tax-exempt status for the years 1988 to 1991 on the grounds that the association did not fulfil the requirement of reasonable openness. Greenpeace appealed this treatment from the LTA, and in their response, later supported by the County Court, the LTA stated that:

In the association's [Greenpeace] annual report from 1988 it is clear that the number of so-called supportive members amounted to 210,000. These persons cannot, according to the statutes, become members in a proper sense. They therefore lack established and traditional member influence. By this is understood, for example, a member's possibility of influencing the election of a board or of adopting or rejecting the annual report and accounts, which is usually done through presence at the association's annual meeting. This possibility does not exist for these so-called supportive members . . . therefore, according to the preparatory work, unlimited tax liability is at hand. (Gothenburg and Bohus County Administrative Court 1993, p. 7, my translation)

As an interesting remark, these long-standing and well founded principles of transparency and internal democracy in the Swedish popular mass movements, as well as their strong ideological coupling to the overall democracy in society, seem to contradict the emergence of the nonprofit sector in the United States. It would seem that the US nonprofit sector during the beginning of the twentieth century instead was part of a larger ideological project, intended to separate out a private sector 'sharply differentiated from the public sector and free of its democratic constraints' (Salamon 1997, p. 286). This view is also supported by US economist Rose-Ackerman, who states that although public agencies can provide a 'guarantee to donors that their funds are not siphoned off as profits . . . independent nonprofits, less constrained by majoritarian claims, can better reflect the desires of donors' (Rose-Ackerman 1996, p. 724).

### 5.3 Membership estimates

One way to study the membership situation in a country is to estimate how many memberships there are in different types of

**Table 8 – Number and share of 1992 memberships in Sweden, by ICNPO field (in thousands)**

ICNPO field	Total	Share
Culture and recreation	10,484	32.8%
Education and research	12	0.0%
Health care	33	0.1%
Social services	51	0.2%
Environment	1,903	5.9%
Development and housing	3,151	9.8%
Law and advocacy	4,573	14.3%
Politics	887	2.8%
Philanthropy	83	0.3%
International activities	891	2.8%
Religion	994	3.1%
Labor and business	3,940	12.3%
NEC	872	2.7%
Established cooperation	4,140	12.9%
Total	32,019	100.0%

Source: Lundström and Wijkström (1997).

associations, sports associations being one type, unions another, social clubs a third, and so on. Three recent studies have attempted this for Sweden. These studies have all arrived at a total number of about 20 million memberships in different Swedish associations (Petersson et al. 1989, Häll 1994, Statistics Sweden 1996). There is however an intrinsic limitation in the approach used in these surveys: 'A weakness of the procedure is that some respondents have multiple memberships of the same type and these are counted only once. The measure taps the number of types of memberships rather than the total number of memberships' (Curtis et al. 1992, p. 142).

In an attempt to obtain a more accurate estimate of the total membership situation in Sweden for 1992, a number of secondary sources have been consulted and complemented with additional calculations. To be able to compare results with those of the other Swedish studies the focus was on total number of formal memberships in all types of Swedish associations (Table 8)<sup>4</sup>.

4 We did thus not limit our scope strictly to nonprofit or voluntary organizations only but included, for example, also memberships in the traditional cooperative movement.

We find the same two fields in the top of the Swedish sector as when operating expenditures of the organizations were studied: culture and recreation together with labor and business organizations (cf. Table 1). The sovereignty of culture and recreation is, however, heavily emphasized, but even more interesting is that two new 'voice' or interest-dominated fields – development and housing, and law, advocacy and politics – have moved to the upper echelons. The upper part of the table also features the strong and established traditional cooperative movement, with a high memberships found in the older consumer cooperatives. Not unexpectedly, organizations active within the core domains of the welfare state together have less than 1 per cent of the total memberships in Sweden, a fact that supports the overall picture of a heavily leisure- and advocacy-focused Swedish third sector (Wijkström 1997).

To explain the relatively low share of memberships in religious societies the fact that memberships in the Church of Sweden are excluded is important. The Church of Sweden is still a state church and until 1996 everyone with at least one parent a member of the Church had automatic membership that could be discontinued only through formal resignation. It is also important to understand that Sweden is highly secular. Only a small minority of the population attend church regularly and the number of church visits has fallen steadily (Swedish Institute 1992, Pettersson 1994). When church attendance of the elderly is studied, a survey within the European Community (EC) showed that only 14–15 per cent in Sweden and Denmark visited a church or a religious meeting during the last week, compared to an EC average of 32.4 per cent, with as high figures as 82 and 52 per cent for Ireland and Italy, respectively. As many as 45 per cent of elderly persons in Sweden consider themselves non-religious, a figure matched by no other European country, the Netherlands coming closest with 28 per cent (Andersson 1993, pp. 31–2).

When comparing the result of this analysis with estimates provided in previous studies (Pettersson et al. 1989, Häll 1994, Statistics Sweden 1996) it is obvious that the limitation of the 'organizational type' approach reduces and distorts the Swedish membership picture heavily. For example, the 'non-double' counting routine indicates that the total memberships of associations active in some fields, for example culture and recreation, has been chronically under-reported in these studies. By the same token, the importance of the types of associations where often only one membership per person is found, like political parties or labor unions, are relatively over-rated. This approach, together with the exclusion of most youth

memberships in the other studies, is likely the most important reason for the deviation from earlier estimates. As a matter of fact, Curtis et al. (1992, p. 142) found that Sweden has the world's highest percentage of multiple memberships.

Some data presented in the earlier referred to article by Curtis et al. (1992) can help us to understand the Swedish membership situation in an international context. This material offers one of very few possibilities to make comparisons of membership figures between countries. Based on World Value Survey data for 15 advanced industrial countries collected between 1981 and 1983, the authors find that the share of the Swedish population reporting membership of a voluntary association is among the highest in the world (68 per cent),<sup>5</sup> only surpassed by the US (73 per cent). Close are also Northern Ireland (67 per cent), the Netherlands (63 per cent), Norway (62 per cent) and Australia (61 per cent). Countries with the lowest share of voluntary memberships in the population are Italy (26 per cent), France (27 per cent), Japan (30 per cent) and Spain (31 per cent). If church and union memberships are excluded, some differences will occur but the same basic order prevails (Curtis et al. 1992, p. 143).

#### 5.4 Volunteers

An important dimension of the membership in Sweden is that of volunteering unpaid work for the organization – the 'active' member. The distinction between active and passive members is of crucial importance, at least in the Swedish political and ideological debate concerning the importance of the larger popular mass movements. Petersson et al. (1989, pp. 110–11) express it in this way:

Membership itself is a necessary but not sufficient condition for vigorous organizations. If an association is to become something more than only an empty construction on paper, an active engagement from at least some of the members is demanded. This active membership is an essential ingredient in the idea of the popular mass movement (*folkrörelsen*). (My translation)

It is important to note that what is meant by this activity is not usually traditional charitable volunteering in social services or health

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5 The significant difference between this estimate for Sweden and more recent estimates by Häll (1994) and Petersson et al. (1989) can probably partly be explained by an exclusion of cooperative memberships in the World Value Survey.

care, which in 1994 accounted for only 26 per cent of the total number of volunteers in Sweden, which is in line with the overall focus and structure of the Swedish sector. In Sweden, voluntary work has traditionally, and to an overwhelming degree, been viewed as a dimension of the formal membership of an association. Volunteers in Swedish associations are found among formal members to a much higher extent than in many other European countries. Of all the people volunteering in Sweden in 1994, as many as 86 per cent were members of the organization they volunteered for, which is more than 40 per cent higher than for the average volunteer in the eight comparison European countries (Table 9).

Other authors have found volunteering in Sweden to be more common than elsewhere in Europe (Jeppsson Grassman and Svedberg 1995) and an overwhelming 89 per cent of the volunteering in Sweden is carried out under the auspices of nonprofit or voluntary organizations, which is higher than in other European countries (Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995, pp. 32–3). Only Denmark comes close, with 84 per cent of the volunteering taking place within the voluntary sector. In the data presented by Gaskin and Davis Smith (1995) we can also see that more Swedish people are engaged as volunteers, that volunteering in Sweden is more evenly distributed among social classes, and that the distinction between 'volunteer' and 'client' is less useful when understanding volunteering in Sweden than in many other European countries.

It is also found that most Swedish volunteers are active in sports and recreation organizations (40 per cent, surpassed only by Denmark with 48 per cent) while as few as 26 per cent of the total number of

**Table 9 – Percentage of volunteers among those who have joined an organization in eight European countries**

Country	Share of 'member volunteers'
Belgium (French-speaking)	58%
Bulgaria	40%
Germany	68%
Great Britain	47%
Republic of Ireland	60%
Netherlands	57%
Slovakia	58%
Sweden	86%
Average (unweighted)	60%

Source: Gaskin and Davis Smith (1995, p. 33).

volunteers are active in health care, social services and education (the core domains of the welfare state). Corresponding volunteer figures for the three welfare state fields in, for example, the UK is 62 per cent, 58 per cent in Germany and 42 per cent in the Netherlands as well as in the Republic of Ireland. Of the advanced industrial societies included, only Denmark has a lower share of volunteers in the core domains of the welfare state (19 per cent) while the share in the French-speaking parts of Belgium is about equal to that in Sweden with 28 per cent (Gaskin and Davis Smith 1995, p. 35).

### 5.5 Volunteering as unpaid employment

The volunteering studies referred to above all surveyed individuals. Since so much of the volunteering in Sweden takes place within voluntary or nonprofit organizations, another possible way of studying Swedish volunteering is through the organizations. The picture of the Swedish sector as one of culture and recreation is supported and even strengthened when this approach is used and total amount of volunteer time is studied. Nearly 45 per cent of the total number of unpaid hours provided within the Swedish sector went to organizations in culture and recreation. Only some 7 per cent was devoted to education, health care or social services (Wijkström 1994).

If the alternative interpretation of volunteering (as unpaid labor instead of as a dimension of the membership) is adopted, it is possible to compare the total amount of work – unpaid as well as paid – carried out within the Swedish sector with the situation in some other countries. When asked about their volunteers in 1992, the Swedish voluntary or nonprofit organizations reported that, in total, nearly 480 million volunteer hours were contributed. Both total amount of volunteering and distribution among fields are largely confirmed by another study carried out in parallel, but sampling individuals instead of organizations (Jeppsson Grassman 1993).

The 480 million hours of voluntary work are equivalent to 9 per cent of all the paid work hours in Sweden in 1992 (5,304 million hours) (Wijkström 1994). This is especially interesting in the light of the fact that less than 3 per cent of the regular paid workforce in Sweden is employed in nonprofit or voluntary organizations, a comparatively low share of the workforce in international perspective. Compared with the situation in three other European countries (France, Germany and Italy) the relatively high share of unpaid volunteer time in Sweden is striking.

**Table 10 – Total amount of work in the sectors of four European countries (FTE)**

Country	Employees	Volunteers	Total	FTE per 1,000 capita
France	802,619	586,576	1,389,195	25
Germany	1,017,945	679,341	1,697,286	21
Italy	418,129	272,861	690,990	12
Sweden	82,558	228,804	311,362	36

Sources: Wijkström (1994), Salamon et al. (1996, pp. 11, 15, 23).

To compare the total amount of work provided in the Swedish sector with the situation in the other European countries where data are available, the Swedish material has to be adjusted. After adjustments, the voluntary work provided in Sweden in 1992 was approximately 421 million hours, which equals 228,804 FTE (full-time equivalent). Together with some 100,000 salaried employees in the Swedish sector (representing 82,558 FTE) the total amount of work (unpaid as well as paid) roughly equalled 311,362 FTE<sup>6</sup>.

The result of a comparison of total time (contributed by paid employees as well as by unpaid volunteers) carried out in four European countries where similar data have been collected is given in Table 10. The amount of work (given in FTE per 1,000 capita) provided in the Swedish third sector seems extensive.

## 6 Summary of the empirical findings

There has been a general perception that the Swedish third sector by international comparison is small and weak in economic terms. This is probably best exemplified by the research by Estelle James in the late

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6 Volunteering in Swedish political parties and sacral activities is omitted and estimates of social work provided by volunteers within the Church of Sweden and the free churches are added, since these are the adjustments done in the other countries. Data for the other countries is from 1990 (France, population 56.5 million; Germany, population 79.4 million; Italy, population 57.7 million) while the Swedish material is from 1992 (population 8.7 million). The voluntary work contributed in France has been estimated at 1,079,300,000 hours (Archambault 1997, p.114). To recalculate, I have used the same FTE estimate as used for Sweden, which is 40 hours per week for 46 weeks a year (1,840 hours).



1970s (e.g., James and Rose-Ackerman 1986, James 1987, 1989b) but the same basic understanding is also evident in the work of Salamon and Anheier (1996b). Salamon and Anheier (1996b) make one of the few attempts to test a number of standard nonprofit theories with data collected within the same empirical framework. The authors for example test some explanations of the size of a nonprofit sector in a society. Unfortunately, their way of operationalizing the size of the sector is by assuming it to be equal to the sector's share of paid employment in a country, leaving the amount of unpaid voluntary work completely out of their analysis. As shown earlier in this article, this will give a severely biased understanding of the size of the Swedish sector, since the paid employees provide only some 27 per cent of the total labor in the sector. The rest is provided by volunteers. Contradicting this perception of a small Swedish nonprofit sector, the material presented in this article shows in fact that it seems to be at least as extensive as that in a number of other developed countries.

There has also been the perception that the sector in Sweden is highly dependent upon the Swedish government (James 1989b, Boli 1991, 1992). This paper shows that, from an international perspective, the nonprofit or voluntary sector in Sweden as a whole, at least in an economic sense, instead appears to have a relatively high degree of self-financing. This fact does not address the question of independence in the same way as Boli (1991, 1992), but financial freedom is certainly one important factor when judging the overall independence of the sector. Further, the share of public sector revenue to the Swedish nonprofit sector presented in this article is in fact less than half what James (1989b) estimated to be the case in the late 1970s<sup>7</sup>.

The size of the Swedish sector is thus similar and not inferior to the sector in comparable countries in an economic sense, but deviates considerably when the degree of direct public financing is considered. An important explanation for this deviation is that the structure of the sector in Sweden differs greatly from that of other countries where

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7 It is unlikely that this fact is due only to the difference in time when data were collected. If the organizations in the sector would have experienced such a severe cutback in public financing during this relatively short period, there would have been some historical evidence of that, which we have not found. Neither is the alternative explanation that the organizations during these years heavily increased their share of revenues from sources other than government supported. Instead, one important reason for this discrepancy is that James (1987, 1989b) left the entire labor market segment (unions, employers' and trade associations) out of her analysis.

comparable data are available. The dominant fields of the Swedish sector (culture and recreation, labor and business associations) are less dependent upon direct public subsidies and contracts than the dominant fields (education, health care, social services) in most of the other developed countries (Lundström and Wijkström 1995, 1997).

To be able to answer the larger and more central question of the Swedish sector's overall importance and impact in society relative to the situation in other countries, a limited number of secondary data have been brought together in this article for a more socio-economic approach. In line with a civil society tradition, some preliminary comparisons, focusing on members and volunteer activity instead of economic measurements, have been made. Although international comparisons of this type must be made with great caution, since the field is only in its infancy when it comes to cross-cultural comparisons, the data indicate that a large proportion of the population in Sweden is formally affiliated to different organizations in the third sector.

Volunteers and volunteering in Sweden are highly associated with the role of formal members, rather than viewed as work provided by unpaid employees. Swedes seem to be at least as active as members and volunteers in the voluntary or nonprofit sector as people in many other countries and it is indicated in this article that the per capita amount of time provided jointly by volunteers and employees in the Swedish sector is higher than what is found in three other European countries. However, even though the data for the four countries were collected within the same framework, caution is once again called upon when doing international comparisons in such a virgin field of study, especially since the data relate to different years.

Without being able to say anything with finality, the material in this article – high memberships and with members active as volunteers, contributing a considerable amount of time in comparison with salaried staff – indicates that the sector in Sweden probably ranks high also in the civil society dimension. Perhaps it is possible to speak of more or stronger solidarity found in Swedish society, as indicated in the work of Pfaller et al. (1991), a solidarity that is also present in the work of the Swedish voluntary sector and its organizations (Salamon and Anheier 1997, p. 21). More comparative research is needed to answer such a question satisfactorily.

To understand the character of the sector in any specific culture or society, we must understand the importance of individuals in the sector. It is necessary to go beyond the simple measuring of number of formal memberships or amount of voluntary hours provided. Whether

individuals first and foremost perceive themselves, for example, as members – as in the Swedish case – or if it mainly is in the function as volunteers or donors they identify themselves with the organizations, does matter. If volunteering is seen as an active dimension of membership, as a responsibility for members, it has different implications for the relation between the organization and the volunteer than if volunteering basically is viewed as unpaid labor, provided by non-salaried employees.

## 7 Discussion

In concluding this article, I will briefly address some topics of relevance for the further study of the third sector. By way of introduction we noted that researchers outside Sweden have previously had difficulties in discovering the true nature of the nonprofit sector in Sweden. These difficulties are symptoms of systematic biases within the mainstream understanding of the nonprofit sector not only in Sweden but also in most other societies.

### 7.1 'Double ethnocentrism'

Much of the earlier international research concentrated on the sector's (economic) impact in the production of traditional welfare services or public goods. Researchers interested in Sweden have chosen to study fields where the Swedish sector economically has been insignificant, such as compulsory education, and largely avoided fields such as culture and recreation or labor and business.

James (1987) states that her theoretical contributions to the study of the nonprofit sector contrast and offer an alternative to the earlier dominant theoretical paradigms developed in a narrow US context. I will argue that her ideas, based firmly in research on education ('the major service provided by NPOs throughout the world' according to James) is as much part and parcel of the very same 'conventional wisdom' that she accuses other US contributors of (James 1987, pp. 397–8). My point is that much of the theoretical work trying to explain the existence and importance of a nonprofit sector from an economic perspective is based on a limited and biased sample of the sector. The possibility of making any generalizations to a complete third sector based on this is small.

On this previous line of research, James (1997, p. 4) herself recently concluded that 'This early work had only a small comparative

perspective. Most theories were developed with the US or UK context in mind, and most empirical work also concentrated on a few industrialised countries', but influential nonprofit researchers were fully aware of the limitations of this approach already 10 years ago. For example, even though more membership-based organizations like political parties, special-interest groups, private clubs and labor unions were included in their definition of a nonprofit sector, James and Rose-Ackerman (1986, p. 4) wrote:

Much of the discussion of the nonprofit sector and nonprofit theory . . . focuses on a subset of organizations that are tax-exempt and eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code [in the United States] . . . [and] we are primarily concerned with these service-providing, philanthropic organizations.

With this knowledge and deliberate limitation, James and Rose-Ackerman in the very same volume nevertheless made statements with theoretical pretensions of being valid for the whole of the sector. A recent example of this reductionism is found in an article by Rose-Ackerman (1996). The article seems to analyse the role of a nonprofit, charitable or voluntary sector but focuses entirely on welfare service-only philanthropy. This philanthropy is provided by nonprofit firms founded and operated by individual entrepreneurial ideologues, sometimes supported by charitable giving or volunteering by private donors. Collective or mutual undertakings in the fields of culture and recreation or on the labor market, like sports associations and labor unions, but also self-help groups active in the field of social services, are completely missing in her analysis.

Ware (1989, p. 26), referring specifically to this line of research, writes: 'We are less likely to be misled in a comparative study if we do not organize our research around a concept that has its origins in a specific legal system, and reflects a particular culture and institutional history.' The total neglect of the member dimension is another salient example of ignorance in this field of research; Smith (1991, p. 140) critically observes that 'these membership organizations are referred to in passing and then discarded from the analysis, as if they were a trivial part of the voluntary sector, qualitatively and quantitatively'.

In the mainstream (economic) nonprofit research, the assumption is often also made that only money (revenues and expenditures) matters, while other forms of influence seem to be largely ignored. Even though James (1989b) admits that 'nonprofit organizations have a much greater impact on the Swedish economy and society than

their direct production activities would indicate' and continues 'Indeed, representation and advocacy may be one of the most important functions of NPOs in the modern welfare state' (pp.40, 53), this understanding is absent in her major hypotheses and conclusions. We thus have had an unfortunate combination of two types of 'ethnocentrism' in much of the earlier nonprofit literature, one relating to the specific national culture and legal system in the United States, the other to the culture of the academic discipline of economics.

## 7.2 The role of a third sector in society

The findings presented here point to another interesting topic, namely what the dominant character of a third sector in a particular culture or society is like. The particular mix and emphasis of different roles or functions of the sector will probably vary considerably, depending on historical and contextual factors, such as the existence and type of welfare state or the structure and nature of religious and political arrangements and institutions. Before we are able to address the issue of the dominant character of a particular country's third sector satisfactorily, however, other questions must be posed and answered. What is the impact on society of this sector, if any? What is the role of a third sector?

Many of the organizations in the sector have developed specific operations. As discussed above, these could be seen as the production of concrete services, like the welfare service 'education' or the member service 'recreation', while others are better understood as provision of the more intangible service of 'voice' to champion a particular cause or vision, for example in the form of lobbying or demonstrations (Wijkström 1996, 1997). To a large extent it is these operations only (and especially the welfare services) that are analysed as the main outcome of the sector in much of the nonprofit literature.

Although a few contributions in the mainstream nonprofit research actually address another type of role or function, they do this primarily by addressing the role or function of nonprofit or voluntary organizations only. I argue, however, that the role of the sector is not simply the sum of the operations of individual organizations in the sector, and more scarce are the attempts within this mainstream research to attribute specific roles for the sector as a whole on a macro-level. This is also discussed by Anheier and Seibel (1990, pp. 9–10), who instead have found this line of thought in the political

science tradition. In sociology the role of the sector (i.e., its social movement component) is also addressed. For example, Melucci (1988, 1989) sees contemporary movements as 'signs' that symbolically challenge dominant cultural codes.

It is possible that we might not be able to distinguish a specific role for a third sector in society. Instead, the development of a number of more specific roles or functions for particular fields or dimensions of the sector may be a more appropriate approach. It may be that this kind of deeper understanding could provide part of the answer to the unique 'thirdness' of this sector that, for example, Lohmann (1995) is looking for, but it could also challenge the whole idea of something like a separate and easily identifiable third sector in society.

### 7.3 Conclusion

Already from this short and rather limited analysis of a few empirical findings it is obvious that it is impossible to make any general statements about the role and overall importance of a third, nonprofit or voluntary sector in Sweden through the use of only one of the dimensions of the sector proposed by either of the two main paradigms. It is basically the provision of welfare services – health care, education and social services – that have been studied in much of the mainstream nonprofit research. At the same time, in the other main research tradition – the civil society paradigm – students of political science or sociology tend to emphasize the advocacy dimension of the sector. This approach focuses, for example, on the promotion of interests or the importance of the sector in reflecting social conflicts. But both these faces of the sector must be included in the analysis and 'if a fuller understanding of the sector is to be developed, the simultaneous production of voice and service has to be stressed' (Wijkström 1997, p. 292).

The main conclusion of this discussion is that to avoid the risk of being limited by theories and concepts developed within one single and narrow academic discipline in the continued quest to understand this part of society, bridges must be built between the two central paradigms as well as between different disciplines where researchers are studying this phenomenon. The persistent and much-needed work by Smith (e.g., 1991, 1992, 1993) to bring the forgotten or lost membership dimension back into mainstream nonprofit research, and the attempt by Lohmann (1992) to construct a more inclusive conceptual platform for future third sector studies, are good examples of what has been lacking. But this work must be followed by more.

Etzioni (1988, p.27) writes: 'Once a concept is defined so that it encompasses all the incidents that are members of a given category, . . . it ceases to enhance one's ability to explain'. There is much explaining power left in doing more conceptual work in this field of research without any immediate risk for such a development.

## **Appendix: Swedish version of the ICNPO (International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations)**

From Lundström and Wijkström (1997).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1. Culture and recreation</b></p> <p>110 Culture and arts</p> <p>120 Sports</p> <p>131 Social clubs</p> <p>132 Hobby</p> <p>133 Outdoor recreation</p> <p>134 Students</p> <p><b>2. Education and research</b></p> <p>210 Primary and secondary education</p> <p>220 Higher education</p> <p>231 Educational associations</p> <p>232 Residential colleges</p> <p>240 Research/other education</p> <p><b>3. Health care</b></p> <p>310 Hospitals and rehabilitation</p> <p>340 Other health care</p> <p><b>4. Social services</b></p> <p>411 Day care and pre-school</p> <p>412 Elderly care</p> <p>413 Drug addict care</p> <p>414 Other social services</p> <p><b>5. Environment</b></p> <p>511 Environmental work</p> <p>512 Hunting and fishing areas</p> <p>520 Animal protection</p> <p><b>6. Development and housing</b></p> <p>611 Regional development</p> <p>612 Assembly halls and places</p> <p>613 Joint facilities</p> <p>621 Joint ownerships</p> <p>622 Tenants and student housing</p> <p>623 Own-your-own-home association</p> | <p><b>7. Law, advocacy and politics</b></p> <p>711 Pensioners</p> <p>712 Ethnic groups and immigrants</p> <p>713 Disabled persons</p> <p>714 Temperance organizations</p> <p>715 Women's associations</p> <p>720 Other civic and advocacy</p> <p>730 Political parties</p> <p><b>8. Philanthropy</b></p> <p>810 Research donations</p> <p>820 Other donations</p> <p><b>9. International activities</b></p> <p>910 Relief work</p> <p>920 Peace and solidarity work</p> <p>930 Other international work</p> <p><b>10. Religion</b></p> <p>1010 Christian free churches</p> <p>1020 Other religions</p> <p><b>11. Labor and business</b></p> <p>1110 Labor unions</p> <p>1120 Professional associations</p> <p>1130 Industry associations</p> <p>1140 Employers' associations</p> <p><b>12. Not elsewhere classified (NEC)</b></p> <p>1210 Voluntary defence</p> <p>1220 Other</p> |
|---|---|

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### **Le secteur "nonprofit" en Suède: une approche comparative internationale**

*Une approche américaine réductrice donnait auparavant une image biaisée du secteur "nonprofit" en Suède. Le courant principal de la littérature "nonprofit" semble en effet avoir négligé les travaux réalisés dans la tradition complexe et considérable de la société civile suédoise.*

*Cet article présente des données internationales récentes selon ces deux paradigmes. Il donne une représentation plus fidèle du secteur "nonprofit" suédois et met en évidence les limites des approches précédentes. La perception du secteur, non seulement en Suède mais aussi ailleurs, s'en trouve améliorée. Afin de poursuivre la recherche sur la "raison d'être" du secteur "nonprofit", il faudrait sans doute rassembler davantage de données internationales mais aussi développer un cadre d'analyse multidisciplinaire.*

### **Der schwedische Nonprofit-Sektor im internationalen Vergleich**

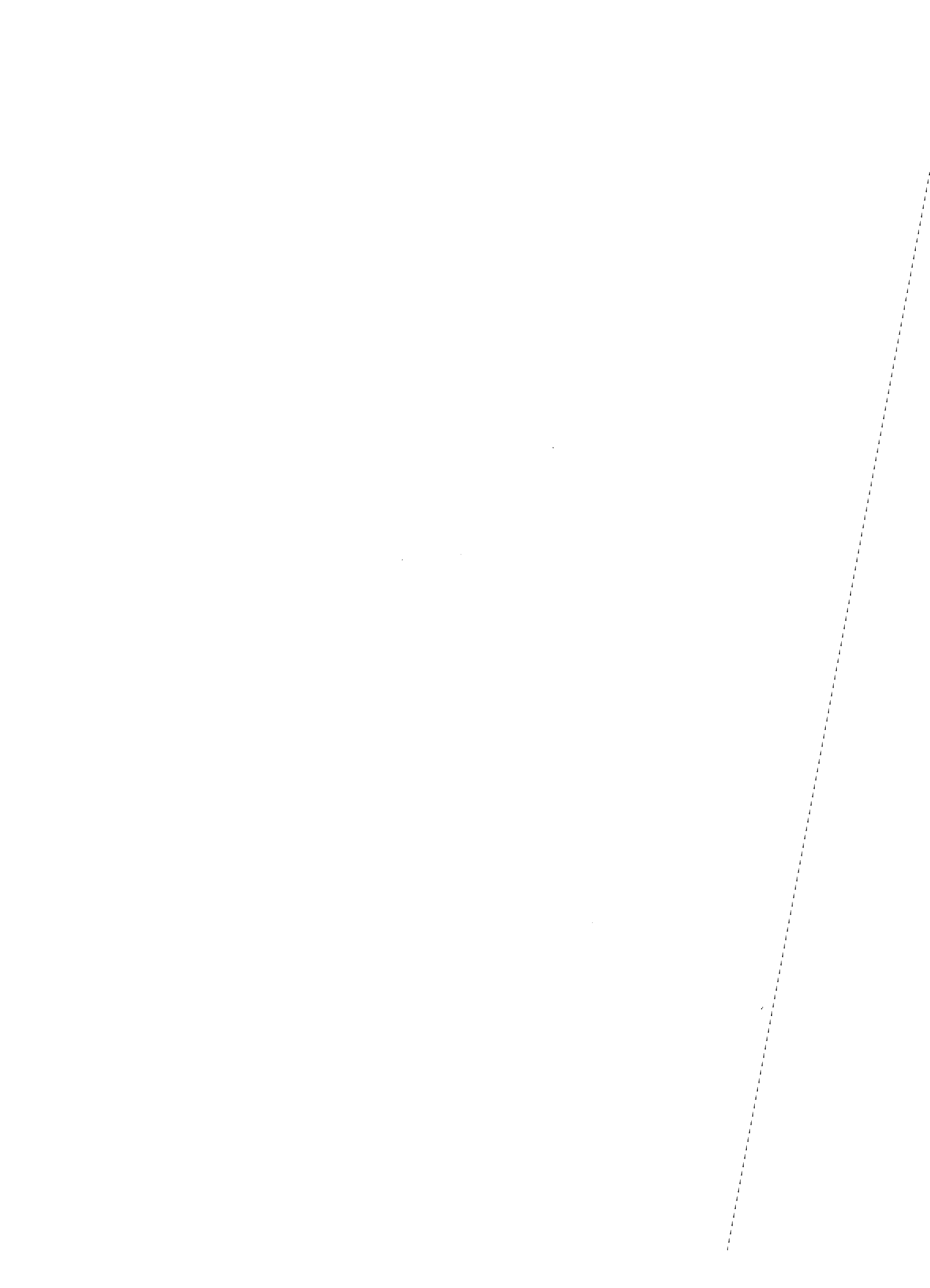
*Das frühere Bild vom Nonprofit-Sektor in Schweden wurde durch eine enge US-amerikanische Sichtweise verfälscht. Der main stream der Nonprofit-Literatur scheint die Arbeiten nicht zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, die in der wichtigen, aber mehr komplexen Tradition der civil society durchgeführt wurden. In diesem Beitrag wird neueres Datenmaterial aus verschiedenen Nationen entsprechend diesen beiden Paradigmen präsentiert. Dies vermittelt uns ein besseres Bild vom schwedischen Nonprofit-Sektor und wirft ein Schlaglicht auf die Begrenztheiten*

*früherer Ansätze, und zwar nicht nur zu unserem Verständnis des schwedischen Nonprofit-Sektors, sondern auch des Nonprofit-Sektors anderswo. Um die Suche nach der "raison d'être" des Nonprofit-Sektors fortzusetzen, wird nicht nur mehr Datenmaterial aus verschiedenen Nationen benötigt, sondern wir müssen auch einen multi-disziplinären Rahmen zum Verständnis des Datenmaterials entwickeln.*

### **El sector "no lucrativo" en Suecia: un enfoque comparativo internacional**

*Un enfoque americano reduccionista venía dando una imagen sesgada del sector "no lucrativo" en Suecia. La corriente principal de la literatura "no lucrativa" parece haber despreciado los complejos y considerables trabajos realizados tradicionalmente por la sociedad civil sueca.*

*Este artículo presenta datos internacionales recientes según estos dos paradigmas. Ofrece una representación más fidedigna del sector "no lucrativo" y pone en evidencia los enfoques precedentes. La percepción del sector, no solamente en Suecia sino también en otras partes, ha mejorado. Con la finalidad de proseguir la investigación de la razón de ser del sector "no lucrativo", sería indudablemente necesario reunir más datos internacionales, pero también desarrollar un cuadro de análisis multidisciplinar.*





# Hate groups and outlaw bikers: Part of civil society?<sup>14</sup>

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## Abstract

*There is a growing interest in the enhancement and expansion of civil society worldwide. This interest is partly spurred by a recent and growing line of research on nonprofit and voluntary activities. A second wave of inspiration for the debate is found in the the work of researchers dealing more directly with the idea of a civil society. A strong interest in the somewhat amorphous concept of 'social capital' can also be noted.*

*Almost without exception, empirical studies carried out and more theoretical work conducted along these paths deal with their object of study from a normatively positive angle: civil society activities and engagement seem to, almost per definition, be understood to be not only good but also necessary for a well-functioning (i.e., democratic) larger society. If this attitude of general neglectance is abandoned for a short while, the rather short notes or comments found in the literature seem to be based on almost no empirical evidence and the theoretical argumentation is surprisingly weak.*

*This paper instead takes its departure in the fact that some organizations – exemplified here by outlaw motorcycle gangs and white hate groups – are considered worse than others. In the paper, it is firstly tested and shown that such organizations really do belong conceptually to a civil society. However, the ability of earlier research to include material on these organizations in their empirical data is questioned. It is argued that this – empirically as well as theoretically – important subpopulation is often left out of the analysis due to the intrinsic 'positive' understanding we seem to have of civil society organizations. In the conclusions, a number of definitional issues are addressed.*

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14 An earlier version of this text was presented at the Fourth Nordic Conference on Nonprofit Sector Research in Vaasa, Finland, November 6-7, 1997. The author is grateful for the substantial comments contributed by the participants at this conference, as well as for those remarks offered by Charlotte Fabiansson and Mark Lyons at the University of Technology, Sydney. For all shortcomings of the text as they appear in this essay, however, I am fully and alone responsible.

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## Introduction<sup>15</sup>

A not too often studied phenomenon in civil society is the 'bad' or 'dangerous' organizations. These organizations exist in the outskirts of all industrialized societies of today. Organizations found in this 'dark' sub-sector or, as expressed by one journalist – in the backyard of civil society<sup>16</sup> – promote politically extremely incorrect opinions and/or use methods considered illegal in contemporary legislation. Whether the illegal activities of these organizations are referred to as civil disobedience or terrorism, it is clear that they are found outside current legal or normative boundaries.

Some of the organizations are of a more 'good-bad' character, e.g., the plowshare movement or Greenpeace. Both of these organizations are champions of 'fine' or 'noble' causes like peace or the protection of the environment. These causes are accepted as important by large segments of the population, but are promoted, in these organizations, by criminal activities or through the use of illegal methods. Another group of organizations are instead more 'bad-good' in character, encompassing organizations such as nazi or fascist parties. The basic values and views of these organizations are shared by only a small minority in society and are often considered unacceptable. These organizations are – when viewed from a purely legal standpoint, however, formally correct with respect to their organization and operations.

The organizations dealt with in this text are, in contrast, most often considered purely 'bad-bad' (see Figure 1 below for a classification), and display – openly or through their operations – basic values or views with no or very limited support in the surrounding society. Either they strive socially and politically for the advancement of, or return to, these deviant and unacceptable values or norms through the use of illegal, often brutally violent, actions (as, e.g., the Ku Klux Klan), or they may be considered as change agents promoting a differing set of values and norms through their sheer existence and behaviour alone (e.g., outlaw motorcycle clubs).

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15 For a short list of the main secondary sources used on outlaw biking, see appendix in "Outlaw biking in alternative frames of interpretation" later in this volume.

16 "På det civila samhällets bakgård", Per Larsson, in *Eskilstuna-Kuriren*, April 7, 1998.

Figure 1. A tentative model of ideal-typical organizations in civil society.

		MEANS	
		"Acceptable"	"Unacceptable"
PURPOSE	"Acceptable"	WWF  Red Cross  YMCA	Greenpeace  The Plowshare movement
	"Unacceptable"	Neo-nazi parties	W.A.R.  Outlaw MC clubs  Ku Klux Klan

Previous scholar interest and research

Surprisingly few solid academic accounts of these organizations are found – neither in the social capital or civil society literature nor in the growing nonprofit and voluntary research. This lack of research can probably be explained in part by methodological considerations – it is difficult or even dangerous to access these organizations. For example, concerning the lack of studies on skinheads, Zellner (1995, p. 6) comments:

Social scientists have not done extensive studies of the skinhead counter-culture. Skinheads are not likely to respond to questionnaires; and there are obvious hazards associated with participant observation. In order to participate, the social scientists would have to become involved in antisocial activities. Refusal to participate could involve intolerable sanctions.

In a similar fashion, Hopper and Moore (1990, pp. 367, 368) describe the particular difficulties associated with doing research on outlaw motorcycle gangs:

Bikers would not fill out questionnaires or allow ordinary research methods such as tape recorders or note taking. [...] Studying bikers was a risky undertaking for us [...] At times when we were not expecting any problems, conditions became hazardous.

However, another reason for this limited interest from the social sciences is likely that the organizations we are dealing with do not fit our pre-

conceptions of how a nonprofit or voluntary organization, or popular social movement, should behave or look like. Take for example the statement by Cohen and Arato (1995, p. 492): "It is our thesis that social movements constitute the dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies." It is doubtful that they include the organizations in question here. Another way to address the same phenomenon is provided by van Til (1988, p. 17):

There does appear to be a strong tendency in the literature of voluntarism to find what one seeks. Thus both conservative and change-oriented writers identify a wide range of organizations and activities that embody their particular conceptions of what voluntary action should be and what it can accomplish. Their writings catalogue manifold experiences and tend toward the conclusion that the type of voluntarism advocated by the author is massively strong and clearly the wave of the future.

Despite the lack of empirical accounts, not many researchers or research projects have explicitly excluded this type of 'bad-bad' organization, *conceptually* speaking, from their work. The organizations are nevertheless covered by the definitions and criteria that we use, as will be shown in this paper. At the same time, I believe that most researchers have failed, or have maybe not even tried, to obtain reliable data on these organizations. And if they have, it would be interesting to see how that data is incorporated in their material.

In general, categories seem to be missing for these organizations and their types of activity. Perhaps this conceptual inclusion was not really ever the intention of the designers of the surveys and studies where the definitions or classifications have been used. What type of organization or purpose would a researcher be advised to tick when interviewing a regular Ku Klux Klan member who states that he or she does voluntary work? Community work? Advocacy? Terrorism? Or a member in an outlaw club acting as sergeant-at-arms in a bar brawl – should he be considered as holding a position of trust, guiding and assisting the rank-and-file members?

References to such 'bad-bad' organizations can be found in recent academic work dealing with the nonprofit sector, civil society, or social capital, but then often in the form of footnotes and with what seems to be a taken-for-granted and stereotypic understanding of what these organizations are and what they represent. Most deeper study and insight into this phenomenon seems to be lacking in the mainstream literature. Let us consider some examples:

Not all associations of the like-minded are committed to democratic goals nor organized in an egalitarian fashion; consider for example, the Ku Klux Klan or

the Nazi Party. In weighing the consequences of any particular organization for democratic governance, one must also consider other civic virtues, such as tolerance and equality.

Putnam (1993, footnote 30 on p. 221)

... social capital produced by some voluntary associations might not benefit the whole society. Indeed, it might have negative consequences. Some have noted that voluntary associations such as the Klu Klux Klan [sic], whilst they might generate a good deal of social capital within the tight membership group, are damaging to the wider society.

Lyons (1997, p. 3)

Sometimes independent action shows itself in ugly, perverse ways, as when the Ku Klux Klan organizes a vigilante force to terrorize negro Americans or the Minutemen drill grimly in their cellars.

Cornuelle (1983, p. 280; cited in van Til, 1988, p. 17)

... it is not immediately obvious that being involved in a racist organisations [sic] will produce generalised trust and reciprocity. It is not even evident that it will produce trust between the members of the organisation themselves, since such groups show a propensity to splinter into factions which then fight political battles among themselves.

Newton (1996, p. 97)

## **The aim of the paper**

Before any serious attempts to make predictions about, or explain the existence or behaviour of, a nonprofit or voluntary sector in civil society can be made, a much clearer understanding of the types of organizations encompassed by it is needed. In this text, it will be tested how well two 'bad-bad' types of organizations – white hate groups (e.g., racist skinheads or the Ku Klux Klan) and outlaw motorcycle gangs (e.g., the Hells Angels or the Rebels) – fit existing definitions of nonprofit or voluntary organizations and whether it is possible to view them as social movement organizations. The main aim of the paper is to conduct this test to decide whether these groups are to be viewed as part of civil society or not.

The text does not attempt to remedy the identified paucity of first-hand, in-depth data on these organizations, but merely to use some of the scarce, existing literature as secondary data sources. The test will, however, be based on a section of rather thorough empirical descriptions. This is done mainly because, in comparison with other types of organizations, there is a general lack of a sufficient understanding of these two particular types of organizations.

## Approach of the study

With no previous firsthand experience of the outlaw biker world or white hate groups and their activities, it has at times been tricky to sift through the various existing types of texts. I have mainly used written material from several countries, a mixture of newspaper articles, police reports, and scholarly work found in different disciplines.

The material ranges from slightly romanticized accounts produced by outlaw bikers themselves or persons closely related to the white-power or biker worlds, to various sometimes one-eyed reports produced by law-enforcement officers and journalists. The impressionistic texts, with a more romantic angle, emphasize the importance of civic virtues such as a strong (male) solidarity, courage, honor and respect; they tend to glorify the brotherhood character found in the different groups. When reporting on outlaws, visions of social rebels riding without helmets and the anti-hero image of the last free men pushing for the last frontier to be conquered from their iron horses, are vivid – explicitly expressed in the texts or just beneath the surface. The hate groups and the retreatist movement are seen as the final bulwark against society's development towards a general religio-moral morass. Both types of organizations are viewed as the last defence against an evil state (or society) trying to geld the last real, free men by way of ever-increasing control, taxation and the introduction of new and increasingly inhibitive rules and regulations.

This kind of romantically-biased literature is contrasted by the fairly simple understanding of these phenomenon often given in police or law-enforcement documents. This, as it appears, sometimes unreflected upon picture, is happily echoed by, and sometimes also distorted in, mass media. This tends to produce rather one-sided accounts. Both groups are naturally biased by their respective professions – the police seeking to detect and prevent crime and journalists seeking to produce sensational texts in an effort to increase circulation of the evening press by featuring hot scoops and headlines. The outlaw gangs are described as well-organized enterprises in crime – with large-scale manufacturing and distribution of illegal drugs, and mob-like 'protection' and debt-collection in combination with brutal sexual exploitation of their women, for business and pleasure. White Power organizations for their part are seen as fronts or covers for underlying unscrupulous ideological or business interests – selling hate music and propaganda to vulnerable youths, or the leading of youths astray by cynical entrepreneurs in the 'moral and ethics' business.

The few existing serious academic studies in this area seem to have a more balanced approach to the phenomena. In general, they do not avoid the brutal violence or criminal activities conducted by the organizations or their members, but try to take the analysis a step further. For example, as one explanation, they often contrast an earlier feeling of alienation, lack of identity and general direction in the previous life of the members, with a strong newfound social identity, a quest for belonging and new meaning to life. They do not seem to do this to defend or legitimize the criminal or violent acts, but rather in an attempt to better understand and explain the phenomenon by understanding and analyzing possible underlying reasons and driving forces.

My aim and mandate is neither to condemn nor glorify any of the organizations discussed. When organizations like the Ku Klux Klan, White Aryan Resistance and outlaw clubs like Hells Angels or the Rebels are analyzed in a nonprofit, voluntary or social movement setting, it is not to say that they are equally 'good' or useful actors in civil society as more traditional nonprofit or voluntary phenomena like the Red Cross, Amnesty International or the environmental movement.

The point I want to make is instead that we risk being narrow or biased in our understanding of what civil society is and of its role, if we do not admit that these organizations from the 'dark' side also inhabit this part of society. I can not but believe that the explicit inclusion of the Angels and the Klan in the analytical framework used to understand nonprofit or voluntary issues will have an impact on future attempts to formulate general theories for the sector or for our basic understanding of the role of civil society itself.

## **Part of civil society?**

There are a large number of meanings or functions, as well as different sets of boundaries and contents, ascribed by various scholars and other observers to civil society and the organizations populating it. These issues will not be addressed, clarified or sorted out here. For the purpose of this paper it will be sufficient merely to state that voluntary or nonprofit organizations or – from another angle – social movement organizations, are an important element in most contemporary understandings of what civil society is, regardless of whether it consists exclusively of such organizations.

Today, at least two strong traditions in the analysis of this part of society can be identified. One is the more recent and rather homogenous



nonprofit or voluntary approach, dominated by research conducted in a legal/economic framework. The other stream of research comes from what could be called a civil society tradition. This tradition is more heterogenous and is made up of several divergent strains of research with a firm base in social/political issues, including social capital and social movement research (Lyons, 1996).

Depending on which of these two basic approaches the observer chooses, different views of the sector and its role in society are obtained, a fact that will sometimes confuse the debate, especially in international comparative settings. Instead, to receive a more complex understanding of the sector, a socio-economic approach, combining these two traditions, is called for in the analysis (e.g., Wijkström, 1997). Therefore, in this paper, two different types of organizations will be tested against, firstly, a definition of a nonprofit or voluntary organization and, secondly, against a set of criteria used to describe a social movement organization, derived from the social movement literature, to decide whether they are part of civil society or not.

## **Nonprofit or voluntary organizations**

One of the most commonly repeated criterion in definitions of nonprofit organizations is the non-profit distribution restriction, as expressed, for example, by Weisbrod (1988, p. 1): "a nonprofit organization may not lawfully pay its profits to owners or, indeed, to anyone associated with the organization." It is important to note that this does not restrict the organization from creating a financial surplus from one year to the other, nor from paying possible staff and employees a salary. A number of other characteristics are also often mentioned. One of the most recent and comprehensive definitions, including the nonprofit distribution restriction, is proposed by Salamon and Anheier (1997).

To summarize: According to Salamon and Anheier, a nonprofit organization should be formally organized, which means that the organization should be institutionalized to some extent in its societal context. It should further be a private organization and thus legally separated from government. The non-profit-distributing criteria demands that the organization should not be returning any profits to its owners or directors. The organization should also be self-governing and equipped to control its own activities, to distinguish it from entities totally controlled by public agencies or single private for-profit companies. Finally, some meaningful degree of voluntary participation from the surrounding

society should exist, either in the form of voluntary work or gifts of money or other items (ibid., pp. 33-34).

## **Social movement organizations**

Another approach, deviating from the structural/legal/economic definition of a nonprofit organization presented above, could also be adopted. More along the lines of a social movement tradition, this perspective focuses on active participation of citizens and the effects of this participation on individuals and society. The basic understanding of the approach is found in a quote from Blumer (1946, p. 199): "Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life."

### **Benefits for members or society**

A definition of what should be found in voluntary (or social movement) associations according to this basic understanding concentrates on: organized collective voluntary action (i.e., unpaid and not coerced), provided by individuals, and deemed beneficial for the individuals themselves or society at large. See, for example, van Til (1988, p. 8):

*A voluntary association is a structured group whose members have united for the purpose of advancing an interest or achieving some social purpose. Theirs is a clear aim toward a chosen form of 'social betterment.' Such an association is directed in its aims beyond the immediate enjoyment of fellowship and consummatory group activity; it links the group in some direct way to the larger society.*

This basic view is taken also by Marshall (1996, pp. 58-59). He describes the voluntary sector as an amalgam of several sub-sectors of which the "only common feature is their mediating character – the fact that they give individuals a role and a place in social life and, potentially, social change. They represent action that is both collective and yet personal." Marshall goes on to state that the voluntary sector provides both the adhesive which holds states or nations together and the solvent which allows them to change (ibid.).

### **Identity formation**

Taking part in the operations of the organization could also be beneficial to the members in that it provides them with an identity and through this gives them a place in social life. Two ways of addressing the idea of the importance of civil society organizations in the formation and reproduction of identity can be found. One is the 'collective identity' approach elaborated upon and emphasized by authors like Melucci (1988,

1989). According to Gamson (1992, p. 57), Melucci suggests that the most central task of the 'new' social movements is the construction of a collective identity:

Melucci's central point is not simply the strategic one that a strong sense of collective identity is instrumental to the success of collective action but that it is a goal in its own right requiring us to rethink the concept of success. [...] The creation of an ongoing collective identity that maintains the loyalty and commitment of participants is a cultural achievement in its own right, regardless of its contribution to the achievement of political and organizational goals.

In the words of Melucci himself (1988, p. 258):

[T]here is an evident formation of collective demands and conflicts which assume the form of social 'movements' aiming at the reappropriation of the motivation and sense of action in everyday life. [...] The formation, maintenance and alteration through time of a self-reflexive identity requires social spaces free from control or repression. These spaces are formed by processes (of organization, leadership, ideology) that consolidate collective actors, ensure the continuity of their demands, and permit their confrontation and negotiation with the outside world.

The other approach to identity has a more individual slant. It deals more directly with the use or benefit, for single members, of being associated with an organization. This is analyzed in terms of the effect it has on their present lives and changes in the way they (and their environment) experience their own identity. Gamson (1992, p. 56), referring to the cruder hands of Hoffer, as illustrated in his book from 1951: *The True Believer*, writes that, earlier:

... movements were seen in general as providing a substitute for a spoiled identity. 'The frustrated follow a leader,' Hoffer writes, 'less because of their faith that he is leading them to a promised land than because of the immediate feeling that he is leading them away from their unwanted selves. Surrender to a leader is not a means to an end but a fulfillment.'

### **Social or political change**

Finally, one of the most important features of social movement organizations is their capacity to promote social or political change, or stability. According to this tradition, a civil society organization should aim at social or political improvement, or at least hinder deterioration. Dressed in a terminology borrowed from Habermas, Cohen and Arato (1992, p. 565) state:

The politics of civil society is thus both defensive and offensive: Social movements seek to democratize civil society, to protect it from economic and political "colonization," and to exert influence on political society.

From this more outward oriented perspective, it is understood that civil society organizations should be engaged in activities aimed at changing

existing power structures, or at least challenging them. Melucci (1988, p. 249), although critical to the overuse of the movement concept, state that:

... 'movements' no longer operate as characters but as *signs*. They do this in the sense that they translate their action into symbolic challenges that upset the dominant cultural codes and reveal their irrationality and partiality by acting at the levels (of information and communication) at which the new forms of technocratic power also operate.

From a slightly different perspective, but reasoning basically along the same line of logic, Klandermans (1992, p. 84) argues that:

An important aspect of the social construction of protest is the construction of an injustice frame: situations are defined as unjust and grievances are transformed into demands. Defining the roots of the problem, suggesting collective rather than individual solutions, and identifying an antagonist are crucial elements in the process of grievance interpretation.

To summarize the various attributes associated with a social movement organization (SMO) presented in this section, it could be stated that a SMO should be based on collective action towards the benefit of its members or society at large. Often, this benefit is believed to come through social or political change. Sometimes, a SMO also provides a platform for the creation of identity, either on individual or collective level.

In the following two sections, I will present secondary empirical accounts of the two ideal-type organizations studied in this paper: the hate group and the outlaw gang. In a subsequent section, these organizations will be analyzed using the definitional framework developed above. As the primary example of a hate group I will use probably the best known organization – the Ku Klux Klan – while empirical accounts of several different outlaw motorcycle clubs have been compiled to give the reader an idea of the archetypical outlaw gang.

## **The Klan and other hate groups**

White supremacist hate groups are an international phenomenon. Part of a much wider international movement, these organizations feed on hate or suspicion of foreigners and alien cultures. As part of the same larger international movement we can note a number of relatively influential individuals and (political) organizations – often with racist programs or messages – on the very far right. These groups are found not only in the US but also in other countries in the sphere of western culture. Examples include Pauline Hanson with her One Nation party in Australia or France's Jean-Marie Le Pen and his National Front. We also have reports on neo-nazi groups and their activities from countries like Germany and

Sweden. In this text, however, we will mainly meet the Ku Klux Klan as the ideal-typical hate group.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was established in 1865 by Confederate veterans returning home from the American Civil War. The KKK of the 1990s is not as large as it was then or in the 1920s, when there was an estimated four or five million members enrolled in the United States. Nor is KKK as powerful as it was in the 1960s, when the followers were estimated at about 40,000. Even in the late 1970s the Klan held some 12,000 members. During the 1980s, however, membership figures have fallen steadily from around 10,000 at the beginning of the decade to about half this force in 1987-88, as estimated by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL, 1991; Sims, 1995; Tucker, 1991; Whitehead, 1970).

After the First World War there was a growing modernism in the US, with modern influences in such areas as religion, sex and alcohol. The Klan was then seen by many as a bulwark against this development. Listen to Tucker's (1991, pp. 2-3) description:

In Indiana alone up to 300,000 people had joined what they believed to be a crusade for old-time fundamentalism religion, clean living, 100 percent Americanism, and law and order. Invocations of God, flag, and country, more than of white supremacy, spurred its spectacular success. [...] The Klan was racist, white, and Anglo-Saxon. It had its violent fringes, mostly in the South and Southwest. But the masses flocking to its flaming crosses, especially in the Middle West, were not out to lynch blacks or to flog adulterers. They were, for the most part, ordinary work-a-day Americans caught up in a rush of flag-waving, nativist nationalism and defensive Protestant-Puritan moral reaction.

This defence of traditional religio-moralistic values was especially successful among the village or small-town people of the United States who made up the backbone of the nation (Rice, 1962, pp. 14-16). Tucker (1991, pp. 182-183) suggests that the early Klan provided an outlet for frustrated tensions in the flag-waving fever left over from the Second World War, caused by Jazz Age morality, the Demon Rum, and the fear that the Pope was about to take over America.

Although it is believed that the ranks of the organization had been reduced to less than two thousand in the middle of the 1990s, the KKK is not as odd an or limited phenomena as one might first think. In the US alone, it was estimated that about 770 different white supremacist groups or militia-type organizations, many with racist leanings, existed as late as 1995 (Sims, 1995, p. xi). For example the number of racist skinheads in the US has been estimated to have climbed from no more than 300 in 1986 to about 5,000 in the mid-1990s (Zellner, 1995, p. 2), and organizations like

W.A.R. (White Aryan Resistance) and Aryan Nations<sup>14</sup> also seem to have grown during this period. All of these organizations appear to be based on one or more of three ideological belief systems, according to Kenney and Finckenauer (1995, pp. 308-309): Christian conservatism, white supremacy, and patriotism-survival.

Entering into the 1990s, the Klan seems to have changed tactics along two major paths. The first is its attempt to polish the overt racist message through the use of a toned-down code language á la David Duke, one of the most famous and successful US agitators in this field, as illustrated in one of his lines: "I don't hate blacks; I just love whites" (ADL, 1991, p. 10). The other change is to abandon the tactics of violence. This change has probably been inspired by lessons learned from the million-dollar lawsuits forcing first the leaders of W.A.R. then those of the UKA (United Klans of America) to assume economic responsibility for the violence and crimes performed by some of their followers (ADL, 1991, p. 1; Tucker, 1991, pp. 192-193; Zellner, 1995, p. 29).

### **Organizational structure: The KKK**

What in this text will be referred to as 'the Klan' is not one single organization or even a confederation. It is not possible to speak of the 'Klan Movement' of today as a unified entity. We are dealing instead with a large number of Klan organizations often led by rivalling 'Grand Wizards'. Some of the factions aspire to be the one and only real or original Klan, at times competing, at times cooperating with one another. There is a considerable flux and instability among different white supremacist groups found in the US. Members often belong to more than one of these organizations at the same time, and individuals as well as organizational units shift between various alternatives and new alliances are formed. As an illustrative example, the Ku Klux Klan Realm of Delaware (1997, p. 1) had the following message on their Internet homepage in 1997:

The New Kastle Kounty Knight Riders Klavern has now joined forces with The American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. In a move that we think will benefit all

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<sup>14</sup> Officially entitled "Church of Jesus Christ Christian – Aryan Nations", Aryan Nations is based on "Christian Identity", a religious philosophy that features racial and national pride and is rooted in the belief that the Aryans are the true descendants of Israel. Members stockpile weapons and try to unify the radical right in the US to establish a 'white homeland' (Kenney and Finckenauer, 1995, p. 305, Zellner, 1995, pp. 34, 49-50).

concerned, the Realm of Delaware decided to join with the American Knights. As of May 1st, 1997 we are no longer members of the International Keystone Knights. As far as the members of the Realm of Delaware are concerned, this move will NOT change in any way the relationship we have with any other White Pride organization. We will continue to treat ALL other groups as brothers and sisters.

There are only two major national Klan organizations left in the US today, the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, since the oldest and largest organization, the UKA (United Klans of America), became defunct after the civil trial referred to above. These two national organizations have chapters (or klaverns) in most states, competing with a number of smaller local or splinter groups (ADL, 1991, p. 4).

An idea of the highly formalized nature of, and also struggle between, the different factions in the Klan world is given in the following quote by Sims (1996, p. 54). It describes some of the problems faced by Robert Scoggin, banished from the UKA (United Klans of America) in the late 1960s, who formed his own version of the Klan – the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan – in the early 1970s.

During the struggle, UKA obtained a court order restraining Scoggin from using the name 'United Klans, South Carolina Realm, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.' The secretary of state refused to charter his newly formed Invisible Empire, Knights, South Carolina Realm, the Ku Klux Klan because 'the proposed name is a colorable imitation of the name of an incorporated organization previously existing in the state.'

## **On Klan members and recruiting**

One of the real old-timers of the Klan, Bob Jones, describes how he went about recruiting new members in the early days (Sims, 1996, p. 37):

Bob Jones grinned, 'I was well-known in ever' truck stop in the state. One truck company gave out two applications to new employees: one to go to work and the other for the Klan. The company had three employees that weren't members of the Klan: one was black, and two were Catholics.'

As a contrast, the activities of David Duke, one of the earlier most successful persons in the new generation of Klan leaders in the US, seem to be changing the way things are done within the organization, as also indicated earlier in the text. The recruiting methods he used were not always looked upon favorably by other Klan leaders, for example, Robert Shelton. As described by Sims (1996, pp. 163, 184):

Duke was, in his own words, doing things that had not been done before by the Invisible Empire: he advertised in newspapers and on radio; he often hired rock bands to appeal to young people; he opened his ranks to college students and women; he replaced many of the preposterous-sounding titles with more

acceptable ones, such as National Director and Chaplain; he never wore a hood, not even for cross-lighting ceremonies, and he shed the colored satin robes for stoic white cotton.

To defend his policy of accepting members by mail – referred to sarcastically by Shelton as a “Sears, Roebuck Klan” – Duke described his two membership categories: regular members and mail recruits, known as ‘associate members,’ who do not receive the rituals and secret instructions until they have been personally interviewed and approved.

Since 1981, David Duke has headed the NAAWP (the National Association for the Advancement of White People) and even if he has changed his message and appearance somewhat since his Klan days, his political agenda is described as the ‘first cousin’ of the KKK by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). ADL also states that, “the kind of appeal Duke makes does strike a responsive chord among many whites who feel alienated and victimized by recent trends and social policies” (ADL, 1991, p. 21). This analysis is consistent with two illustrations of regular Klan members and their motives for joining the Klan in terms of esteem and status, given by Sims (1996, pp. 245, 276):

‘I think along the way I developed an inferiority complex [...] there were needs there for recognition and for acceptance that were better met among the radical fringe than were being met in the social setting I was in at the time. It was very reinforcing when I was in that. The more I’d do and get patted on the back and be accepted by my peers in the radical movement, that was more esteem that came to me, more recognition and a sense of worthwhileness and belonging.’

Like many Klanspeople, John was making up for many things he had missed. He had bought himself a big diamond ring for his little finger and a navy-blue Cadillac. He had status in the Klan.

### **Women and men in the Klan**

On the Klan and more individual reasons for joining it, Sims (1996, pp. 275, 283) writes:

He had joined the Klan a year ago, partly because he felt ‘somepin’s gotta be done’ and partly because he was a joiner: Loyal Order of Moose and sundry neighborhood clubs.

... he seemed to have entered the Invisible Empire for much the same reason he joined the Masons and the American League: because he enjoyed getting together with the boys as much as he opposed integration.

The Klan is not entirely for men, even if the organization most often is associated with its male members. Sims (1996, p. 20) gives this illustrative account of the role of women in the Klan:

Bill Miller returned to the podium to introduce his wife, Linda, a porcelain-skinned woman with red hair and a red robe, who apologized that this was her first time to speak in public. ‘We need more women’, she started in an angelic tone. ‘We need the men, but we also need the women behind the men,



to do little things like we've done this evenin'. Stand over there an' cook an' take your money.'

A support organization called the Ladies Auxiliary has been formed and wives, girlfriends and mothers are encouraged to become members. "By now [before a cross-burning ritual] the field was sprinkled with members of the Ladies Auxiliary in red, white, and blue uniforms." These ladies are no less committed to the Klan than their husbands. One of the wives exclaims: "I admire the Klan. I'm Klan from my toes to my head. Matter of fact I don't think I ever really lived till I joined the Klan. I'm behind my husband one hundred percent. [...] We joined as a couple and that's the way it's remained, and when the children get old enough they'll follow right in our footsteps" (Sims, 1996, pp. 77-78). Sims also describes some of the women in the Klan (1996, pp. 64, 77):

She introduced herself as Patricia Smithers, Queen Kleagle of Texas. 'That means I'm in charge of the organization of women in the state of Texas,' she said, taking a drag on a king-size cigarette. 'My husband's the Grand Dragon.' Pat Smithers estimated that two hundred fifty women belonged to the Klan in Vidor [...] 'We take care of all the fund-raisin' for the state of Texas,' she boasted, 'an' we do the snoopin'.'

Bobbie Rockhold was talking to another woman when I approached. Both looked like typical housewives and mothers who belonged to garden clubs and the PTA, but their outside interest proved to be the Klan's Ladies Auxiliary. Bobbie Rockhold was the wife of the new Grand Dragon of Alabama; Shirley Willis's husband held the same rank in Georgia.

When it comes to direct anti-black actions, Sims (1996, p. 149) states that the "women didn't limit their patrolling to the shopping centers and public streets. They also walked the school hallways to keep out black teachers and students."

## **Economy and volunteering in the Klan**

The economy of the Klan is based on annual membership fees or dues and voluntary contributions from members and other supporters, just like in any other more traditional voluntary or nonprofit organizations. As described by one of the Klan factions (Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1997):

The world's oldest, largest, and most professional White's civil rights organization. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan are a non-commercial, non-profit, volunteer organization. We rely solely [sic] on donations from our membership and our supporters throughout the world.

Or as illustrated by Sims (1996, p. 65):

Sending twenty or so robed Klanspeople through the crowd with upturned helmets for a donation, he [Robert Scoggin, the South Carolina Dragon of the

Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan] pleaded, 'We don't get any Rockefeller Grants. We don't get any Carnegie Foundation grants. There's very few people here that couldn't afford a dollar or two. A dime, even a penny, will buy you an application card. So dig in your pockets. Twenty dollars won't hurt you.'

The Klan organizations also have some revenue from the sale of books and various Klan paraphernalia like Klan-embellished t-shirts, tie clasps, necklaces, bumper stickers or confederate pillow cases, often sold at sale tables at the rallies and used to indicate association with or support for the organization.

The other major source of resources for the KKK is the voluntary work provided by its members in a number of different functions. In her book, Sims (1996, pp. 71, 91) provides us with two good examples of what the voluntary contributions of time and other resources by some Klan members can look like:

'I was tied up in this thing – rally Saturday, Sunday and during the week sometimes. And it takes money. I wasn't paid nothing, and it's money you take away from home. [...] running up and down the road, I'll be traveling over five hundred miles this weekend, putting mileage on my car, burning my tires up, gas.'

'If I were to put as much time workin' for some firm as I do for the Klan, I'd probably be makin' a minimum of fifty thousand dollars a year. Still, my wife supports me. She works free, gratis, herself, for the organization. She does secreterial work.'

## Social and political change

The Klan has always been into American politics on all levels. The Klan has a long history of, not always successful, attempts of trying to put their own people in positions of power or striking alliances with politicians and others they find sympathetic (Rice, 1962). Tucker (1991, p. 101) gives us an idea of the impact and the ambitions of the Klan in the 1920s:

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1924, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan captured the government of Indiana. Determined to defend state and nation against alcohol, atheism, aliens, and the Pope, they elected a closet Klansman as governor, another as lieutenant-governor, and still another as secretary of state. Klan favorites won all but one of Indiana's U.S. congressional seats.

Sam Holloway Bowers (quoted in Whitehead, 1970, p. 8), founder and first Imperial Wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi, proclaimed in June 1964 that :

'We must always remember that while the law enforcement officials have a job to do, we, as Christians, have a responsibility and have taken an oath to preserve Christian civilization. May Almighty God grant that their job and our oath never come in conflict; but should they ever, it must be clearly understood that we can never yield our principles to anyone, regardless of his

position. Respect for Christian ideals can not yield to respect for persons nor statutes and procedure which have been twisted by man away from its Divine origin.'

To continue the story of the Klan's political influence in the US, David Duke, the racist and former Klansman, won a Republican seat in the Louisiana State Legislature in 1988 (Tucker, 1991, p. 191). Duke was probably also the Klan leader that expressed the most elaborate views on the 'new' Klan as a movement seeking social change through political power. David Duke, in 1976 a young and successful Klan leader (Sims, 1996, pp. 165, 168) then proclaimed that:

'We see this as a social movement in the traditional sense. The same way the Sons of Liberty were. The same way the Communist Party was. The same way the Fascist Party was. In other words, a movement for social change and not just as a fraternity for people to get together and have fun or salute the past.'

'We don't compromise our philosophy. But we are a social movement, a political movement, and naturally when a subject – if it fits with our basic philosophy, then naturally if this is what the people are interested in, then naturally we talk about it.'

## **Symbols and violence in the Klan**

The most spectacular attributes associated with the Klan and its nocturnal parades and rallies are probably the robes and the terrifying practice of cross-burning. Both of these symbolic attributes are used to intimidate their enemies or opponents and demonstrate their existence and power to the larger community, but also to strengthen the bonds among and unity of the members. On the importance of symbols for earlier Klan success and the problems met by white hate groups of the 1990s, Tucker (1991, p. 200) reflects:

Along with its crusades to save America, the Klan had offered recognizable, unifying forces: mystical symbolism, secret rites, special regalia hoods, flaming crosses, and even a special language. Today's activist far Right offers no such attractions, no costumes, no special insignia, nothing to give a special sense of belonging.

The use of violence seems to be one explanation for the exceptional growth of hate group activity in the US. Even if the Klan of today is trying to tone down their most violent elements, the use of violence has historically been one of the Klan key features. In the years after its creation in 1865, the KKK was responsible for lynching some 3,500 blacks before being dissolved in 1877. Even though this is history, it is stated by one Australian journalist that more than 3,000 acts of racial violence or murder in the years between 1980 and 1986 can be attributed to the Klan or other white supremacist groups (Pasquier, 1997, p. 52). The use of

violence in the Klan was also the main reason why the FBI were brought into the scene in the Mississippi in the 1970s (Whitehead, 1970). The more pronounced violence in US hate groups of today is probably also one of the reasons for the reassignment of 300 former spy-chasers from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to the monitoring of gang activities (Zellner, 1995, p. 16).

Violence within the Klan has traditionally been linked to one of the official office bearers called the Night Hawk, who usually appears masked in a black ceremonial robe, slightly shorter than the others. However, some observers state that as early as in the 1970s, secret units such as the Klan Berets or special Terror Units were created within the Klan to carry out more militant and violent activities. These were paramilitary units of select men and women that met monthly to practice guerilla warfare, which is consistent with the recent development of the highly violent US Patriot Movement. The Patriot Movement is nurtured by strong anti-government attitudes in segments of the population. Although most Patriot followers are law-abiding citizens, the movement does have a more radical wing. According to the civil rights organization Klanwatch (1997), the members of this faction:

... operate in autonomous cells and follow a radical philosophy of religious and racial separatism. They envision a white Christian nation on the North American continent, and they advocate violence to establish it. Members of such a cell are suspected of bombing an abortion clinic and a gay bar in Atlanta in 1997.

One fairly recent account of the violence carried out by the Klan is provided by Klanwatch (1997), who closely monitor the US activities of the KKK:

Nineteen-year-old Michael Donald was on his way to the store in 1981 when two members of the United Klans of America abducted him, beat him, cut his throat and hung his body from a tree on a residential street in Mobile, Alabama. The two Klansmen who carried out the ritualistic killing were eventually arrested and convicted.

In line with the tougher legal pressure put on the Klan and the law suits brought down on them and other hate groups, the KKK has become more careful. Ironically, a possible reason for the decline in Klan membership figures today could be explained by the fact that the mainstream Klan organizations are considered, as argued by Sims (1996), too soft by a new generation of more hard-boiled young activists. Maybe the fourth wave of Klan movements could rightly be named the 'Kareful Klan', as suggested by Zellner (1995, pp. 29-31).

## Outlaw motorcycle clubs

The first outlaw bikers saw the light in the end of the Second World War, when they, as bored and disillusioned US fighter pilots, returned home. Even if most outlaw motorcycle clubs have been founded in the US, the outlaw biker culture today has become a truly international phenomenon. It is stated that the outlaw club subculture had spread to eleven countries outside North America in 1990: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland, (Wolf, 1991, p. 4).

It is reported that the most notorious of all outlaw federations – the Hells Angels – was estimated to consist of nearly 100 chapters worldwide in 1996 – including some 1,400 full-fledged individual Angels, and another 15 or so *prospect* clubs. About half of these chapters should, according to this account, be found outside North America (Charpentier, 1996, pp. 42-43). The number of Swedish outlaw clubs – including others than those related to Hells Angels – was estimated at around 20-30 in 1996, about the same is true for Denmark (Charpentier, 1996, p. 20; Svensk Polis, 1997, p. 8). In 1996, the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC, 1996) reported that:

There are 35 outlaw motorcycle gangs in Canada, representing more than 70 chapters with about 1,200 members. The Hell's Angels are the most powerful and best organized. They have eleven chapters in three provinces [and] [...] maintain business relationships with other criminal organizations, both nationally and internationally.

Similarly to the Klan organizations, the outlaw biker world also seems to be in a flux. Smaller clubs are being either engulfed or exterminated by more powerful groups expanding their territory. New clubs enter and others die. Some clubs form amiable and cooperative alliances while others seem to be engaged in more or less constant warfare. Wolf (1991, p. 304) describes the changing situation for the Canadian Rebels, which can serve as a concentrated illustration of these processes:

... the Rebels MC had taken over the Warlords MC, incorporated the Spokesmen MC, and formed four chapter in two provinces; and, as impossible as it seemed in 1979, the Rebels has forsaken their allegiance with the King's Crew in favour of a pact with their old nemesis, the Grim Reapers.

## The outlaw biker image

The American journalist Hunter S. Thompson (1966, p. 82) wrote that the root definition of an outlaw biker in the mid-1960s was a dangerous hoodlum on a big fast motorcycles and argued that the main spirit was no

different then than when the first Angel chapter was formed in the late 1940s. The public image of outlaw motorcycle clubs today, however, seems to have changed, especially considering the more pronounced business profile ascribed to them by several observers. In contrast to the romantic myth of rebellion and of freedom to do your own thing traditionally associated with outlaw biking, and conveyed through books and movies, Kenney and Finckenauer (1995, p. 292), argues that:

... this perception of motorcycle gangs has changed over the last two decades. "Outlaw" motorcyclist have become much less romantic figures and are more likely to be viewed today as common criminals or worse.

Even though the situation has changed over the decades, the Hells Angels is, however, still the most notorious outlaw club. When they first appeared on the stage, the Angels were viewed, because of their commitment to the club and to the outlaw ideals, as the élite of the outlaw world. According to Thompson (1966, p. 82):

The only difference between the Hell's Angels and the other outlaw clubs is that the Angels are more extreme. Most of the others are part-time outlaws, but the Angels play the role seven days a week: they wear their colours at home, on the street and sometimes even to work; they ride their bikes to the neighbourhood grocery for a quart of milk. An Angel without his colours feels naked and vulnerable – like a knight without his armour.

## **The 'Big Four'**

However, as a President's Commission (1986, p. 6) in the US reports, the Angels are no longer the only major player. Some of the other outlaw clubs seem to have adopted the same full-time philosophy and now challenge the Angels previous solitaire position more directly:

The major outlaw motorcycle gangs traffic dangerous drugs within separate territorial boundaries: the Hell's Angels control the West Coast trade, the Outlaws dominate the Midwest and parts of the east coast, the Bandidos control the Southwest, and Eastern Seaboard States are dominated by the Pagans.

Although these 'Big Four' are the largest and most powerful outlaw motorcycle gangs, and also attract the bulk of media and police attention, it has been argued that as of 1990, an estimated total of 900 outlaw clubs existed in North America alone (Wolf, 1991, p. 339). From a European perspective, it is stated – even though the figures seem high – that another possible 100 outlaw clubs can be found in Denmark and Sweden and some 200 in Germany (Charpentier, 1996, p. 20).

It has been argued – by law enforcement officials and journalists alike – that these four major outlaw federations now fit the definition of

organized crime; they focus on business and making money instead of biking and riding motorcycles (Abadinsky, 1994, p. 273; Lavigne, 1987; 1996). Wolf (1991, p. 320) observes that:

... the clubs that most often are implicated and convicted of these types of criminal activities [illicit drug trade, prostitution, and extortion] are chapters of the four club federations that dominate the United States and Canada.

It is argued that through this development, the four big outlaw motorcycle federations have moved one step beyond the outlaw biker subculture and instead become vehicles for organized crime (Abadinsky, 1994).

### **The structure of an outlaw club**

Bay (1997) argues that the main organizational characteristics of outlaw gangs are more or less the same as those of student societies, various orders or other fraternal societies. They are élitist, secretive, hierarchical, male-only, highly competitive associations with a deep-rooted brotherhood ideology. They perform rituals of (male) bonding through highly selective and ritualized membership procedures and the use of strong symbols.

According to several accounts, outlaw motorcycle gangs are heavily structured and formalized organizational entities. Under the guidance of their legendary President Sony Barger, the Hells Angels in California incorporated and issued 500 shares as early as 1966. The purpose of the organization was stated as the "promotion and advancement of motorcycle driving, motorcycle clubs, motorcycle highway safety and all phases of motorcycles and motorcycle driving". In Europe, according to Lavigne (1996, pp. 37, 51), the Hells Angels' Hamburg Chapter was entered into the Register of Associations in Hamburg on June, 1978.

Wolf (1991, p. 9) has studied the Rebels, a Canadian outlaw club consisting of four federated clubs. He states that becoming a member of the Rebels:

... means being part of a tightly knit voluntary association that operates as a secret society within an organizational framework that includes a political structure, a financial base, a geographical territory, a chain of command, a constitution, an elaborate set of rules, and internal mechanisms for enforcing justice and compliance from within.

The US Angels are much concerned with legislative attempts to curb their activities. One way to circumvent the intentions of the legislator is to formalize part of their organization even further. According to Lavigne (1996, p. 289), in an internal response to a resolution stating outlaw motorcycle gangs to be major criminal elements if they are not legal

entities, one of the Angels wrote: "[A]s soon as we become a LEGAL ENTITY, WE WILL NO LONGER QUALIFY AS AN OUTLAW CLUB. I feel, so as to protect our future as a club, we must become a Non-Profit fraternal Organization."

Most outlaw motorcycle gangs seem to have used more or less the same organizational blueprint for their clubs. There is a standard set of official positions available, including a President at the top, often a Vice-President acting as second-in-command, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Sergeant-at-arms and a Road Captain. Harvey and Simpson (1989, p. 21) report on the Australian Comancheros:

Jock [the President] carefully chose the men on whom he bestowed the honour of an office in the Comanchero club. He looked for loyalty and strength in his Sergeant-at-Arms, the man who sorted out disputes between club members or other clubs. The Vice President had to be brave and display a degree of leadership, but not so much as to challenge Jock's authority.

## **Outlaw membership**

A new member starts as a hangaround, an associate or a friend of the club. The hangaround position is a form of apprenticeship where you are supposed to learn the rules and traditions of the club. Wolf (1991, p. 65) describes the function of the hangaround period in the Canadian Rebels MC:

The biker gets a clear idea of what the club is all about while he enjoys many of the benefits of club affiliation. As a biker, he has already committed himself to a number of values and activities that set him apart from the four-wheeled culture. Now he will learn how to take part in activities that generate subcultural values and constitute subcultural boundaries. He will learn where these boundaries are, how they are to be crossed, and how to maintain them through participation.

Charpentier (1996, pp. 26-27) describes the role of a hangaround as a slave or an apprentice, where 'slavery' means that the hangarounds shall always be of assistance. They take care of the dishes and the cleaning, they assist in the renovation of the clubhouse and they function as the guards at parties that the club organizes. In some clubs, you are expected to provide unpaid more or less full-time services for a year or even more.

If this hangaround arrangement turns out to everyone's satisfaction, the relationship develops into a nominee, striker or a prospect position; the terminology and time period in between depending on which of the clubs he tries to join. The above description is similar to that of the American Bandidos, as described by Harvey and Simpson (1989, p. 37):



Bandido nominees, after being introduced to the club, were assigned to an old man, a full club member whose duty it was to acquaint the prospective member with the rules and his duties as far as the bar and cleaning up was concerned.

This is the first step towards becoming a full member or solid patchholder in the club. Through participation in the day-to-day activities, the striker gains first-hand knowledge of the cultural themes of the club. These themes could, according to Wolf (1991, p. 105), be summarized as: 'love of biking, love for your brothers, and love for the club'. Based on these thematical generalizations on ideology and behaviour, the members are able to take decisions in unfamiliar situations in which they have never been before, and for which no regulatory club directives exist.

As a first official token of formal association with the club the prospect is allowed to wear part of the full 'colors' on his 'leathers' in public. Harvey and Simpson (1989, p. 21) describe the procedure in the Australian Comancheros:

The strip of material with the word COMANCHEROS was the first official sign of membership. After a minimum of three months and if the member was accepted, he was rewarded with a Horseshoe, a gold embroidered arc to be stitched on to the back of his riding leathers.

The position as a prospect or a striker draws the biker into three different dimensions of club participation, according to Wolf (1991, p. 88):

First, on a personal level, the prospect adopts a system of core values that are specific to the outlaw-club subculture. Second, on an interpersonal level, the prospect is incorporated into a network of informal social relations. Third, on an institutional level, the prospect is introduced to the formal role regulations and expectations of the club.

The normal recruitment process for outlaw gangs has been described (see also Lavigne, 1987, pp. 70-72). In times of tough strain, other alternatives might be considered. After two major legal procedures against the Angels in the US, it has been stated that they were so weakened that it was suggested, according to Lavigne (1996, p. 323), "that Hells Angels should write to thousands of U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia to show they had support back home. This would attract to the Hells Angels a new crop of servicemen, not unlike those who founded the club in 1948 – footloose and on the look for action".

## **The 'colors' and other outlaw symbols and rituals**

In the outlaw motorcycle world, various symbols and rituals are extremely important in constructing the members' own as well as others understanding of who they are. One of the most important symbols for

outlaws are the club's colors or the 'patch'. This is the official club insignia you wear on the back of your denim jacket, indicating club affiliation and the territory the club claims. To the individual biker, the 'colors' are everything; loss of one's colors means either probation or loss of membership. According to Wolf (1991, p. 124), these colors are essential in the construction of individual identities:

For young men who share Blues's [member of the Rebels MC] sentiments, wearing a club patch becomes a personal declaration of independence, of not being compromised, a symbolic leverage against the pressures of a society that has done them no favours. When a patch holder flies his colours he changes the reality of his social world along with the way he deals with it. He escapes from the everyday into the special world of the outlaw where the bonds that hold him to the duties in everyday life, such as work and family, disappear.

A common practice of many outlaw motorcycle gangs, as well as street gangs, is the display of different types of tattoos, featuring important symbols of the subculture (Floyd, 1996; Lavigne, 1987; Wolf, 1991). For example the colors of an outlaw club may be worn as a tattoo, which is mandatory for the Hells Angels (Abadinsky, 1994, p. 279; Lavigne, 1996, p. 48). If you change clubs or are thrown out of one, you either return your colors to the club or your patches will be 'pulled' by force. In the case of a club tattoo, it must be crossed out or at least provided with the date of exit when leaving the club. "Expulsion [from the club] involves the confiscation of the member's club colours, by force if necessary, and the dating of any club (Rebel skull) tattoo" (Wolf, 1991, p. 299). No-one outside the club is allowed to wear its colors. "The Angels have skinned non-members caught wearing club tattoos" (Lavigne, 1987, pp. 73, 140:5), and violent fights have started because someone felt that their colors, and thus also the club's honor, have been insulted.

More formally, the colors can be seen as the official trademark of a club. An example is the Bandidos, as described by Harvey and Simpson (1989, pp. 35):

He flipped through the Bandido by-laws, trade-marked on the right top corner with a fat Mexican bandit wearing a snarl and a sombrero, and holding a knife and a gun.

The name 'HELLS ANGELS' and the Death's Head logo ® are trademarks owned by Hells Angels Motorcycle Corporation, registered in the United States and various other countries. The Death's Head was patented in the US in 1972 and the name – without the apostrophe – was registered as a trademark in the 1980s. The Angels are using established trademark and copyright firms to protect their symbols from being misused (Hells Angels San Jose, 1997; Lavigne, 1996, pp. 37, 333). But patent violations rarely

come before a judge. According to Lavigne (1987, pp. 75-76), the Angels prefer to settle out of court, as when they wounded and killed several members of the Mongols after waging a war of pride against the gang. The Mongols were waering colors in red and white that resembled the Angels' trademark and refused to change them.

### **The motorcycle**

To belong to one of the outlaw clubs as a full member, i.e., a patchholder, the ownership and operation of a big Harley Davidson motorcycle is compulsory. In the constitution of the Pagans' Motorcycle Club, for example, it is stated that "All members must have a Harley Davidson 750-1200 CC", and further that "All bikes must be on the road April 30th, or otherwise directed by the Mother Club" (Abadinsky, 1994, p. 280).

The motorcycle is much more than a hobby or a means of transport, it is a symbol of the complete freedom and a personal expression of the biker's identity. In the words of Sernhed (1997, p. 33):

To the biker, the motorcycle is no leisure pursuit, it is the most central object in the culture he belongs to. An affiliation with a decisive importance for his life and identity.

Wolf (1991, p. 43) has a similar interpretation:

The transition from novice motorcyclist to 'righteous biker' involves a man coming to view his motorcycle as an extension of himself. The customized motorcycle is a concrete reference point for the biker's identity; it is his personal statement in chrome and steel as to what he is all about.

### **The 'run'**

A very important tradition of the Hells Angels and other outlaw motorcycle clubs is the 'run'. Most outlaw clubs seem to have some kind of formal sanctions against members who do not care properly for their bikes and runs are formally mandated by the club's constitution; the motorcycles and the runs are the club's fundamental reason for existing. As expressed by Harvey and Simpson (1989, pp. 21-22, 26), these runs fill crucial social as well as image functions within the Australian Comancheros:

On 'runs', trips into the bush or along the New South Wales coastline, the Comancheros would show themselves to the outside world, their leader riding up front, the rest according to rank behind. They sat low in the saddle [...] out to do battle with society, putting up the highway, brave in numbers. [...] When the boys went on a run to the bush for two days of partying or pig shooting, 40 men would pull out from the Granville clubhouse and ride out, two abreast in formation behind their leader, a formidable sight to the docile motorists on the F4 freeway.

In the same vein, Thompson (1966, p. 120), quoting Zorro – the then only Brazilian Angel, writes:

A run is a lot of things to the Angels: a party, an exhibition and an exercise in solidarity. 'You never know how many Angels there are until you go to a big run,' says Zorro. 'Some get snuffed, some drop out, some go to the slammer and there's always new guys who've joined. That's why the runs are important – you find out who's on your side.'

In North America, the most important run is probably the 'Labour Day Run'. Thompson (1966, p. 16) gives a description of the importance of the Labour Day Run for the US Hells Angels:

[A] Labour Day Run is the biggest event of the Hell's Angels' calendar; it is the annual gathering of the whole outlaw clan, a massive three-day drunk that nearly always results in some wild, free-swinging action and another rude shock for the squares.

A similar account is given by Wolf (1991, p. 235):

North American outlaw clubs have traditionally adopted the Labour Day long weekend as a date for a mandatory run. The Labour Day run not only marks the end of the official riding season, for many clubs it becomes a major political event as well. Existing political ties among clubs are strengthened, and the possibility of establishing new ones is explored as 'the booze flows' and the members 'let the good times roll.'

But, as argued by Thompson (1966), the Angels' predilection for travelling in packs is not only imagery. Nor is it entirely due to warps and defects in the bikers' collective personality. According to Thompson, these are no doubt also factors, but he argues that the main reason for this form of travelling is purely pragmatic. Ralph 'Sonny' Barger, the founder and President of the US Angels, described it in this way in the mid-1960s (Thompson, 1966, p. 127):

'If you want the cops to leave you alone you have to shake 'em up,' explains Barger. 'If we make a scene with less than fifteen bikes they'll always bust us. But if we show up with a hundred or two hundred they'll give us a goddamn escort, they'll show a little respect. Cops are like anybody else: they don't want any more trouble than they think they can handle.'

A special show of strength and solidarity in the outlaw society is that displayed at funerals of prominent outlaw members (Bay, 1992; Harvey and Simpson, 1989, pp. 27-29; Lavigne, 1996, pp. 104-105; Thompson, 1966, pp. 275-280; Wolf, 1991, pp. 214-217). In the words of Wolf (1991, p. 215):

The outlaw fraternity comes together as a whole when a member dies. Feuding clubs will often put aside differences and declare an informal truce as they prepare for the funeral run. [...] The funeral run is laden with outlaw-biker symbolism. The hearse will be escorted by a solemn honour guard of motorcycles in formation, and the casket is draped with the deceased's club colours. Conducting the funeral in this manner prevents the death of a member from demoralizing the group.

## **Outlaw economy and finances**

The outlaw economy might look different in different national settings, in different clubs and in different phases of a club's life-cycle. In Sweden, which is a comparatively young outlaw country (the first chapter of a major hard-core outlaw clubs having come relatively late in comparison with countries like Denmark or Germany) the finances of most clubs seem to have been based to a large degree on membership fees and the income from different forms of events, entrance fees and bar revenues. Membership fees are rather steep and sometimes new members are also required to pay a large one-time entrance fee (Charpentier, 1996).

According to Wolf (1991, p. 250), the Canadian Rebels replenish their club treasury with money from five major sources: membership dues and club fines; the sale of commodities to members (e.g., beer, motorcycle parts, t-shirts, badges); the brokerage of club shares; sponsoring 'boogies' (commercial public dances); and holding 'field days' (inter-club meets for 'some friendly competition and serious partying'). The income from sales of paraphernalia such as t-shirts, stickers, key-rings and other items provided with club or Harley Davidson insignia, seem to be an important source of revenue also for the Hells Angels MC (Lavigne, 1996).

### **Criminal business**

The examples given above sound like traditional nonprofit approaches to raising money. On the other hand, according to a survey of local law enforcement officials in the US conducted by a presidential Commission on Organized Crime in 1986, it was stated that the 'Big Four' outlaw motorcycle gangs controlled nearly 40 percent of the dangerous drug traffic (substances other than heroin, cocaine and marijuana) in the United States.

The major problem for prosecutors and police is to link this 'crank cooking' or the distribution and sales of illicit drugs, formally, to the outlaw clubs, and thus establish that there is organized criminal activity involved. "Most Hells Angels run their labs on their own. Walton [an Angel] said Bobby England's lab, busted in the mid-1970s, was the only one directly connected to the club" (Lavigne, 1996, p. 41). Listen also to Sonny Barger's (then Hells Angels' US President) declaration at a West Coast Officers' Meeting in November, 1986 (as cited in Lavigne, 1996, pp. 197-198):

'We got to get one thing straight with everybody: what goes on in this room is 100 percent legal. We don't talk about illegal things here. Because if you're

doing anything illegal, I don't want to know about it 'cause it's not club business.'

Lavigne (1996, p. 246) explains the Angels' routine:

The Angels are truthful when they say they are not a criminal organization. Rather, they are an organization of criminals. They go out of their way to maintain a barrier between the Hells Angels as a club and the Hells Angels as a business.

This policy of strict decoupling is stated to have been adopted to avoid "[bringing] down the heat on the club", i.e., to dodge unnecessary attention from law enforcement. It is stated that, according to the advice of lawyers, the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club has been structured to avoid charges under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute, a statute drafted to combat traditional organized crime (Lavigne, 1996, p. 246).

The Canadian Rebels had a club rule regarding good and bad ways of making money, adopted along basically the same lines. According to Steve, the Rebels' sergeant-at-arms: "If you're selling dope you don't do it as a club member, you don't wear your colours, you don't wear your club T-shirt" Wolf (1991, p. 268). This rule was adopted in order to protect the other club members from the increased police surveillance that would ensue if one club member would be arrested for selling narcotics.

## Social or political change

Thompson (1966, p. 258) gives the following account of the Hells Angels in the 1960s, but the same basic description still seems to be valid in the 1990s:

The Angels, like all other motorcycle outlaws, are rigidly anti-Communist. Their political views are limited to the same kind of retrograde patriotism that motivates the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party.

Charpentier (1996, p. 92) argues that a slightly different political situation, due mainly to historical reasons, is found in Sweden. According to him, the Swedish bikers, like their US brothers, have a negative attitude towards communists. Therefore, he states, the majority of outlaw bikers vote for the Social Democratic Party.

There exists a historical account of at least possible political ambitions in the Hells Angels. Thompson (1966, p. 264), as well as Lavigne (1987, pp. 33-34), presents excerpts from an official letter to the President of the United States from Sonny Barger, the most influential President of the US Angels, read at a press conference in November 1965. In this letter to

Lyndon B. Johnson, Barger offers to create a special crack unit of members of the Hells Angels to act behind enemy lines in the Vietnam War.

This clearly political statement from the Angels must be seen in light of the fact that the founding fathers of the organization were ex-fighter pilots from the Second World War, and that it came at the same time as the patriotic Angels were involved in breaking up anti-war demonstrations arranged by academics and left-wing supporters at Berkeley University.

On this single piece of evidence, it could maybe be argued that the Angels historically have strived for social and political change, but Lavigne (1991, pp. 247-248) states that in 1979 – 14 years later – the same Hells Angels President, Sonny Barger, had a different interpretation of the situation – as a one-time-only event:

‘We’ve never took [sic] a political stance on anything other than that one time on the VDC [the Vietnam War protest march in California in 1965] and at that time I thought we were right, but I’ve done 180 degrees on that since.’

The view that outlaw motorcycle clubs are mainly unpolitical is also supported by Charpentier (1996, p. 38):

An outlaw club does not have any all-embracing political or social goals – other than in the case of Sweden, a strongly negative attitude towards the European Union. The clubs were created solely to cater to the interests of the members.

## **Hate groups and outlaws: Part of civil society?**

In this section of the paper, our two ideal-type case organizations will be analyzed and tested against the two sets of definitions presented earlier: that of the nonprofit or voluntary organization and that of the social movement organization. Based on the descriptions given in the previous sections, it goes almost without saying that the two types of organizations are private and highly self-governing; neither is part of government nor of a for-profit company. The two types of organizations are also institutionalized in the form of formal organizations. Further, they both no doubts receive considerable support from their members and supporters in the form of cash contributions (membership fees and gifts) as well as in unpaid, voluntary, labor. But what about the non-profit distribution criterion?

## Non-profit distributing

Meeting the non-profit distribution requirement is somewhat tricky – even for more traditional nonprofit or charity organizations. It was noted earlier that this criterion does not restrict organizations from paying staff and directors' salaries. Thus we have a potential grey zone in which a financial surplus actually can be transformed and distributed in the guise of salaries to influential members or directors of the organizations or key employees.

The Klan does not seem to pose a problem in this respect (at least no more than other nonprofit organizations in the US or elsewhere), but in the case of the four major outlaw clubs – the Hells Angels, the Pagans, the Outlaws, and the Bandidos – and their reported big business in organized crime, the problem is more profound. To begin with, it is very difficult to establish something like a normal salary in this world. Or, worded more incisively: If the Hells Angels as a club was engaged in producing, distributing and selling illegal drugs, what then could be considered a reasonable or normal annual salary for, let us say, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of drug-related operations in California, considering its scope and related dangers?

Another more serious critique, is that most major business activities carried out in the outlaw biker world – whether legal such as motorcycle shops, or criminal such as illegal drug manufacturing or mob-like 'protection' – seem to be organized and owned by individual members and not by the clubs themselves (Lavigne, 1996; Wolf, 1991). One result of this construction is that any potential profit from these operations is *de facto not* part of Hells Angels MC revenues. If this is the case, the non-distribution criterion is, in principle, not violated any more in Hells Angels or the Rebels than it is in organizations such as the Odd Fellows or Rotary, where people with profitable businesses or as highly paid professionals meet and sometime do business together.

To end this somewhat hypothetical, but nonetheless important, discussion on the nonprofit distribution criterion, it must be noted that single organizations might very well have changed character during their life span. Some outlaw clubs, for example, seem to have become regular for-profit organizations, with organized crime as the single most important motive. The outlaw world in the United States alone, however, today encompasses some 900 different motorcycle clubs. Taken together with the outlaw clubs found in at least the rest of the



industrialized world, it is clear that the worldwide population of outlaw motorcycle clubs is quite substantial and includes several thousands individual bikers from a large number of countries. The outlaw phenomenon is thus obviously much larger than to let itself be reduced or trivialized by the fact that some of the organizations – for example the 'Big Four' outlaw federations, originally found within this population of outlaw biking 'proper' clubs – have over time developed into something else.

## Identity formation – a place in social life

In the previous presentations, it is obvious that identity formation and recognition are important features for members found both in the white hate groups as well as in the outlaw biking clubs. This is, of course, not of equal importance to all of the members nor in all organizations, but to a significant number. According to Spergler (1995, p. 98), a parallel need can also be found in street or youth gangs: "The need for recognition, reputation, or status is the common denominator in why individuals, whether or not personally troubled or socially disadvantaged, participate in gangs." The 'losers-turned-Angels' process can be seen as a salient example of the first type of collective identity formation presented earlier, and of its importance for the individual members (Thompson, 1966, pp. 83-84):

Despite the anarchic possibilities of the machines they ride and worship, they insist that their main concern in life is 'to be a righteous Angel', which requires a loud obedience to the party line. They are intensely aware of *belonging*, of being able to depend on each other. [...] This desperate sense of unity is crucial to the outlaw mystique. If the Hell's Angels are outcasts of society, as they freely admit, then it is all the more necessary that they defend each other from attacks by 'the others' – mean squares, enemy gangs or armed agents of the Main Cop. When somebody punches a lone Angel everyone of them feels threatened.

Charpentier (1996, p. 38) writes in a similar, albeit less violent, fashion on the Swedish outlaw biker world:

... the clubs are meeting places for like-minded where you ride your bike, talk bikes, tinker with them and party. That is the basic foundation. And therefore men chose to seek membership – despite sacrifices. To become involved and be part of this particular type of solidarity. Sometimes, this also creates an *identity*: "you are someone". The gangs are closely united. The time as a *hangaround* and *prospect* guarantees a continuity.

For an outlaw motorcycle gang, Wolf (1991) also emphasizes the importance of the special status of being a member of an outlaw club in the recruitment process. The strong sense of participation, adventure and

brotherhood that is offered, lures the striker into the club. Wolf (1991, p. 89):

The strong emotional appeal of these aspects of group participation makes them particularly effective in drawing the striker into the club mould. If he is successful in his quest, the striker achieves a sense of special identity; it is the sense of social validity that comes with having achieved membership in an élite group through great personal effort and sacrifice.

Wolf (1991, p. 30) is more explicit on the issue of identity when discussing outlaw bikers and also links identity closely to a working class background: "Becoming a biker constitutes a search for identity. [...] becoming a biker is a class-specific response to the general problem of self-actualization." The role of social movements in creating and enhancing individual identity illustrated earlier for the Klan, is also exemplified by a quote from a report by the ADL (1989, p. 29):

Skinhead gangs, like all street gangs and cults, provide their members with a substitute family composed of their peers. This is particularly true for those Skinheads who live communally, in rented apartments or houses, as many do.

### **Symbols and insignia**

Apart from an often uniform-like dress code, everyday or ceremonial, the members of both of these types of organizations show a special inclination towards strong bonding symbols and signs. The colors of the outlaw gangs are probably the best example of artifacts used to strengthen the visual identity of the organization, but also the impressive procession of large motorcycles displayed on a run, the cross-burning rituals performed by the Ku Klux Klan and the white robes worn by Klan members, function in the same way (e.g., Tucker, 1991, p. 200). In the case of outlaw gangs, the motorcycle itself, as well as its design and decorations, is strongly associated with the identity of its owner. At the same time, the motorcycle is a symbol of freedom from social responsibility and restraint. Wolf (1991, pp. 17-18) also recognizes the special club names of the outlaw members as important in their search for a new identity:

These names are reminders of club association. More important, they separate the individual from his past, giving him the opportunity to build a new persona in terms of group-value traits. Pseudonyms give members an aura; they draw upon a collective power. They are no longer just Rick, Allen, or Bill; they are Blues, Terrible Tom, and Caveman; they are outlaw bikers!

The different hate groups and outlaw motorcycle gangs have also developed intricate and highly sophisticated signal systems, often difficult to interpret for an outsider. But for the initiated observer, these systems can be compared to the highly regulated heraldic culture that developed

around ancient noblemen and their different coats-of-arms or the military rank system<sup>15</sup>, indicating rank and experience. This is a symbolic system where, for example, the color of a special badge, or even that of shoestrings, as well as the design of tattoos or robes, also tell a certain story about the bearer and his courage. The different signs and emblems worn by outlaw bikers, for example, indicate the respect or honor the biker should receive from his mates as well as other bikers, while the symbols used by white hate groups, skinheads and neo-nazi supporters often refer to German war symbols from the Second World War (e.g., Jadestig, 1997, pp. 19-25). The different signs tell a story often associated with sex, drugs or the use of violence (Lavigne, 1987, pp. 78-79):

The most dangerous patch worn by a Hell's Angel, as far as police are concerned, is a red on white piece of cloth that reads "DEGUELLO" – no quarter. [...] The patch is the Angels' red badge of courage. It is worn by Angels who violently resist arrest and dates to the early 1960s.

Or listen to the account of skinhead symbolism given by Zellner (1995, p. 5):

Certain nuances of dress say much about a skinhead. For example, the color of the laces worn in the Doc Martens tell a story. Red laces stand for "white power"; white laces for "white pride" (a more moderate position); and yellow boot strings signal a hatred for cops – or indicate that the wearer has killed a cop.

It has also been argued that colors or patches in the outlaw world have a peace-keeping effect; since the order of rank between two unacquainted bikers is settled often already from the start through the display of colors. Further shows of force or demonstrations of courage are unnecessary (Bay, 1990, p. 242). This is true not only for biker-to-biker relations but also in encounters between bikers and others, as described by 'Eel' on the question if he and his motorcycle fraternity got into many fights (quoted in Connell, 1995, p. 107):

'No, not really. Most people would take one look at us and move. No big drama. Anyone who has got any guts to stand up they ended backing down anyway most times. [...] I think a lot of it's to do with appearance. [...] the way we look and the fact that we have got earrings and tattoos, we ride bikes. That's enough to scare shit out of most straight people.'

More common forms of insignia are also carried, plackets and rings are used and displayed in exactly the same manner as the Rotary wheel or the rings of fraternal associations like the Free-Masons. Even bumper stickers

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<sup>15</sup> Note that the main function of the sergeant-at-arms in an outlaw motorcycle club easily could be interpreted as the ultimate defender of a club's honor through the protection of its coat of arms – the club's 'colors' (cf. Bay, 1990).

and pins are used, indicating organizational affiliation, like that of Greenpeace or the Red Cross. Together with given club names as in the case of the outlaws, and a special language, jargong or code (an argot) as used by the Klan or the skinheads (Bay, 1997; Wolf, 1991, pp. 70-71; Zellner, 1995, pp. 4-5), these symbols and signs contribute to a feeling of unity and uniqueness.

## **Social or political change**

It might be of interest to note that both the Ku Klux Klan and the Hells Angels were started in the US by returning war veterans; however, some 100 years apart. The Klan was founded in 1865 by Confederate soldiers returning home from the American Civil War and new energy was fuelled into the revived organization with returning veterans from World War I (Tucker, 1991, p. 199). The Hells Angels was started by a group of bored, demobilized US fighter pilots returning from the Second World War, and receive a second wave of disgruntled warriors in the late 1960s and early 1970s returning from the Vietnam War (Lavigne, 1987, p. 50).

The logic behind this relationship seems to be that after social and political upheavals such as major wars, society's basic value systems are placed under great pressure. Due to an extensive mobility of people, and sense of overall chaos, together with the high personal and moral strain of wartime, normal moral and ethical standards are disrupted. The, maybe mythical, explanation of the birth of these organizations was that they were due to great social and political changes themselves; they were born out of it. This explanation does not explain the development during the rest of the century, but it could be of importance to understand the type of social soil favourable for the first sprout of these types of organizations.

To shed a different light on the Klan movement and its aspirations for social change and political power, a historical comparison can be made. Around the beginning of the 20th century, millions of people in the labor movement in Europe were engaged in demonstrations, illegal wildcat strikes and sabotage of machinery. This was done in an effort to question and contest the then state-protected right of capitalists and the ruling classes to dictate what the protesters understood as the basic conditions for the very existence of the working class. In a similar interpretation, it could be argued that the millions of Klan members in the United States took to marches and parades, and illegal cross-burning and violent

harassment and killing of black Americans to protect what they felt threatened. Their culture, basic moral values, families and livelihoods were under attack by a policy of racial integration forced upon them by an insensitive government.

In an analysis of the conflict between police and spectators surrounding the Australian Grand Prix motorcycle races at Bathurst during the period of 1960-1985, Cunneen and Lynch (1988) argue that the riots could be seen as part of an institutionalization of the conflict and a symbolic resolution to class conflict and powerlessness. Their analysis not only focuses on outlaw bikers but also includes the broader subculture built around the leisure motorcycling. They find that this subculture is heavily subsumed within wider working-class traditions, mainly anti-police activities, and a struggle over control of and claims on public space (ibid., pp. 4-5). The anti-establishment currents found in this account basically agree with the description of the North American outlaw biker culture given by Wolf (1991, pp. 58-59):

The outlaw-biker community is an enclave of right-wing patriotism. Major biker events, such as those held at Sturgis and Daytona, feature a plethora of stars-and-stripes flag waving. [...] For them the best government is the government that ensures personal liberty and governs the least.

However, to base a statement that the outlaw motorcycle clubs are actively striving for social or political change on these and similarly diffuse accounts, seems to be to be stretching the empirical material a bit too far. In a sense, the outlaw bikers and their clubs could of course be seen in themselves as expressions of an alternative life style, and be interpreted as a social movement, but the basic awareness still seems to be lacking.

## **Reflections on the issue of definition**

The possibility of creating definitions that would bar 'bad-bad' organizations, without losing too many of the 'true' or 'good' civil society organizations along the way, will be briefly discussed. This is done not because I think such a definition *ought to* be created, but rather in an attempt to illustrate the severe problems related to such an operation. I question whether it is even possible to construct a working definition of a nonprofit or voluntary organization – or social movement organization – that holds any theoretical relevance, so as to bar these 'bad-bad' organizations alone. It is in any case doubtful that it is possible to do so without risking the exclusion of some of the 'good' organizations as well.

Just because a society or nation decides to ban an organization, does not mean that the organization is no longer a nonprofit/voluntary or social movement organization (at least according to the criteria used and discussed here). It can certainly still be part of civil society. We just have to remember the case of totalitarian regimes where even some of the most established organizations were banned for different reasons.

## **On democracy**

In the quote from Putnam (1993, footnote 30 on p. 221) addressed initially in this text, the question of democracy is approached on two levels, internally and externally: "Not all associations of the like-minded are committed to democratic goals nor organized in an egalitarian fashion ...". In this paper, only the intra-organizational aspect of democracy will be addressed, since the available secondary empirical material does not provide information enough on the organizations' attitudes to overall democracy in society. The issue of the external impact of outlaw motorcycle clubs, however, will be addressed in a slightly different fashion in another text (Wijkström, 1998).

Regarding internal models of democratic decision processes (organized in an egalitarian fashion), one could opt for the wording: 'open and democratically run organizations', as it is found, for example, in the popular movement model in Scandinavia. This would, however, exclude a significant number of nonprofits of the Anglo-Saxon type, for example, as well as most foundations. Even if we accepted the extra criterion that the organizations should be democratically run, we would then have to decide what we mean by democratic. Is it the classic representative – majority rules – democratic model we refer to? Is it the 'walk-away' model proposed by Greenpeace based on the idea that if the members don't want us they can stop paying the membership fees, and since the organization does not have any other sources of income, it would then have to discontinue its activities? Or do we mean the form of direct democracy used by organizations such as the Plowshare movement or the Rebels, where all members shall have a say and some decisions are even taken by total consensus?

Whatever the added criterion would be, it seems as if both the outlaw motorcycle clubs and the Ku Klux Klan would pass as democratically-run organizations, considering the existence of internal democracy, as we normally understand the concept in the Western world.

## **On the use of violence**

What is it then that differentiates these 'bad-bad' organizations from other organizations in civil society? It can not be that they are using violence per se, since voluntary defence organizations are prepering for that all the time. Neither can it be that they are acting outside the present boundaries of the existing legal system, that is what organizations active in civil disobediance do, e.g., – Greenpeace or the plowshare movement. The only remaining alternative would appear to be the combination of these two conditions: that the organizations are using unauthorized (i.e., not legally sanctioned) violence and therefore threaten the existing understanding of a (nation) state monopoly on violence. I will, however, present here some cases that further complicate this discussion.

Firstly, there are a number of (illegal) militant guerillas striving for democracy in dictatorships in Latin-America and Africa. Some of them use unauthorized violence, but are nevertheless often understood as 'good' or at least necessary social movements by contemporary Western observers. Why?

Secondly, we have the 'right to life' movement in the US, based on the same guiding principles as also found in religious right as well as political right organizations. The members of this anti-abortion movement are, however, killing doctors that allow or perform abortions. Their motivation is that these doctors are taking lives and to kill them would stop more lives tto be wasted. Who is right or wrong from a strictly moral or ethical standpoint is not an uncomplicated issue to deal with.

Finally, another US movement is the radical Patriot Movement mentioned earlier based on strong anti-government attitudes in the population. Its members follow a radical philosophy of religious and racial separatism in which they envision a white Christian nation on the North American continent, and advocate violence to establish it. Some of the members are suspected of bombings and murders. Right or wrong?

## **The issue of Pareto optimum**

To include requirements like 'without hurting or treating somebody worse than he or she already is' (cf. Pareto optimum) would exclude most organizations aiming at social or political change. These organizations often aim to redistribute power or wealth in order to strengthen or support a specific issue or group of persons which, almost by definition, also requires a losing side. To demand of civil society organizations that

they should follow and obey the rules, laws and norms of contemporary society (a third alternative) would result in organizations which use civil disobedience being left outside civil society by the definition, which seems a bit ridiculous. The contest and questioning of established society, its norms and structures, seems to be at the very heart of most understandings of social movements.

### **Normative statements**

As long as the definition refrains from making contemporary moral or normative statements part of the required criteria, it is difficult to exclude 'bad-bad' organizations. The only possible other group of definitions that exclude these types of organizations are those that include normative statements or conditions like 'the good of society'. One such example is presented by van Til (1988, p. 7), where he cites Smith, Heddy and Baldwin (1972, p. 167): "Voluntary action directed at the long-range betterment of society and the general welfare may be the "best" kind of voluntary action in the eyes of most people."

These types of normative definitions, on the other hand, must face the problem of having to change their population (i.e., exclude or include organizations) according to how the public opinion (or some other agreed upon mechanism to catch the current understanding of what is good for society) of these organizations shifts, irrespective of whether the organization itself has changed its practice or aim.

The notion of 'best kind of voluntary action' is fairly relative and difficult to use with any great precision in classification work. First of all, it must be decided which group of persons should be the reference group. Should this group encompass most of the people in the immediate local community, city, state, country, or even the world? Or is it possible to imagine even non-territorial demarcations of the group, e.g., a business corporation, federation of associations or a certain religion (cf. Dahl, 1967). And what about the opinion and welfare of people not yet born? This is a matter of profound importance when dealing, for example, with peace or environmental issues.

### **Context dependency**

To further address the complexity and high degree of context dependence, and, dare I say, historical blindness, that seems present in many attempts



to define the organizations populating civil society, let us take some examples.

The European Christian Crusaders and their different religious orders were probably seen as good and worthy champions for charitable and noble causes back home in Europe, but it is doubtful that the same general understanding of their activities prevailed among the population in, for example, Palestine.

And what of the labor movement in Scandinavia? In the early days, it was probably not viewed as a particularly good or especially useful group of organizations by central observers in established society. It had but a few genuine supporters and met with strong resistance in the beginning. As its influence and support grew, however, this status would gradually change, partly because labor party regimes dominated government and the public sector for longer periods.

Let us, finally, return to one of the organizations dealt with in this paper, the Ku Klux Klan. Four to five *million* persons in the US were Klan members in the 1920s. If we assume that the organizations found in the 'Klan world' of today have the same goals and use the same methods, would it make any sense to include the Klan of the 1920s in civil society, but exclude it in the beginning of the 1990s, when their membership have been claimed to have shrunk considerably?

Do we have to create a new 'bad-bad' or 'dark' flexible sector to house all these organizations that we from time to time deem not good enough? This sector would then perhaps encompass organizations such as those who use civil disobedience or unsanctioned violence, or organizations where people 'bash heads just for fun' or harass and say evil and discriminating things about other groups of people.

## **Concluding but not closing the discussion**

The Klan and the Angels have been used in this paper to test the borders and content of what are often understood to be crucial components of civil society. In this endeavor to test existing definitions, the question initially raised was whether white supremacist hate groups and outlaw motorcycle gangs really were part of civil society. The main conclusion we are able to draw, is that both of these ideal-types of organizations are part of civil society, according to the two definitions tested.

However, according to several sources, a limited group of outlaw motorcycle clubs – the 'Big Four' – seems to have developed into

something else, away from the notion of outlaw motorcycle club 'proper'. If this something else is better understood as a regular company, as organized crime, or as family business is outside the scope and aim of this paper.

It soon became obvious during the work, that the two different types of organization really were different. Furthermore, however, has the work with the secondary material made visible to me the need to differentiate even further between different sub-types of organizations that are found within the two broader ideal-typical constructs, the white hate group and the outlaw motorcycle club. To be able to understand these two, on the surface homogenous, phenomena better, I believe that we must go deeper into the respective worlds. In an endeavor to penetrate the outlaw world somewhat further, I take such a step in another text (Wijkström, 1998).

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# Strategic dilemmas for Swedish popular movement organizations

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April, 1998

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## Abstract

*This essay is sprung from a larger research project, aiming at mapping the Swedish nonprofit sector in comparison to a number of other countries. During this work, we have had to tackle the fact that the "sector" was, in fact, not understood as **one** sector but consisted of several different organizational groups, or types unified by a basic rationality or certain organizational principles and attributes, rather than specific fields of activity. One of the largest and most influential groups or types found in Sweden are the traditional popular movements (folkrörelserna) and their organizations, e.g., the labor, temperance, and free church movements. All of these organizations gathered strength around the turn of the century and have been influential actors in Swedish society for the major part of the 20th century.*

*Now, at the end of the century, these organizations are often claimed – by themselves as well as by society at large – to be experiencing a **crisis**. Some of the symptoms are decreasing membership figures, less political influence, and active members turning passive. A number of explanations have been put forth but too often the organizations – and other observers – have tried to analyze only one or two of these explanations, or – in a "rational" step-by-step manner – tried to address and solve the issues or problems experienced sequentially. In my view, this approach is often insufficient to handle such complex and interrelated relations and processes. In this essay, I will try to provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation.*

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19 The essay is an extension and further development of research conducted by the author between 1993 and 1996. The empirical material referred to is presented in more detail in the book "The nonprofit sector in Sweden" (Lundström and Wijkström, 1997, Manchester University Press). I am grateful for the many useful comments made by participants of a seminar held at Wollongong University in Australia (August 21, 1997), as well as scholars taking part in the "Workshop on the Management of Nonprofit Organisations" in Brussels, Belgium (November 13-14, 1997), where earlier versions of this text have been presented. Also Claes Arvidsson at Upsala Nya Tidning and Lars Pettersson at the Swedish Red Cross, have read the text and offered initiated and useful advice. For all shortcomings of the text as they appear in this essay, however, I am fully and alone responsible.

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## Introduction

The Swedish nonprofit sector is dominated by organizations found in the large popular movements (folkrörelserna). These organizations boast a vast number of formal individual memberships as well as the association of a high proportion of the population; they are a heavily institutionalized part of society, have traditionally been able to exercise a strong political influence, and have come to represent a considerable economic force.

The Swedish popular movements have most often promoted certain interests, e.g., within the labor movement, or been active in the protection of specific values, e.g., as the free churches and temperance movement, or engaged in recreation or leisure, as in the example of the sports movement. The contribution of traditional human services made by popular movement organizations (PMOs) in fields like health care, social services or compulsory education (the core domains of the welfare state) is, and has always been, very limited. The amount of such welfare services provided by nonprofit or voluntary organizations in Sweden has also been considerably lower than what is found in other industrialized countries.

This is true despite the fact that the relative economic size of the Swedish nonprofit sector is equal to that of for example, the British, French, German and Italian sectors. Only in a few niches, most prominently care and rehabilitation of drug addicts and adult education, have the regular services provided by popular movement organizations, historically speaking, been of any significance in Sweden (Lundström and Wijkström, 1997; Wijkström, 1997a, 1997b).

## Conceptual issues

Before we begin discussion of some of the problems facing the traditional Swedish popular movements today, it is important to discuss a number of conceptual issues and describe the basic structure of Swedish popular movement organizations.

It could be asked whether it is at all possible to understand the highly disparate group of Swedish nonprofit and voluntary organizations as a separate and easily distinguishable sector in society. For the purpose of this text, however, I will view these organizations as a sector with joint characteristics, *as if* such a thing as a Swedish nonprofit sector really did

exist, and society will be represented by a model containing four sectors – state or government, business, nonprofit or voluntary, and household. The four-sector model has also been proposed by a number of other authors, among them van Til (1988), who bases his model on the work of Talcott Parsons.

Other students of nonprofit or voluntary organizations have proposed and used three-sector models of society: a state sector including governmental agencies or bureaucracies, a business sector with for-profit firms and companies, and a third sector that is "intended to express an alternative to the disadvantages associated with both profit maximization and bureaucracy" (Seibel and Anheier, 1990, p. 7).

Often absent in three-sector-models, is the third sector's interaction with and relations to individuals or households (see also van Til, 1988, pp. 71-87). I argue that any model with the ambition of explaining society must also take this household sector into account. The individual is a crucial component of not only a third sector (e.g., as family or association member), but also of the public sector (as citizen or voter) and of the business sector (as consumer or owner). The latter two sectors can not do without the individual or the household any more than the nonprofit or voluntary sector can.

## **The Swedish popular movements**

In this section of the essay, the reader will be provided a general view of Swedish popular movements and the organizations found within them: the historical development, organizational structure, and an attempt to pin down what the popular movement concept really stands for.

### **Historical development**

The historical development of the Swedish popular movements could be described as a series of waves. The first wave swept in between 1870 and 1920 and included the peak of the temperance, (Christian) free-church and labor (blue-collar workers) movements. Consumer and farmers' cooperative movements are also sometimes included. Towards the end of this first wave, the first organizations for women's rights, popular (adult) education and the sports movement took shape. Also during this period, white-collar workers organized themselves into unions, though these groups made only modest progress in the beginning (Engberg, 1986; Johansson, 1980; Lundkvist, 1977).



It was during the second wave that slowly replaced the first wave, extending until about the 1970s, that most of the larger interest movements including organizations for the handicapped, pensioners and tenants, came alive and reached their peaks. At the same time, we also note a parallel third wave of strong more leisure- and activity-centered organizations. Organizations for outdoor life, like hunting and fishing, tourism and scouting, together with numerous hobby associations sprouted like mushrooms. This is of course the major period of initial growth for the Swedish sports movement, whose importance and influence continue to extend well into the 1990s (Engberg, 1986; Johansson, 1980; Lindroth, 1988; Lundkvist, 1977).

The fourth wave is by nature more diffuse and difficult to describe. In a sense, we are in the midst of it. Its beginning could probably be dated to the late 1960s. Even though precedents to these movements can be traced back to as early as the turn of the century, the new generation of organizations found in peace, women's rights and environmental movements seems to be of a somewhat different character than the earlier organizations. The client or patient movement, including numerous self-help groups, expanded rapidly in Sweden during the 1970s and 1980s and should also be added to this wave (Karlsson, 1997). In international social movement literature, the organizations or movements found in this wave are sometimes labelled 'new social movements' (NSMs), but the debate on what is actually new about these movements is still vivid (see, for example, Laraña, Johnston and Gusfield, 1994; Morris and Mueller, 1992; Social Research, 1985).

### **Defining a popular movement**

There is no clearly specified definition of a popular movement in Sweden, but a number of attributes are often noted some of these being also heavily institutionalized (see Chapter 2 in Lundström and Wijkström, 1997). One of the first existing attempts to define the concept was made as early as the 1940s, when Thörnberg (1943) stated that a popular movement was the organized effort to promote or support specific interest-based values. According to Thörnberg, these values generated an attitude in the popular movement which lead to (organized) action aimed at achieving a certain condition or situation. This attitude stemmed from the belief that this particular condition or situation could satisfy wishes related to either the individuals themselves, others or society at large (*ibid.*, p. 7). So far, the definition is much in line with the international understanding of a social movement.

Later, Heckscher (1951) broadened the popular movement concept to embrace altruistic organizations as well as interest-based organizations. He also added that, to qualify as popular movements, the organizations should also be broadly (nationally) based and democratically run. The ideas of broadness and internal democracy introduced by Heckscher are also to be found and stressed in most later definitions. These later definitions focus on formal organizations and require further that the organizations carry ideological messages, that they be open to everyone, that they strive to create opinion, and that they be independent of the public sector (Engberg, 1986; Johansson, 1980; Jonsson, 1995; SOU 1988:39, p. 11; Svedberg, 1981).

In this modern understanding of a popular movement organization a high degree of transparency, towards the members and also in relation to society, must be added to the list of requirements to be fulfilled. Active membership is also a crucial ingredient of the Swedish PMO concept, at least on a rhetorical level. This active membership does not refer primarily to regular volunteers, as in the Anglo-Saxon understanding, but focuses on the everyday activity by rank and file members in the organizations – for example as soccer players, study circle students, or practising members of the church choir (Häll, 1992; Petersson, Westholm and Blomberg, 1989). The idea and importance of active members in Swedish PMOs are clearly linked to normatively positive concepts like citizen participation and mobilization, concepts traditionally associated with basic features of social movements.

The current use of the Swedish concept *folkrörelse* is complex. Firstly, it is used by scholars to refer to the various Swedish social movements that appear in the different, historically separated waves. Secondly, in the everyday understanding of the concept, popular movement is more or less used to describe single movement organizations. For the purpose of this essay, the term popular movement organization (PMO) will be reserved for Swedish nonprofit or voluntary organizations that satisfy the requirements listed above. Thus, according to this definition, neither Greenpeace Sweden nor the Plowshare movement groups qualify as PMOs, though both are clearly SMOs (social movement organizations) and crucial actors in the Swedish environmental and peace movements, respectively. In the case of Greenpeace, it does not have the required democratic attributes (or the openness), and the Plowshares lack the required (national) broadness. Naturally there is a large amount of small, often local, associations in Sweden with no formal link to a PMO but who

are nevertheless engaged in different social movements. These associations are important parts of the Swedish nonprofit or voluntary sector, but are not PMOs as defined in this text.

### **Describing Swedish PMOs**

We have briefly described the historical development of the Swedish popular movements and given a short definition of the PMO concept, but what do these PMOs really look like – organizationally? Swedish PMOs are most often immense structures of hundreds or even thousands of primary – with individuals as members – and secondary – with other associations as members – associations. These associations are joined together in highly formalized federative structures. The PMOs are often geographically organized, having a local, primary, association as the basic organizational unit, with individual members drawn from the local community. These local associations are joined together by region, often on county level, into federations (*länsförbund*). County federations are then members of a national federation (*riksförbund*). In the larger PMOs, a district level is often added between local and county level.

The national federation acts as a spokesperson for the entire PMO and often coordinates nation-wide operations or national campaigns. The national federation is thus, in reality, owned and controlled, on the first level, by the member (county) federations, and on a second and third level – through an extensive democratic process – by the local and district associations and, finally, by the individual members. This control and governance function is for the most part highly formalized. Decisionmaking and control processes rest on the basic idea that every member has one vote and access to the assembly of the association where he or she is a member and where the board for the association is elected. For the larger organizations, like county or national federations, control and governance is often catered to through extensive representative democratic procedures, originating in the primary associations and based on the individual members as the ‘electorate’.

The largest Swedish PMOs are of two main types that could be described as (a) *groups* and (b) *combines*. The two types are formally organized as federations (*förbund*) and the basic legal structure is the same for both, but the group is considered more or less *one* organization, in which the member associations are more uniform in character and share the same basic mission, ideology and also name. Examples of such PMO groups are the Association of the Visually Impaired (*Synskadades Riksförbund*), the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

(*Naturskyddsföreningen*). The second type of PMO, the combine, on the other hand, consists of more loosely coupled autonomic associations pursuing different objectives and sometimes even competing with each other. The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (*Landsorganisationen*) and the Swedish Sports Confederation (*Riksidrottsförbundet*) are two, influential, such combines. Combines are often seen as peak or umbrella organizations that promote or protect the interests of their member associations. These combines hardly ever have individuals as primary members or organize specific activities or operations in which individual members can take part as volunteers. While the *group* has often grown organically in a top-down fashion, the *combine* has often come to life through a bottom-up process.

## **Pressures from above, below and within**

A brief presentation of the main features of a number of changing processes is perhaps in order. It is argued that these empirically observable changes that relate to conditions in the organizational environment will have crucial implications for the survival and management of the traditional Swedish popular movements and their organizations. This will lead to new and different pressures on the PMOs, the first of which are found in the changing relations between the organizations and the welfare state. Secondly, the changing relations between the PMOs and the individuals, the members, will be outlined. Finally, apart from the *direct* effects of these changing pressures on the PMOs, originating *outside* the Swedish nonprofit sector, it will also be argued that they will *indirectly* affect the relations between organizations *within* the sector.

### **Pressure from the welfare state**

First of all, it is important to note that the major traditional Swedish popular movements and their organizations have grown and increased their influence in society during the major part of the 20th century in a close interaction with the Swedish welfare state. They might not be children of the same era – the PMOs and the state – but I would argue that they are firmly rooted in the same basic social conditions and institutional framework, especially considering the substantial influence in government policy from the labor movement as a consequence of their long and almost unbroken period in government power until the 1970s.

Four parallel changes concerning the relations between the nonprofit sector and the public sector in Sweden can be outlined. These changes are

general in their nature, but in their effects on specifically the nonprofit sector, they can be expressed as, or translated into, two interrelated hypothetical processes affecting the PMOs and other nonprofit or voluntary Swedish organizations. In earlier work (Lundström and Wijkström, 1995, 1997), we have referred to these two processes of change as 'from state subsidies to local government contracts' and 'from production of voice to provision of services'. The four underlying changes are presented below.

1. Firstly, we can discern a tendency whereby funds from the public to the nonprofit sector, within one and the same field, are transformed from general organizational subsidies to more specific forms of compensation. This can affect everything from state support to environmental organizations, to municipal support for temperance organizations.
2. Secondly, there are a number of indicators that point in the direction of reduced government support on the national level to activities in the larger nonprofit organizations' central, often national, units.
3. Thirdly, the nonprofit sector (as well as the the for-profit sector) has been given increased opportunities to engage in direct production of traditional services, mainly in daychild care and primary education, though this change is also observable in other areas.
4. Lastly, within the public sector, there has occurred a transfer of responsibility for certain areas from the national to the local government level. This applies, for example, to childcare and compulsory education.

The first major change, 'from state subsidies to local government contracts', involves two of the above. First, it is noted that subsidies, at least indirectly, are transformed into contracts. A similar discussion of a shift from state grants to contracts in the case of the UK is provided by Lewis (1996). She argues that although contractual relations between government and the voluntary sector are not new per se, these new contracts seem to resemble alternatives to publicly delivered services to a greater extent than earlier, rather than being viewed as supplementary or complementary services, thus bearing a greater responsibility for the core domains of the welfare state (*ibid.*, pp. 108-109).

This is an issue also found in the Swedish debate, though until now such propositions have been fiercely rejected by the nonprofits as well as government agencies, at least on the surface. Second, there is a process of decentralization, from national to municipal level, of a number of

questions concerning fields of direct importance to the nonprofit sector. The general effect of this vertical shift within the public sector on Swedish nonprofits can be exemplified by citing a recent strategic document from the Swedish Red Cross (Ceciliagruppen, 1998, p. 9):

More and more of society's public resources are organized on municipal level. This has an effect on areas related to our work; social work, rescue work, care and the work to integrate people from other countries. This demands a presence at municipal level; that we are visible, that we are experienced as a natural speaking partner to politicians and public authorities, that people easily find their way to us.

The other major resulting change is a shift of focus within the sector as a whole from 'production of voice to provision of services'. One important explanation for this development is that much of the earlier opportunities for PMOs to participate in shaping public policy have disappeared. According to Rothstein (1998, p. 5), "the trustful collaboration between the major interest organizations in the labor market and the state disappeared during the late 1980s. The participation of interest organizations in the creation of public policy by governmental commissions has become much less significant, and working compromises are seldom reached even when they do participate."

This shift from 'production of voice to provision of services' is also related to a corresponding shift in the welfare state. As a result of what is sometimes called the economic or financial crisis of the welfare state, government is seeking new and alternative ways to provide the welfare services it is responsible for in a more efficient and cost-conscious way. According to Ahrne, Roman and Franzén (1996, p. 155), the common denominator behind public strategies dressed in terms like decentralization, user influence and privatization, is:

... that the services of the public sector should be better adjusted to individual citizens' needs and desires by coming closer to them or by being more flexible. There is often in these proposals also an understanding that the activities should become more efficient and therefore less costly.

For a 'social democratic welfare state' like Sweden (Esping-Andersen, 1990) different nonprofit, voluntary or cooperative arrangements seem to offer an interesting middle-of-the-road solution. A middle-way between full-scale privatization of services within the core domains of the welfare state, to profit-maximizing actors in a market and an increasingly bureaucratized and rigid public sector. That is at least, the way the basic argument goes.

This is, however, not to be confused with the situation in the US, where the nonprofit sector is regarded as the "*preferred mechanism* for pro-

viding collective goods" and the state is reduced to a residual institution when the nonprofits fail (Salamon, 1987, p. 111). In the US, nonprofits seem to have preceded state provision of welfare services while the state and the PMOs in Sweden grew in unison. In Sweden, the nonprofit sector is seen as the 'preferred' alternative in relation to for-profit or market solutions.

## **Pressure from the individual**

After presenting the current challenges meeting the PMOs on a macro level from a welfare state in transition, it is time to address the question of new or shifting demands on the PMOs and other Swedish nonprofit organizations on the micro level, from the individual. I argue that, from a situation where members earlier used membership in one and the same organization for several different purposes – and also invested their loyalty there – they now tend to 'shop around' among different organizations and activities to find the composition of memberships that satisfies their specific needs. Signs of this development was visible several decades ago; listen, for example, to this prophecy by Dahl (1967, p. 964) on citizens' multiple loyalties:

[T]he citizens of our modern cities will have no single loyalty and no single community; they will have multiple loyalties to many associations; and nowhere will they find the all-inclusive community.

Although this development was initiated some time ago, it seems as if the major impact on the Swedish PMOs have been somewhat delayed.

I have elsewhere also argued that it is possible to speak of a fragmentation of the different dimensions of membership (Wijkström, 1995, 1996; see Engberg, 1986, for a similar discussion on the situation in Sweden). For the individual, membership satisfies different demands or needs in different situations, and he or she also has new and strong preferences concerning how and in which form the work should be carried out. The strategic work of the Swedish Red Cross referred to earlier can once again be used to illustrate (Ceciliagruppen, 1998, p. 3):

We are meeting new generations with different demands on the organization, who seek other forms of expression for their humanitarian involvement than those sought by present and previous members and volunteers.

At least part of the explanation for this lies in the continuous increase in educational level in Sweden during the 20th century. The final report of the Swedish Power Study claims that a new type of citizen, endowed with a greater knowledge and resources, has emerged. A new kind of citizenry

with heightened demands on differentiation and pluralistic solutions has evolved in fields like health care and education, fields in which the researchers also found that many people experienced a lack of influence, (Petersson, Westholm and Blomberg, 1989). In another survey, it is claimed that these 'new' citizens, through higher levels of education, are now also able to question different forms of expert judgement (SOU 1990:44). Another element to be added to the picture of a 'new' member is an increased drive for efficiency combined with a sense of shrinking amount of 'free' time. Finally, the difference could also be a matter of different attitudes between the generations. According to Rothstein (1998, p. 9), for example, political activity may, for older generations, be a question of habit and social pressure. For young people, on the other hand, "participation can be considered a more deliberate act."

The increased capacity/educational level of individuals in general has lead to more sophisticated, demanding and time-conscious citizens. Thus, members (and potential members) of traditional PMOs have become stronger, better educated, and increasingly independent. This process has lead to a group of more demanding individuals vis á vis society at large, and also in their relations to the traditional PMOs.

### **"New" Volunteers**

In Sweden, voluntary work has traditionally, and to an overwhelming degree, been viewed as one among other dimensions of membership. A volunteer is a member who is more active in an organization's activities than its passive members. And this relationship is more pronounced in Sweden than in other countries studied (Gaskin and Smith, 1995).

Despite this general picture, however, there is a tendency today among certain Swedish organizations to recruit volunteers for more limited assignments and projects, as well as for specific their professional competence. This "new" way of organizing volunteers recently developed in Sweden has probably been inspired by experience from Anglo-Saxon countries. A complementary explanation is that many of the traditional Swedish charities have taken the legal form of a foundation or are governed by a small 'closed' circle of members. None of these constructions allow for 'normal' active members in the function of volunteers, as does the traditional PMO model. These older charities are a group that have grown in importance – economically as well as the scale of their operations – during the last two decades.



The relationship between an organization and its volunteers can, using such a model as described above, be seen in terms of a contract rather than traditional membership participation in Sweden. The volunteer offers resources (energy, ideas, work hours, etc.) to the organization in order to work with a special issue or group of clients in which he or she is particularly interested. The advantages of this model include the possibility of utilizing the volunteers' time effectively, and the recruitment of people with special professional abilities. This model may also be better adapted to the way people are prepared to participate today. Without committing oneself to all the different activities or to the more administrative chores of the association, it is possible for a person to focus on the particular task or field in which he or she is interested.

### **The collective versus the individual**

Finally, there also seems to be a shift along the individual-collective scale, both at the individual and organizational level. Thörn (1991, p. 47) speaks of a form of 'political minimalism' where individuals as well as organizations with different values or objectives are still able to find forms for cooperation around important single issues, for example anti-highway or squatting actions. The words of Pakulski (1991, p. 160) also offer a similar account of recent trends within the environmental and peace movements:

For the occasional observer of a peace rally, an environmental demonstration or an anti-nuclear march, it is becoming more difficult to distinguish the dominant issue, the key slogan, or the principal organisational allegiance. This polyphony is increasingly typical. Hardly any demonstration, march or rally is mono-thematic in terms of organisational representation and issue-focus. The process of coalescence is drawing into the eco-pax orbit such other, more loosely affiliated groups as feminists, students, squatters, gays, land-rights supporters, animal liberationists, and a host of local political and cultural bodies.

Rothstein (1998, pp. 28) uses the term 'solidaric individualism' with which he means that individuals are willing to support each other but also accept that some have other values and want to engage in different causes. He continues (Rothstein, 1998, p. 30): "Choosing an organization may nowadays have more to do with the individual's deliberate creation of a specific lifestyle than with adherence to an established organized collective identity." In a similar vein, but expressed somewhat differently, Engberg (1986) coined the term 'organized individualism', a development that also has been noted in Norway (Selle and Øymyr, 1995, p. 241). Engberg (1986, p. 187) writes:

Voluntary associations of the turn of the century contributed towards replacing vertical distributions of loyalty [...] in favour of the horizontal pattern of solidarity within one's own collective became crucial to how loyalty was to be dispersed or withheld. Voluntary associations in the welfare society defined their loyalties in more narrow terms, and people tend to divide their identities among several collectives – in a system of organized individualism.

A similar development from more collective sports to individual ones is argued to be at hand also in Sweden by some observers (see, e.g., Åhrné Roman and Franzén, 1996), basically along the same line of reasoning as is found in Engberg (1986). However, an interesting counter-trend is also noted, where an exceptionally strong growth in a collective sport like, for example, Swedish floor ball seems to complicate the picture (Åhrné Roman and Franzén, pp. 287-288).

## **Pressure from new and changing organizations**

Partly as a result of the new or changing demands on nonprofit organizations, and partly as a result of the changing demands on voluntary arrangements from the welfare state, as well as from individual citizens as described above, a number of indirect changes are occurring also *within* the nonprofit sector. These changes can be seen in two types of processes. The first is expanding or shifting activities within existing organizations. The other change is an influx of completely new organizations. These changes are taking place in traditional service fields, like primary education and social services, core domains of the welfare state, but there is also a strong drive or thrust from new organizations in clearly voice-dominated fields.

The changes within service provision are most visible in areas considered to lie in the outskirts of the welfare state's domains, like work with marginal groups such as care or rehabilitation of drug addicts, shelters for homeless, or in fields recently added to the core domains, like daycare services. But they can also be seen in the well-established 'welfare state fields' of primary compulsory education. The more voice-focused organizations entering the Swedish arena are primarily active in fields often connected to the 'new social movements', for example, human rights or environmental issues.

### **New services within existing organizations**

A natural adaption from existing organizations as a result of the changes described above is the involvement in new service provision, or at least expanding the provision of existing services. This has also happened in a number of other Swedish organizations, for example, traditional charities

like the Swedish Red Cross and the City Mission in Stockholm, as well as within the sports movement where examples of more expanded responsibilities when it comes to the management and running of various sports facilities can be found. Another effect is that traditional PMOs tend to more clearly divisionalize different activities. A salient example of this is the Association for Promotion of Outdoor Life (*Friluftsförbundet*) in which a number of new 'divisions' have been created into which earlier activities have been divided and placed, the objective being that, in this way, the full range of operations be easier to grasp and manage.

It is, however, not only an expansion of services within the existing organizations that we can expect to occur, we can also foresee structural changes to some of the organizations themselves. This has already happened in some cases. To be managed and run more smoothly as regular service operations, a number of well-defined operations have been severed from an existing established organization in the form of a foundation. This has been done in an effort to expand the degree of freedom within these operations, and to make them more easily accountable to external resource providers, e.g., municipalities.

### **Production of services by new organizations**

The most important change in the nonprofit sector as a whole is probably the influx of totally new organizations engaged in direct service production. A large group of these new organizations are cooperatives, often called neo-cooperatives (*nykooperationen*). The services organized by these small-scale cooperatives normally lie within the responsibility of the welfare state, such as assistance for the handicapped, elderly, or childcare, though some are also engaged in the rehabilitation of former drug addicts. Most numerous are the parent cooperative daycare centers started since the end of the 1970s and found all across the country (Pestoff, 1994). This group of new cooperatives within social welfare provision are a dynamic force in the Swedish nonprofit sector as well as in the cooperative world. With few exceptions, these new cooperatives have a clearly pragmatic orientation, and completely lack a movement profile (Stryjan, 1994).

Another important group of new organizations are the nonprofit free schools started mainly during the 1990s, in response to both a growing demand among the population and a clear shift in public policy towards privately provided primary and secondary education during a period of conservative/liberal government. Both the new childcare centers and the

recently established private schools are mostly "founded within the last twenty years directly in response to the availability of government funds .... [and] usually derive most of their revenues from government", and thus fall under the second type of service-delivering nonprofit agencies as identified by Lipsky and Smith (1989-90, pp. 627-628).

The other two types of nonprofit service providers, as identified by these authors, are the 'traditional social service agencies' started a long time ago and often more prestigious, and the agency founded in response to unmet community or neighborhood needs, e.g., organizations for homeless people, shelters for battered women, or hospices for AIDS victims (*ibid.*). Both types are often financially more independent of government sources since the older establishments have often created base of resources other than public grants or contracts, and the neighborhood agencies draw their resources mainly from the local community. Thus, the new service providers found in the Swedish nonprofit sector are more vulnerable and easily affected by changes in government policy, as also noted by Stryjan and Wijkström (1996).

### **New voice providers**

Traditional PMOs with their feet firmly rooted in the Swedish popular movement tradition are today often subject to criticism for their formalized and centralized structures as well as for being overly integrated within established power structures. It is sometimes argued that many of the traditional PMOs tend to identify themselves with 'what they have been doing earlier' and seem to be incapable of redefining their role in society in accordance with new, and maybe more pressing needs and grievances. As a result, new voice or advocacy organizations have found fertile soil in Sweden.

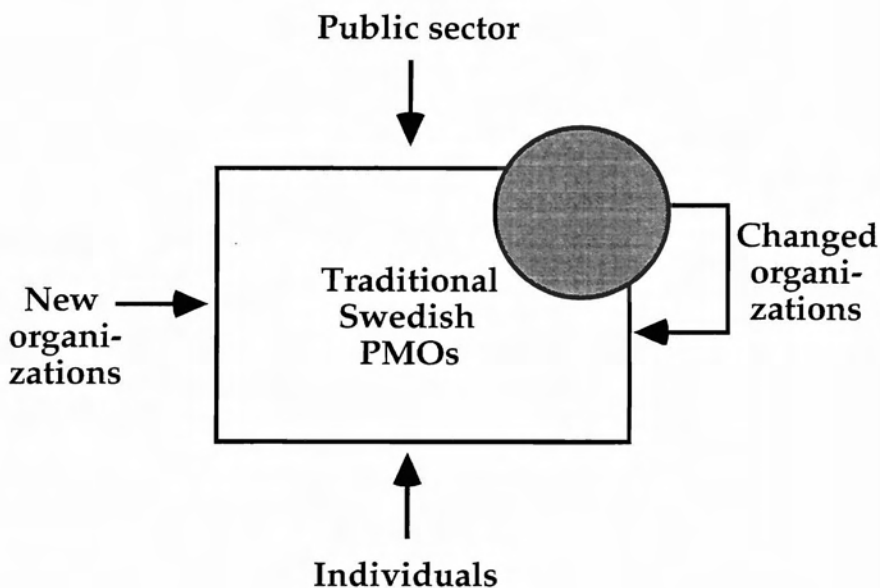
These organizations are mainly found within the 'new social movements' (NSMs) and are active in fields such as environment, peace, and women's liberation, often through acts of civil disobedience. In their ideologies, they stress values such as equal rights, ecology and solidarity, and tend to have more in common with their international counterparts than with the older and established Swedish popular movements. The formation of these new organizations may, in part, even be seen as a critique of the institutionalization and hegemony of the older popular movements in Sweden (Thörn 1991, 1996). The small activist groups in the young Plowshare movement and Greenpeace Sweden can be taken as examples (Thelander, 1996). More will be said on this topic in the second part of this essay.

As noted earlier, most neo-cooperative organizations are highly pragmatic service providers. However, within the field of drug policy an interesting new example can be found where a small number of originally voice-providing organizations have entered a policy field earlier more or less monopolized by the Swedish temperance movement. In these new organizations, it seems as if they have been able to combine undertakings on the individual level, becoming 'clean', with activities aimed at larger and more profound societal change. Through the formation of 'Rainbow Sweden', two Swedish organizations run by, for and with people who have decided to get rid of their drug dependency, have taken a strong ideological position, with the aim of achieving institutional policy changes at the European level (Hansson and Wijkström, 1997).

### **A summary and a model**

To conclude and summarize the first part of the text, I provide a tentative model to graphically illustrate the different forms of pressure the traditional Swedish PMOs are under. In the first part of the essay, it has been argued that the traditional PMOs are caught between two external changes, taking place *outside* the sector's boundaries but affecting the PMOs directly. The first is the changing view on the role of nonprofits and cooperatives in society, and the following shifts in economic support and transfer of resources from the government sector. The second pressure comes from individuals, e.g., the members now better educated and jealously guarding their own private time better, at the same time as being equipped with what seems to be a set of partly different values than earlier generations.

Figure 1. Four types of pressure on the Swedish PMOs.



These two general changes not only affect the PMOs directly, they also have an indirect influence. While encouraging a return to and expansion of earlier service-producing nonprofits within the human services (education, social services), as well as promoting an influx of completely new nonprofit and neo-cooperative service-producers, the welfare state is expanding the room, considerably, for nonprofit or voluntary activities within its core domains. Secondly, there is pressure coming from new and seemingly more aggressive, tighter focused and action-oriented, NSM organizations *within* the sector. The NSMOs have emerged in response to shifting values and norms within the population, mainly concerning issues of environment, peace and civil rights.

## Analysis and discussion

In this second part of the essay, three separate and more theoretical issues will be addressed. The first is a discussion of different reasons for the current position of the traditional Swedish PMOs. The second topic deals with the possible effects of these changing conditions on the popular movement organizations. In the third sub-section, the changes affecting the PMOs are taken and analyzed in a larger societal context in which they

may take on a new and different meaning. First, however, a short commentary on the importance of perspective.

The expansion of the Swedish welfare state was, to a high degree, halted during the 1980s (see, e.g., Ahrne, Roman and Franzén, 1996). Some observers even argue that it has been contracting. As an effect of this broken expansion, Swedish nonprofit or voluntary organizations are experiencing a changing attitude towards their role in society and a different financial situation in their relations with the public sector. One way of interpreting the new situation is to say that it creates new or expanded opportunities for nonprofit or voluntary organizations to take an active part in the core domains of the welfare state. Or as expressed in Stryjan and Wijkström (1996, p. 13):

The ongoing concentration of the [Swedish] public sector has opened the field of welfare services to entry of new service providers. New welfare cooperatives are clearly Swedish cooperative's most dynamic sector, which has grown dramatically in the last decade ...

An alternative interpretation is that the welfare state is retreating, or at least hesitating, and thereby encouraging (or forcing) different forms of (private) nonprofit or voluntary solutions to maintain or expand their part of welfare services in society. The perspective – opportunity or coercion – chosen by the observer depends in part on ideological or political preference and in part on the particular empirical evidence they base their conclusions.

There is no clearcut border between the two major external processes of change described earlier (a hesitant or contracting welfare state and better educated and choice-conscious citizens) in terms of the effects they have. The processes often affect the same organizational field simultaneously and interact with each other. Examples of this are found in daycare and primary education. In some cases, municipalities in poorer and less populated regions are obviously on the retreat, forcing parents to arrange their own child care solutions. In other cases, however, in densely populated and well-served areas, parents are starting up their own cooperative daycare centers or primary schools out of a desire to provide different pedagogic or religious alternatives. Nonetheless, despite the framework one chooses, it is clear that the conditions for organizations in the Swedish nonprofit or voluntary sector are changing, and the role and mission of management and leadership within the PMOs are affected.

## Why?

Why are the traditional Swedish popular movements experiencing the problems presented here? Why do the PMOs not produce welfare services, as demanded by the state and groups of citizens? Why are they unable to meet the shift in values and norms in society that are being picked up and elaborated by 'the new social movements'?

### **The crisis of the welfare state**

The Swedish welfare state is a relatively young phenomenon and the early traditional popular movements grew up alongside its burgeoning universal social systems. The movements and the state were part of the same modernistic/industrial project and shaped each other. Managers and leaders of the PMOs in the early stages often shifted between positions in the nonprofit sector and assignments in the public sector, thus bridging the gap between the two further (e.g., Ambjörnsson, 1991).

The activities and policies of the movement organizations built on the assumption of an extensive, strong and growing welfare state, while the welfare state in its development continuously sought the advice of the popular movements on numerous matters. They would never have taken the shape they have today without each other's influence. Thus, the PMOs and the welfare state were earlier on strongly linked to each other (cf. the labor movement and government power). When shifting conditions affect one, the other will also be affected. In a sense, the crisis of the welfare state could also be said to be the crisis of the traditional popular movements, and vice versa. The earlier strong support of the traditional PMOs within a strong Swedish welfare state seems to be diminishing in line with the increasing problems experienced by a troubled welfare state.

The expectations or demands of new or an expanded volume of services being provided by nonprofit or voluntary organizations in Sweden meet two obstacles with respect to traditional PMOs. The first is that, historically, most PMOs have never been involved in regular provision of services. They are not constructed to or aimed at delivering traditional welfare services. The focus of these organizations has been to provide 'voice' in different issues, in the form of different actions carried out by a large number of volunteers or active members firmly based in democratic principles and consensus agreements. Welfare service production in the fields of social services and compulsory education, on the other hand, often requires employed professionals and can not wait for part-time



volunteers to come around or until every member of an organization has had his or her say in a democratic fashion and come to some agreement.

The other obstacle stems from the ideology of some of the PMOs. The relative distribution of resources flowing from government (local or central) seems now to be shifting in favour of pure service providers. However, for some of the traditional PMOs, for example organizations for the handicapped, a strong belief that the welfare state should shoulder certain responsibilities is central. The idea of such institutions providing these services contradicts their ideology in which the welfare state alone is supposed to cater to, as well as finance, the production of general and universal welfare services like health care, social services and compulsory education. In this way, an egalitarian and just system evolves, and no one need feel humiliating gratitude towards people involved in charitable or philanthropic missions. In the view of these organizations, it would be impossible for them to themselves provide these basic services. It would be a betrayal to their members. To enter into service production now when the welfare state is retreating or at least hesitant when it comes to adding new responsibilities to its domains, would be to neglect the very basic reason for their existence.

## **Institutionalization and bureaucratization**

The early Swedish popular movements have no doubt been of significant importance for the development of Swedish society, the least through extensive organizational and democratic training of large parts of the Swedish population over a number of decades. The PMOs still enjoy strong institutional support and are seen as important and respected actors in society. However, the traditional popular movements and their organizations have today undergone extensive processes of (external) institutionalization, (internal) bureaucratization and professionalization.

Through these processes, many PMOs have come to be highly integrated with established society and its power structures and are now more or less viewed as part and parcel of that establishment. Being somewhat critical, a number of observers state that the concept of *folkrörelse* has come to be synonymous with professional organizations with a relatively low share of active unremunerated participation from the population and a high degree of integration with state and municipal structures (Antman, 1993; Blomdahl, 1990; Johansson, 1980; SOU 1987:33; Thörn, 1996). The earlier Swedish popular movements are thus still powerful actors, but can, in a sense, be said to be house-broken or domesticated. The Swedish situation

is in this respect similar to the Dutch case as described by Lengkeek (1993, p. 21):

In order to create a permanent connection for negotiation, interest groups are incorporated into the process of formulating government policy. On the one hand, interest groups get direct influence on policy; on the other, in exchange for this influence, they accept the government's objectives and try to convince the grass roots to join them. In other words this exchange pacifies or disciplines the grass roots.

An interesting distinction in the social movement literature is that made between consensus and conflict movements. A consensus movement has "broad institutional support for its goals, attitudinal support from the overwhelming majority of the population, and little organized, sustained opposition" (Schwartz and Paul, 1992, p. 207), while conflict movements "are typically supported by minorities or slim majorities of populations and confront fundamental, organized opposition in attempting to bring about social change" (McCarthy and Wolfson, 1992, p. 273). Though earlier, perhaps more conflict-oriented Swedish movements, e.g., the labor movement, are no doubt still important socio-political actors in a national context, some of these movements bear a clear resemblance to consensus movements. Lofland (1989) characterizes consensus movements as 'timid rebellions' or 'derailed dissents', which also seems to hold true for the Swedish situation.

Not only have the PMOs themselves become an institutionalized part of society, through their strong influence in national politics and extensive representation in policy-making instances (see Boli, 1991, 1992), they have also been successful, for better or worse, in the institutionalization of general values, organizational structures and procedural processes associated with the traditional Swedish popular movements. '*Folkrörelse* character' has in fact come to be one of the most important criterion for a nonprofit or voluntary organization to receive governmental support in Sweden. In this way, the PMOs tend to function as a gate-keeper or filter for new types of organizations and activities. If a new organization does not fit the prevailing understanding of how voluntary or nonprofit organizations in Sweden *ought* to behave, look like, or in which types of activity it *should* engage, it will probably run into problems when trying to establish good relations with the authorities and receive financial support.

The Swedish PMOs are relatively favoured when it comes to tax-exemptions and opportunities to draw municipal subsidies or support from the citizenry. This favourable standing also leads to other

organizations, outside the traditional popular movements, striving to be included under this umbrella concept. To receive support from the surrounding environment, economic as well as vocal, an organization must copy criteria from the earlier organizations, such as federative structure, openness and a high degree of formal internal democracy. Thus, strong elements of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) can be traced. Or as Tarrow (1992, p. 197) writes on social movements:

Over time, just as repertoires of action and forms of organizations are institutionalized, a given collective action frame becomes part of the political culture – which is to say, part of the reservoir of symbols from which future movement entrepreneurs can choose.

Even if one could argue, in line with Freeman (1982, p. 14), "that older, larger organizations reach a point where they dominate their environments rather than adjust to them", another argument suggests that, through this process, the PMOs also became too integrated with power structures of the establishment and seem to be unable to take the next step. Not only other, new organizations are affected by the strong institutional support for their basic values and norms, it also seems to strike back at the PMOs themselves. In DiMaggio's and Powell's (1983, p. 148) words:

Organizations may change their goals or develop new practices, and new organizations enter the field. But, in the long run, organizational actors making rational decisions construct around themselves an environment that constrains their ability to change further in later years.

## **New social movements – New values and norms**

The earlier Swedish popular movements constituted an effective response to growing human needs and grievances, often argued to be resulting from the industrial expansion. PMOs were part in a process of establishing and institutionalizing an extensive system of universal legal and economical rights. This was done in an intensive interplay with the Swedish welfare state; a project that now seems to be the platform for new social movements (NSMs).

The NSMs emerging in Sweden today are of course also found in interaction with the welfare state, though perhaps not in the almost symbiotic way of their predecessors. While these new organizations are also dependent upon the state, it is more the system of universal rights and protection guaranteed by the state than the actual cooperation and financial or institutional support that interest them.

Traditional Swedish PMOs are today seldom found in any real conflicts with the state. Some of the new 'voice' organizations, however, do from time to time, through civil disobedience or other undemocratic or extra-parliamentary actions, clash with the state (e.g., over the construction of highways or the production and export of weapons), as well as with large private corporations in the industrial and business sectors.

NSM organizations are not easily classified as popular movements in the traditional sense, nor are they viewed as PMOs, since they often fail to meet the necessary criteria. These younger organizations have had difficulty establishing their identities in Sweden, whereas the old working class movements continue to exercise a stronghold on political and social life (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). Another, more positive, way of looking at the situation is that Swedish society is so open, that demands made by NSMs entering the scene, are quickly accepted and even adopted by the political establishment, leaving no actual space or need for 'new movements'. An example of this is the established Swedish environmental movement, which is thoroughly integrated as an official point of reference within governmental structures (Thörn, 1996).

It can be argued that these NSM organizations have been formed, at least in part, as a critique of the institutionalization of the older popular movements (Thörn, 1991). It has been argued that young people in Sweden today are turning away from traditional channels of political participation. For example, the membership figures for the political parties' youth organizations have shrunk from 220,000 members in 1972 to 50,000 members in 1995 (Rothstein, 1998, p. 9). Instead, young people of today tend to turn towards temporary and single-issue organizations. As Offe (1985, p. 820) puts it, they try to seek out new avenues for influence:

[T]he politics of new social movements [...] seeks to politicize the institutions of civil society in ways that are not constrained by the channels of representative-bureaucratic political institutions, and thereby to *reconstitute* a civil society that is no longer dependent upon ever more regulation, control, and intervention.

As mentioned before, the novelty of the 'new social movements' is debated. This new social organizational category is still seeking and re-defining its borders. Melucci (1988) argues that actions of contemporary movements are more expressive than instrumental (see also Thörn, 1997, p. 168, on the importance of the manifest). The movements function as symbolic 'messages' or 'signs' rather than 'actors' or 'characters' that themselves produce change (Melucci, 1988, pp. 38-80). Often, it is also argued that the logic of these new movements deviates from the

institutionalized conflict over material reproduction and distribution that characterized earlier movements.

According to Habermas (1987), new conflicts have developed in the domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. Conflicts that can not be solved by a redistribution of compensations from the welfare state. In Habermas' words (ibid., p. 392), "the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life", or, as Melucci puts it: "The freedom to *have* ... has been replaced by the freedom to *be*" (1989, pp. 177-178, italics added). Also crucial in the current understanding of many of the NSMs is the role and importance of a strong and growing individualism noted by for example Johnston, Laraña and Gusfield (1994, p. 11):

The issues that NSM [New Social Movement] groups advocate reflect the expanded horizons of personal choice and point out cracks in the system, often in the form of newly defined global concerns. Individuals seek out new collectives and produce 'new social spaces' where novel lifestyles and social identities can be experienced and defined.

### **Bottles too old — or wine too new?**

Traditional Swedish PMOs have been working for and safeguarding an extensive system of universal legal and financial rights, that has now become highly institutionalized within the welfare state. Now, however, some of these PMOs seem to be experiencing a less extensive citizen support and public influence. The explanation for this in the earlier section was that new demands and needs, fundamentally different from earlier ones, are better answered by new types of organizations and activities. But are these demands and needs really new? Are the new demands of the welfare state really impossible to cater to, and the shifting needs from the citizens impossible to satisfy or solve by the organizational form and activities established by earlier PMOs?

Or have the processes described earlier – institutionalization, bureaucratization, and professionalization – resulted in many of the traditional PMOs having changed dramatically and become too rigid? It could be argued that the traditional PMOs, under the influence of these processes, have strayed too far from the earlier direct influence on their members and lost their sensitivity, no longer being able to adapt to the growing or shifting needs and demands of existing – as well as potential – members. It could even be argued that some PMOs have actually lost contact with their core missions. Instead, they are paralyzed by constraints of earlier resource structures or stuck with maintaining operations developed to

support their mission in a previous period, unable to reconsider their situation and seek new resources and test new activities.

In a metaphorical way it could be asked if the wine represented by shifting demands and values is too new and different to be poured into the existing bottles as represented by the traditional PMO's. Or has instead the wine remained the same but the bottles become too old to contain it? Depending on how these questions are answered, the resulting implications for the management of the organizations will be fundamentally different.

## **What are the effects on the PMOs?**

Three main reasons for the problems facing the Swedish PMOs are given in the previous section: their own institutionalization; a new role and position for the welfare state and shifting values and norms among the population. This section presents four effects on the traditional PMOs originating either directly from the changing conditions in their environment or from other nonprofit or voluntary organizations' response to these changes. The effects are of direct importance for the future management of nonprofit or voluntary organizations in Sweden, and especially for the leaders and managers of the PMOs.

### **Loss of members and political influence**

What has happened is that an increasing number of new organizations have entered the Swedish scene and disrupted the earlier 'harmony'. These new organizations usually have a narrower focus, e.g., on one or two of the dimensions of membership introduced earlier, and instead of viewing the member as the whole, merely 'slice off' the specific dimensions of the membership that they are interested in. Greenpeace Sweden, e.g., is not really interested in volunteer time or an active participation of its members in the management and governance of the organization. It has recently also been argued that the traditional Swedish political parties have changed character. According to Gilljam and Möller (1996), they have gone from traditional PMOs to *voter* parties. Less volunteer time and increased professional staff hours have been invested in the work of the parties. Thus, the voter dimension of party membership has been emphasized, while the volunteer dimension has lost considerable importance. Another practice that can be noted in the Swedish sector is the new or hungry organizations that only go for the 'postal giro' dimension. 'Cheque book', 'Bumpersticker', 'paper' or

'support' membership are other expressions for this practice of members supporting an organization through money but with relatively little other contact between member and organization (Johnston, Larafña and Gusfield, 1994, p. 12). Left for the traditional PMOs to fight over, after such processes, is only that which remains of the members' membership 'skeleton' when the new, more aggressive organizations have had their picking.

If the intruding organizations are successful in this depends on how well they succeed in matching their needs to those of the individuals. This development has led to a somewhat fragmentized picture of membership for associations in Sweden. Many earlier established PMOs, in an aim to offer as 'complete' an organization as possible to their members, seem confused. From the PMO perspective, this process has sometimes been interpreted as the flight of (active) members from the established PMOs, and has sometimes been seen as growing disloyalty among the membership cadres of the traditional PMOs and their ideals.

Not only are a number of traditional PMOs witnessing a decreasing number of formal memberships, in addition to diminishing active participation by existing members, some have also lost a considerable amount of their earlier influence. A salient example of this, are the organizations of the Swedish temperance movement which, over this last century, have come to know dramatic shifts in their joint formal 'representation' in the Swedish Parliament (Lindblad and Lundkvist, 1996).

### **Shifting financial support and focus**

The movement 'from state subsidies to local government compensation' introduced earlier could mean extensive changes for the established PMOs. If these organizations wish to receive continued financial support from the public sector on the same level as earlier, they must be prepared to change their operations in order to meet the new demands from local government. Instead of receiving general subsidies for who they are and how many members they have, as they have to a large extent previously, PMOs will receive compensation for what they can explicitly show that they are contributing to the core domains of the public sector.

As shown in earlier work (Lundström and Wijkström, 1997), there is pressure on (or opportunity for) PMOs to take over activities previously managed by local government. This concerns both activities within the core domains of the welfare state, such as social services, and activities in

the field leisure and recreation. This development appears to have increased in over the past few years, and is likely to continue. It may also imply that, organizations in which the managers previously exerted great efforts to influence the allocation of funds from state authorities at the central national level, will now be forced to decentralize in order to 'follow the money and power' down to local government level. And it will be difficult to stand outside of this new game. In referring to the situation in the UK, Deakin (1996, pp. 125-126) expresses this as follows:

Although some large voluntary organisations have declared their intention of standing aside, most simply have no choice but to accept that they will have to participate in the contract culture and learn how to survive there, in a rapidly changing environment.

The process 'from voice to service' means that the importance of the sector as a producer of voice, at least in relative terms, will probably be reduced. This will benefit different types of service providers. It is, however, not only *within* the PMOs that we can expect changes to occur, we can also foresee changes in the composition of the sector. This has already occurred with some service-producing operations, often in the form of foundations, which have been severed from established organizations in order to facilitate more regular, operative forms of management. An example of this is the Red Cross' Noah's Ark Foundation, an organization for HIV-infected persons and their families and friends. Another important effect of this change process on the management of traditional PMOs is the influx of and stiffened competition for resources, from a number of completely new service-providing organizations in the Swedish nonprofit sector, as discussed earlier.

## **Models and managers from business and industry**

In Sweden, there was earlier a flux of individuals between organizations in the nonprofit or voluntary sector and the public sector; people shifting institutional abode between management positions in the nonprofits and civil servant positions in the public sector (see, e.g., Ambjörnsson, 1991). This cross-over between these two sectors has also been noted in the UK, where the tradition has been for individuals from voluntary agencies to later take up positions as officers and members of local government (Deakin, 1996, p. 114).

Recent examples from both Europe and the US, however, today speak instead of an flux of models, methods and practices – as well as individuals on management and board level – between the private for-profit



sector and organizations in the nonprofit sector (see, e.g., Deakin, 1996; Hall, 1990; Lengkeek, 1993; Lewis, 1996). In the words of Robson, Locke and Dawson (1997, p. 2), reflecting upon the UK scene:

There is an influx of commercial management thinking into the voluntary sector, a part of which has been growing use of the 'close to the customer' adage.

In the words of one of the American observers, the organizations have become "more business-like, seeking out professionally trained managers, and retooling veteran executives with expertise in strategic planning, market research, cost-benefit analysis, sophisticated financial information systems, and entrepreneurial approaches to raising revenue" (Hall, 1990, p. 155).

We can observe these more pronounced influences from business and industry on the rest of society also in Sweden. The trend has been obvious in the public sector, where municipalities as well as county councils during the 1990s have been experimenting with new solutions patterned on thinking and models found in the business sphere (e.g., Jacobsson, 1994). A similar process can be noted among the established cooperative organizations in Sweden. Large consumer cooperatives tend to have problems to handle the membership dimension in parallel with an expanded business activity. Many choose the business logic, often inspired by managers with a basic business rationale (e.g., Wijkström, 1994).

This trend now seem to have come to the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organizations like the Swedish Red Cross, *Nationalföreningen för Trafiksäkerhetens Främjande* (NTF), and the City Mission in Stockholm, are today more frequent buyers of management education or training from institutions traditionally involved in education and management training in business or industry, than before. Some of them, like NTF, the Swedish Scout Federation (*Svenska Scoutförbundet*) and the Association for Promotion of Outdoor Life (*Friluftsförbundet*), have employed CEOs with earlier management careers and experience in for-profit enterprises. The Salvation Army in Sweden has even formed a joint-stock company (*aktiebolag*) in which they have placed the ownership of their six City Hotels, under the management of a professional chief executive.

One interesting line of thought is that these business influences on the nonprofits come from two different sources. One track is the obvious from the for-profit sector itself, but the other is found in the influences from the *public* sector on the nonprofit sector. The very same thinking

and methods assimilated by the municipalities, county councils and other public agencies in an earlier phase are today echoed in their relations with voluntary associations and other nonprofits. Lewis (1996), e.g., observes, based on the recent shift from government grants to government contracts for voluntary agencies in the UK, that: "running a contract requires both new and more skills than managing a grant" (ibid., p. 105), and a Dutch observer states that, from government, "pressure is exercised on the [sports] clubs to become more 'professional'. Being a professional institution is, in practice, becoming increasingly a condition for admission into decision-making circles" (Lengkeek, 1993, pp. 22-23).

In the light of these and similar processes – and in manners that urge caution – some observers argue that "[f]undamental differences with the for-profit sector [...] make it unwise for nonprofit leaders to adopt business organizations' externally focused approach to strategic change" (Salipante and Golden-Biddle, 1995, p. 3). Others have found that differences between managerial cultures due to the professionalization of nonprofit management have "brought conflict severe enough to raise questions about the value of the 'new' business voluntarism and the threat it poses to the integrity of nonprofit enterprises" (Hall, 1990, p. 153). Despite these warnings, the recent fascination of the management of Swedish voluntary or nonprofit organizations with business people and professional practices seems to be a trend that has come to stay.

## Foundations

In Sweden, the foundation is better suited for traditional service production than the nonprofit (*ideell*) association. If nonprofits are to increase their service-production, many will probably take the legal form of an foundations. Existing organizations may use foundations to separate their member or voice-producing activities from regular provision of services. To clearly specify what an organization does in the interest of public good (versus what it does in the interest of its members), foundations could be used, especially in times of shrinking public economic support.

During the 1980s, there was an increase in the number of foundations working with in-patient treatment of alcohol and drug abusers. Many free schools established in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s also chose the form of the foundation. This leads us to expect an increased number of young foundations, which is exactly what we find. While nonprofit associations show a more modest development in the last ten

years, the net growth of foundations has accelerated (Lundström and Wijkström, 1997, p. 156).

## **Contracting out, consumerism and colonization**

In the previous sections, a number of reasons why the traditional Swedish PMOs have been experiencing difficulties for a number of decades are presented. In addition, some of the most important effects on the organizations, from a management perspective, have been outlined. On another level, however, other more subtle yet, I would argue, more important changes may be taking place. These changes concern the overall role of this type of organization in society, as well as the basic division of labor between different sectors in society. These profound changes do not only call for the attention of the managers but also for the attention of the leaders of nonprofit or voluntary organizations, as well as other leaders in the community.

One of the key features of the Swedish 'social-democratic' welfare state (and for the nonprofit or voluntary organizations delivering services within this system), in comparison to many of the Anglo-Saxon countries has been the high degree of de-commodification of human services like health care, education and social services, (Esping-Andersen, 1990). "De-commodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market" (ibid., pp. 21-22).

Also activities typically found in the Swedish nonprofit sector organized in a voluntary fashion, like recreation and leisure or interest protection in the labor market, are normally highly de-commodified and un-commercialized. Membership or participation fees are usually not charged according to the frequency in which members take part in the activities. Organizational membership or affiliation is seen more as a 'package deal' where you are free to pick activities or dimensions that appeal to you, e.g., socializing events, sports activities, reading the organization's journal or taking part in fund-raising campaigns, or free to totally neglect the activities of the organization, without no change to the membership fee or dues demanded.

## **Contracting out**

An important and growing debate in this field concerns the advantages and dangers related to the practice of 'contracting-out' services, within the core domains of the welfare state, to nonprofit, voluntary or cooperative operators. This is an avenue taken by a number of countries, most prominently the US and the UK. But also a country like Sweden has examples of contracting-out to be found in the relations between the state and the nonprofit sector, mainly in the fields of sports and social services. However, this is a relatively new practice for most Swedish nonprofit organizations and public authorities and not especially extensive, which means that both institutions have little experience in the field.

In a mostly Anglo-Saxon debate, some important shortcomings of the system have been identified (see, e.g., Lewis, 1996; Lipsky and Smith, 1989, 1989-90; Salamon, 1987, 1990; Smith and Lipsky, 1993), but more positive observers can also be noted (e.g., Ferris, 1993). One of the main issues in the debate has been the autonomy of the nonprofit organization in relation to government, though discussions on bureaucratization and professionalization processes in the voluntary organizations are also included. The discussion focuses on the degree of state control over contracted activities as such, or over the organization as a whole. This focus follows from the fact that a considerable share of the organizations' resources now comes from government, in the form of a contractual relationship. In a sense, true authority involves control over all practical arrangements and decisions as well as the right to decide who is going to be employed regardless of who pays the salary. The rules of the game seem not always to have been crystal clear.

## **Consumerism**

Another, and possibly for the Swedish organizations and their management more relevant, debate has arisen over the same basic process of change, but in a more European-based tradition, focusing on how the relations to the individual, as citizen or member have been affected. One of the possible effects of changing relations between nonprofit or voluntary organizations and both the welfare state and individuals as discussed earlier, is a more pronounced 'consumerism' within the nonprofit sector. The buyer-seller relation can be either direct, as when a person pays to attend a fitness class, or more indirect, executed through third-party solutions financed and carried out through a system

of state or municipal service vouchers, where the reciever is more or less passive.

A more pronounced drive for 'marketization', where nonprofit or voluntary organizations are found in more market- or business-like set-ups than earlier, has been observed in several instances in the fields of leisure, recreation and tourism in particular (see, e.g., Coalter, 1990; Lengkeek, 1993; Wearing and Wearing, 1992), but also in the provision of regular welfare services, an area of more central importance to the welfare state (Deakin, 1996). In a study on the impact on UK voluntary organizations resulting from changes aimed at greater user involvement, Robson, Locke and Dawson (1995, p. 1) write:

The idea of being a customer is now applied to nearly all types of service regardless of the nature of the service, the sector in which it is provided, and whether or not the customer is also the purchaser.

An earlier situation, in which the individual was seen more in terms of an (at least potentially) active and empowered ownership situation through his or her membership, may instead give way to more passive relationships, such as those traditionally found between customers and service providers. Concern has been expressed over the consequences this might have on the positive aspects of membership participation normally associated with the voluntary sector. Positive and important features like the identity formation of individuals, the potential for empowerment of disadvantaged groups, and the benefits of skills and knowledge acquired through active and unremunerated participation of members in the management and operations of a nonprofit or voluntary organization.

Even though not directly related to theories of the nonprofit or voluntary sector, this debate is found in literature on recreation and leisure, one of the most important and significant fields of the Swedish nonprofit sector. The examples found in this literature come from different parts of the industrialized world, but have a number of features in common. Drawing on experience from the UK, an increased drive for professionalization in combination with a drift towards a more 'managerialist' view among public servants is noted in the field of leisure. Coalter (1990, p. 109) argues that a perspective "concerned more with economic efficiency than effectiveness and even less with social equity" has been introduced at the risk of turning citizens into consumers.

In the beginning of the 1990s, a tendency within Swedish municipalities towards treating the citizen as a customer was noted, even though activities within the field of culture and recreation (one of the most

prominent fields of the Swedish nonprofit sector, see Lundström and Wijkström, 1995, 1997) have been subject to such a development only to a limited degree (Forsell, 1994, pp. 35-36).

One way to achieve this change of focus – from the perspective of public to business management – is to move (contract out) tasks earlier performed by the public sector to the market, as discussed earlier. Another way is through internal changes in the public sector: "Rather than move public services into the market place this [model] seeks to import market approaches and techniques into the public sector" (Coalter, 1990, p. 112). A similar drive to include the rationale and techniques of private entrepreneurs in the provision of public good is found in the case of the Netherlands (Lengkeek, 1993). Deakin (1996) writes that a new approach based on 'supermarket values', like customer preferences and satisfaction, "was imported into government by the supermarket barons, Lord Rayner and Griffiths", thus creating the platform for Thatcher to later promote quasi-markets suitable for a British 'mixed economy of care' (ibid., pp. 114-117).

Through such processes of change, an increased emphasis is placed on 'rational' and 'efficient' management principles which, in the view of these authors, are instrumental in a shift in the perception of the role of the individual from that of citizen to that of consumer. And this 'silent revolution' seems to have taken place with almost no preceeding fundamental or ideological discussion on the social significance of these changes or their desirability. In an Australian analysis, concern is expressed that the current processes of commodification of leisure activities and experiences not only threaten, to ruin the basic idea behind the citizenship, but also to reduce the inherent positive capacity of individual identity formation that leisure is believed to have (Wearing and Wearing, 1992).

Another issue, somewhat related to the tension between democracy and consumerism, concerns the often proclaimed importance of the PMOs in making the Swedish democratic system through the education and inclusion of groups that would otherwise have been left out of the political debate more 'active' and 'balanced'. Is this still valid? Are the traditional PMOs still addressing pockets of excluded or less powerful groups in society? Or have their previously weak members and their brothers and sisters now become part of the new 'ruling classes'? Are they the organizations that organize and give voice to the least powerful groups in today's society? Immigrants and their children, the

unemployed and less educated, single mothers – who gives them an opportunity to make their voices heard, to take an active part in the social, economical and political powerplay in today's society?

## Colonization of the “lifeworld”

Using Habermas' idea of a 'colonization of the lifeworld', the non-American scholars cited above have in a way all expressed concern that, in fields like recreation, leisure and tourism, a growing use of models and methods that originate in business and industry, might seriously damage important dimensions of active citizen (or member) participation. In this undertaking, the researchers have been referring mostly to the changing relations between the public and for-profit sectors. Lengkeek (1993, pp. 20-21), referring to the Dutch case, expresses it like this:

The marketing and market-oriented approach of current recreation provision not only has a pragmatic instrumental character but in fact functions as an ideology. In other words, an approach is good if it is market oriented. This ideology is not only embraced by government functionaries and entrepreneurs, but also increasingly by social organizations, who in principle, as interested parties, should have a critical stance towards the power of the state and the market.

But my point is that the same argument can very well be put forth when discussing nonprofit sector and welfare state relations. Even if Langkeek is primarily concerned with public-business relations, it seems that this 'colonization process' has also carried over to the Dutch nonprofit or voluntary sector. He continues (*ibid.*, pp. 22-23):

In the process of the increased interweaving of government and private organizations, pressure is exercised on the [sports] clubs to become more 'professional'. Being a professional institution is, in practice, becoming increasingly a condition for admission into decision-making circles. To stay with Habermas's terminology, clubs systemize themselves within the framework of the corporate negotiating structure. In this way actions by club professionals tend to become distanced from the grass roots and so club organizations move into an area of tension between lifeworld orientation and systematization.

This discussion leads to the question of what the member really is: A passive client or customer who receives services from a service-providing nonprofit or voluntary organization? Or an active, participating owner of a similar organization? Are members merely users or buyers of services or do they govern and lead the organization through active board member representation and exercising volunteer management functions? The answers to these questions are empirical and depend on the specific type of service, organization and/or country in question. A different, and from an ideological perspective more interesting, question

is what the role of the member *should* be and why. Parallel to this debate, there has been a growing concern in recent political science debates that the role of the individual as a citizen is reduced to that of on a 'political market' a consumer of politics turned passive, instead of being an active participant in local or national political life. Deakin (1996, p. 127) concludes his findings from the UK stating that:

[T]he provisional conclusion might be that users have yet to secure much positive gain from the contract culture ... [as] users-as-customers ... but any benefits it might have had for users-as-citizens have not yet been realised.

## Good or bad?

Several of the worries described in earlier sections – professionalization', 'managerialism', 'consumerism', 'commodification', etc. – could all be placed in a neo-marxist academic/political discourse. They could be understood as elements in an attempt to label and understand the shortcomings of the strong neo-liberal surge for market or business solutions within the welfare state, as well as within the nonprofit or voluntary sector. This is a process that has swept over most of the western industrialized world in the last couple of decades. But is important to note that this is only one side of the coin.

But, is this tendency to 'consumerize' some of the relationships in the Swedish nonprofit sector and its organizations really yet another extension and example of, in Habermas' words, 'a colonization of the lifeworld by the system world'? Or could it, instead, be interpreted as a process by which members (and society at large) will eventually get more out of the resources and efforts they put into nonprofit organizations? Will these organizations, in their strive and mission to achieve a number of altruistic aims and good deeds for society and mankind, benefit from a more 'efficient' management and 'effective' methods? Or, as expressed in another way by Robson, Locke and Dawson 1997, p. 1):

Service users are increasingly perceived as consumers or citizens with certain rights or entitlements as a result. This represents a cultural shift away from a view among trustees, managers and practitioners of service users as passive recipients of their philanthropy or 'good works'. The reasons for this change of perception are, first, the growing civil rights movements organised primarily by disabled people and people with mental health problems. And, second, the rising popularity of individual consumerism through the 1980s and 1990s.

Many Swedish organizations today seem to be more or less aware of the underlying tension – struggling with the question of whether it has to be a trade-off. A trade-off between on the one hand, the demand of member influence and participation in long-term strategic leadership, as well as



the day-to-day management of specific operations, and, on the other, an efficient and cost-effective process by which the purpose of the organization is operationalized in the best possible way.

One wonders what kind of leaders and managers are needed to guide the Swedish popular movement organizations through these profound changes into the next millennium.

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# Outlaw biking in alternative frames of interpretation<sup>20</sup>

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## Abstract

*Outlaw motorcycle clubs have elsewhere been used as an extreme case to test the borders and content of what is generally understood as civil society. Based on secondary empirical data sources, the conclusion was reached that outlaw clubs 'proper' are to be considered part of civil society.*

*The present essay is divided into two parts. Firstly, in the main part of the text, three frames of interpretation found in the literature on outlaw biking are refined and presented. The first frame is that of 'business' where the outlaw club is understood as a for-profit company. In the second frame – outlaw clubs as families – the clubs are understood as a response to social alianation in society. Finally, the outlaw world is understood as a tribal society where cardinal virtues such as love, courage and honesty are cherished. The shift of frames are used as an analytical tool in an attempt to understand dimensions and features of the empirical phenomenon 'outlaw motorcycle clubs' that do not present themselves as easily in one single frame. This first part of the essay is concluded with a section in which it is argued that the diversity among outlaw motorcycle clubs are neglected, and a typology of clubs is proposed.*

*In a second and more tentative part, three highly speculative sections is provided. The first addresses the images created in the first part from the perspective that commitment and different types of relations can be seen as responses to uncertainty. In the second section, a tentative model on how an outlaw club's impact on the level of social capital in society can be understood. At the end of the essay, a short list of the major sources on outlaw biking used will be found.*

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<sup>20</sup> At a seminar at the Stockholm School of Economics, March 24, 1998, a small number of friends and colleagues took their time to joyfully rip my paper to pieces. In April 2, 1998, at a seminar at the City University, Kurt Klaudi Klausen – with invaluable and creative critique – and a new group of people, gave my text a new treatment. The discussions at these two seminars gave me the energy necessary to take an extra step at a critical stage of my work. The help and support offered me by Joi Bay and the advice and forthcoming texts from Lars Lagergren have improved the work immensely. For all shortcomings of the text as they appear in this essay, however, I am fully and alone responsible.

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## Introduction

Elsewhere, I have argued that outlaw motorcycle clubs 'proper' are part of civil society, according to existing definitions (Wijkström, 1998). During this work it became obvious to me that the stereotypical understanding of outlaw biking clubs that at least I had had, was simplistic. The fact that this understanding focused only on limited aspects of the phenomenon, taken together with the more sweeping normative statements often also found, indicates that we need a deeper and more multi-dimensional understanding of this social phenomenon.

### Aim of the essay

The essay is divided into two main parts. The aim of the initial and major part is to refine and make explicit three different frames of interpretation of the phenomenon of outlaw biking. These frames are found in different texts and used by various observers for analysis. I am thus in fact working with pictures of the phenomenon created and used by other people. The different texts are used as statements of the authors' mental constructs or images of what outlaw biking is all about.

My main aim is to – condensed and inspired by the work of Morgan (1986) – lay bare and reproduce some of the already existing images pertaining to the population of outlaw motorcycle clubs. In this essay, I have deliberately chosen to present only three of a number of frames possible with the belief that these three images should be sufficient to illustrate my main point: that the analytical framework in which we choose to analyze the phenomenon of outlaw motorcycle biking, affect our understanding of this phenomenon.

The perspectives highlight several important aspects of the phenomenon, but also suppress other key features that might be visible from other angles. Based on these frames, a number of alternative understandings are made visible, in which this social phenomenon is understood *as if* it were something else. Although "organization theorists often [assume] that organizations are ultimately rational phenomena that must be understood with reference to their goals or objectives, this assumption often gets in the way of realistic analysis. If one truly wishes to understand an organization it is much wiser to start from the premise that organizations are complex, ambiguous, and paradoxical" (Morgan, 1986, p. 322). I share this view on organizations.

This view is also in accordance with my basic understanding – inspired by the writing of, for example, Sjöstrand (e.g., 1992, 1997) – that the construction of individuals as *homo complexicus* is more relevant in understanding the interaction between individuals' than the notion of *homo oeconomicus* (cf. classic economics). In this construct, it is understood that individual action to promote interest or cope with uncertainty is based on a calculative interaction rationale. In the *homo complexicus* construct, on the other hand, people could instead be regarded as 'multi-rational' actors, i.e., having more than one interaction rationale (Sjöstrand, 1997, p. 25).

Are outlaw motorcycle clubs, as has been argued earlier, civil society organizations? Or are they more similar to business corporations in the form of organized crime? Can they be meaningfully interpreted as substitute families, or even better, as tribes? The various frames used by other observers are at times overlapping, at times in conflict with each other. The purpose of this essay is not to choose or develop the best frame in which the study of the outlaw biking phenomenon should be conducted, but rather to present a number of – not exhaustive – alternative and/or complementary images of the phenomenon.

I believe that "the use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervade how we understand our world generally" and that "metaphor exerts a formative influence on science, on our language, and on how we think" (Morgan, 1986, pp. 12-13). To be able to read complex organizational phenomena, one must first be able to reframe, to shift focus (see also Asplund, 1970). In this essay, I will use images or metaphors as *ideal typical mental constructs*. An ideal type is not a perfect description of an empirical, social phenomenon, but rather an instrument for clarification. The ideal type does not describe the phenomenon but constitute a refined image of thought (see Sjöstrand, 1985, pp. 13-14, for a more extensive discussion).

Finally, mine is neither the mandate nor the wish to glorify or condemn any of the individuals or organizations discussed. My point of departure is that when neither our democratic governing principles and processes, our existing legislation with its repressive functions, nor our systems for reproduction of basic values and norms in society, seem to work as planned or intended, we must admit that our society has a problem. My belief is that, as a first step towards a remedy and to be able to understand this phenomenon we need good descriptions based on alternative approaches.

## Outlaw biking as business

Outlaw biking may seem as American as apple pie, but is today an international phenomenon. In the Nordic countries – mainly in Denmark, Norway and Sweden – several shoot-outs and attacks facilitating heavy weaponry among feuding outlaw clubs have been noted during the past few years. The clubs have attacked each other's clubhouses and a number of persons have been wounded or killed in what the media has described as 'outlaw wars' (e.g., Aftenbladet, 1996; Stensgard and Larsen, 1997; Persson, 1997). Some observers are worried that this Nordic outlaw conflict will spill over onto the European continent.

In Australia, two heavily armed outlaw biker gangs clashed in September 1984 in a violent battle over turf. The local Comancheros and the first Australian chapter of the US-based Bandidos got at each other's throats and seven people were killed (Harvey and Simpson, 1989). During the 1990s, a ferocious struggle between intruding Hells Angels and local clubs (e.g., the Rock Machine in Quebec) has been raging in Canada. Large amounts of drugs seem to be involved and several encounters have ended in the loss of lives (CISC, 1996, 1997).

It is often argued in law enforcement sources and by journalists that these acts of violence between the outlaw clubs are driven by a war over access to local drug markets. The outlaw gangs are described as well-organized 'enterprises in crime', often involved in large-scale manufacturing and distribution of illegal drugs, mob-like 'protection' and violent debt collection. Often, this type of analysis is found within the wider concept of 'organized criminality' (e.g., Abadinsky, 1994, or Kenney and Finckenaer, 1995).

A report by a presidential Commission on Organized Crime in the US (President's Commission, 1986, p. 6) states that the 'Big Four' outlaw federations – the Hells Angels, the Outlaws, the Bandidos and the Pagans – are not only trading but also producing illegal drugs:

While these gangs have traditionally been active in trafficking a wide variety of illicit drugs, they have developed the technology to manufacture methamphetamine and PCP, and have been a major force in the wholesale and resale distribution of these two drugs nationwide.

As another example, in the 1997 annual report on organized crime in Canada from the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC, 1997) this matter-of-fact statement is provided:

Drug trafficking is the most lucrative activity of outlaw motorcycle gangs. This is especially true of the Hells Angels who, with the support of their affiliated

clubs, have taken over the distribution and sale of drugs such as cocaine, cannabis, LSD and PCP. Furthermore, the Hells Angels are involved in the hydroponic cultivation of marihuana. They also have an increasing share in alcohol and tobacco smuggling.

A similar account is given in a Swedish journalistic police publication (Svensk polis, 1997, p. 8):

The list of other criminality associated with the criminal motorcycle gangs – on top of activities directly related to narcotics – is extensive. Not the least are reports on involvement in the sex industry or extortion of 'protection' money recurrent – in the end of January [1997] was, for example, a well-known 'porno king' in Stockholm hit – as well as involvement in smuggling of alcohol, car and motorcycle thefts, and armed robberies.

According to one Canadian journalist and author, some of the more entrepreneurial members of Hells Angels have been taught with the help and education of experienced chemists, how to set up full-scale drug factories of their own Lavigne (1996). According to this same source, these clandestine, at times mobile, drug labs churn out large amounts of 'crank' (methamphetamine) on the North American market to a market value of millions and millions of dollars (ibid).

According to some observers, this is a development that is supposed to have started some 30 years ago, albeit on a smaller scale. The Hells Angels are claimed to have always used illegal drugs themselves but, starting in the middle of the 1960s, a new generation of Angels seem also to have become more involved in the drug business, selling and handling large quantities of narcotics (Thompson, 1966, p. 221, see also the more general discussion found in Hopper and Moore, 1990).

The involvement in the violence and drug-related industries is often stated to be combined of outlaw clubs with sexual exploitation of ('their') women for business. This can take the form of white slavery, prostitution, top less or nude dancing and the running of brothels. According to some writers, this involvement in the sex industry represents an important (in some of its forms illegal) source of income for certain members and their clubs. Lavigne (1987, p. 118) claims that a "woman's main value for a Hell's Angel, aside from sexual gratification, is daily income – she must give all her money to her old man. Angels put their women to work in massage parlors, topless bars, cocktail lounges and strip clubs." For example, Hopper and Moore (1990, pp. 374-375), after a 17 year period of study of a number of US clubs, mainly in Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, and the Arkansas, state that:

Among most of the groups we studied, biker women were expected to be engaged in economic pursuits for their individual men and sometimes for the

entire club. Many of the old ladies and mamas were employed in nightclubs as topless and nude dancers. [...] A small number [...] also served as prostitutes. Not all of the money-making biker women we encountered were employed in such "sleazy" occupations. [...] One biker women [Karen] had a job in a bank. [...] Like the others employed in less prestigious labor, however, Karen turned her salary over to her old man on payday.

This is not a US only practice. Read, for example, this statement made by German authorities about the Hamburg Hells Angels Motor Cycle Club (HHAMCC), as cited in Lavigne (1996, pp. 56):

The leading full members of the association [HHAMCC] run several brothels in Hamburg and Zurich ... The German prostitutes working in Zurich are controlled by Swiss Hells Angels on behalf of the association.

It is further stated that some of the major clubs have started or acquired more normal, legal, businesses such as limousine companies, catering operations, bars and restaurants – to serve as respectable fronts where, e.g., illegal drug or sex-related revenues can be laundered (Kenney and Finckenauer, 1995, p. 293). In a similar vein, a description of the effects of the establishment of a Hells Angels' chapter is found in a US newspaper article (Brandel, 1996):

In Arizona, the influx of Hells Angels will first be evidenced by the potent methamphetamine flooding the street-drug market. According to another California source, the proceeds will go to front men who'll buy local real estate, bars, and restaurants. "They'll also buy motorcycle shops, engine shops, paint shops and tattoo shops. They buy the kind of places they use," he explains.

## **Outlaw franchising**

There is some evidence that a kind of 'franchise system' has developed in some of the major outlaw clubs. According to these sources, instead of running tightly controlled and centralized illegal or criminal operations of their own, the clubs allow a member or a group of members to engage in any profitable business to his or their liking. These enterprises are then 'taxed' by the mother club. This may be done either formally, through a certain percentage of the profit, or through more informal procedures, such as when members who are making money are expected to contribute to joint Defence Funds set up to take care of more unfortunate brothers in trouble with the law.

The logic behind this system would be that, through their membership in an outlaw club, individual members have (1) acquired a well-known and respected trademark in being allowed to wear the 'colors' of the club, a trademark that is invaluable to their business, and (2) access to a considerable strike force, in the form of other club members, to put behind any

operation in dealing with, for example, unwanted competition from other outlaw clubs.

According to Lavigne (1996), the Hells Angels of today has become too wealthy and too business minded to have any spare time for their motorcycles (see also Hopper and Moore, 1990, p. 382). Lavigne (1996, p 34) argues that any previous club solidarity have been sacrificed:

[T]he brotherhood that bound outlaw bikers began to unravel as the notion of equality fell by the wayside in the late 1970s. Some Hells Angels made big money in the drug business, and suddenly they had something to lose, something to protect. [...] When a member threatened their income, they beat or killed him. The Hells Angels Motorcycle Club was no longer an organization for social misfits. It became an enclave for some of the underworld's most cunning manufacturers and dealers.

A similar account is given by a US journalist. Brandel's (1996) account of what happened to former Hells Angels member Grondalski is illustrative of this perspective on the outlaw motorcycle club as a violent and well-organized crime organization:

Accounts of what he did vary – did he ask permission, or did he just [give] up and move his family farther north of San Francisco? The questions just doubleback on other questions, but apparently he knew too much, and maybe the Angels figured his 5-year-old daughter would remember the faces of the men who forced their way in because Grondalski's entire family was shot execution-style before their house was set ablaze.

## **Alienation and the family metaphor**

It is sometimes argued that a common denominator among outlaw gangs is that a substantial segment of the membership is often made up of, if not outcasts, at least marginalized citizens. The organizations seem to draw their members mainly from some of the least advantaged, lowest educated and most vulnerable groups. New recruits are found in the outskirts of modern society. It is argued that these individuals experience a sense of being cut off or left out of whatever society they were meant to be part of. It is argued that this is a result of the fast-paced, highly technical and skill-demanding development in modern society. Sociologists call it alienation or anomie.

The predominating focus on occupation and the individual's marginalized role in the production process in contemporary society have early been identified by some observers as one explanation for the alienation and sense of lacking identity found in society today. For example Moorehouse (1983, p. 420) is critical to the reduction of life to labor and being to occupation: "However plausible this [reduction] may once have been it really will not serve today. For most people, and by no means only those

in objectively routinized work, the felt centre, the *real* part of life is experienced outside paid labour."

One of the main sources cited, openly or in disguise, in this type of 'alienation' analysis of the outlaw phenomenon, is Emile Durkheim. On the possible negative effects on the individual in modern industrial society, leading to alienation and loss of identity, Emile Durkheim (1933, pp. 370-371), for example writes:

Machines replace men; manufacturing replaces hand-work. The worker is regimented, separated from his family throughout the day. He always lives apart from his employer, etc. [...] He is no longer anything but an inert piece of machinery, only an external force set going which always moves in the same direction and in the same way.

The most pronounced and comprehensive representative for this Durkheim-inspired framework in the analysis of outlaw clubs is the Canadian anthropologist Daniel Wolf, but also in the writings of Thompson (1966) can this influence be traced. Wolf (1991, pp. 341) describes the modern world that he argues the outlaw bikers tries to escape:

In order to establish and maintain the complex division of labour that is required, the administration of growing cities and industries necessitates the fragmentation of cultural order, traditional institutions, interpersonal relations, and symbols of identity.

### **'Rage against the machine'**

[A]n outlaw motorcycle club is a reaction against the superego of technocracy – the Protestant ethic: the principle that one's work is one's life. Outlaw bikers desire to go beyond a purely rationalized sense of self and society.

Wolf (1991, p. 348)

Unlike most other rebels, the Angels have given up hope that the world is going to change for them. They assume, on good evidence, that the people who run the social machinery have little use for outlaw motorcyclists, and they are reconciled to being losers.

Thompson (1966, p. 273)

The self-portrait given by Wolf (1991, p. 8) below, also seems to capture a good deal of what he believes becoming a biker is all about for a large group of outlaws, albeit the average outlaw biker may not have put it as elegantly:

I rode my motorcycle in anger; for me it became a show of contempt and a way of defying the privileged middle class that had put me down and had kept my parent 'in their place.' I felt that the Establishment had done me no favours and that I owed it even less.

Along this line of reasoning, the outlaw bikers are viewed as the victims of a new kind of industrial revolution created by highly automaticized

production processes and relocation of traditional manual production to low-cost countries. From this perspective, outlaw biking could be viewed as a rebellious reaction to modern society.

In a similar observation of a parallel phenomenon, Jeff Coplon (1988, p. 56) describes skinheads as "casualties of a Big Burger economy with no room at the top". He also observes that they "are as likely to be middle-class as working poor. But in other respects they are typical gang members. They tend to come from broken homes, and a high proportion were abused as children." This is the same basic background that is also found in members of more traditional street gangs. According to Kenney and Finckenauer (1995, p. 289):

These [street] gangs are often an alternative form of social grouping filling a vacuum left by the disintegration of families in lower-class urban areas. As such, they provide psychic rewards and status and informal control over members. Bonding ensures some social cohesion, attachment, and commitment to the gang.

Some observers argue that the number of individuals with a marginalized position in society tends to be a growing part of the total population (e.g., Svedberg, 1998). Given the limited information available on outlaw bikers, their backgrounds and personal history, this description also seems to fit the archetypical outlaw biker.

Some observers further argue that the members of outlaw motorcycle clubs are primarily found in the working class (e.g., Charpentier, 1996; Wolf, 1991). There is a general picture that the biking world consists mainly of young white men with limited education from a working-class background. This is in line with what Cunneen and Lynch (1988) have found on conflict-seeking members in the broader biking culture as a whole, not limiting to its outlaw segment.

A dominance in the motorcycle culture of working or lower middle class youths is supported by a historical account of a motorcycle club during the years of 1957-1962 in Sweden, provided by Lagergren (1997, p. 179; see also Connell, 1995, p. 94). A clearly class-based perspective is provided also by Wolf (1991) in his analysis of the Canadian Rebels, and the contempt for middle-class 'squares' is obvious in a quote from Jim, a Canadian biker with the Rebels Motorcycle Club (as quoted by Wolf, 1991, p. 58).

'They think we're animals because we don't play their stupid middle-class games; we don't parade around in little suits and ties telling each other how respectable we are. Those fucking dudes are so worried about being respectable they've probably never made a decision on their own that didn't have the rules all spelled out for them.'



However, whether the claimed (sometimes historical) working-class origin of outlaw club members is still valid in a contemporary context, where the borders between the working class and other groups in society have become increasingly blurred, is difficult to say.

### **The club as a family**

It is interesting to note that several observers and many of the participants refer to the life of the outlaw world in family metaphors. Within this sphere of tight primary relations, it is argued that a high degree of solidarity, sense of belonging, camaraderie and mutual dependence have been created between the members. In the words of Wolf (1991, p. 343):

Bonds of shared biker values bring twenty-five men together into a tightly knit social network that behaves like an extended family – they call it brotherhood. Their interaction is intense and frequent, and includes a wide range of activities that are conducted within an atmosphere of camaraderie and intimacy.

For some members, this relationship is so valuable or sacred that they are prepared to use extreme violence or even kill to protect it, even though such an action may involve great personal risk or put them on a counter-course with the legal system. According to Charpentier (1996, p. 38), the outlaw motorcycle club provides its members with new relations, equally strong as family ties:

The club is everything – or almost everything – to a member. It is among the most important things in life, something you are prepared to stand by and sacrifice yourself for. The brothers become part of your family, and you protect and safeguard your family. Armed, if necessary.

It has also been argued that the informal influence of an outlaw club on its members is more important than the formal system of normative guidelines and sanctions. This is line with what often is understood to be the case also in more 'normal' families.

Wolf (1991) – arguing that this is of particular interest since the club effect on members runs counter to the public stereotype of outlaw motorcycle clubs as creating sociopaths – provides us with these quotes from two members of the Canadian Rebels:

‘When I first met the guys I was not going in any particular direction at the time [...] With a club you definitely have to make a choice. You have to decide where your head’s at, where your commitments are. You have to sit back and organize your life and say: ‘This is where I want to go.’ A lot of people go through life without really reflecting on what they’re all about.’

Blues (ibid., p. 94)

'I know that if I wasn't a member of the club I'd be a lot more of an orangutan than I am now. I used to fight a lot. I mean I used to be in a scrap maybe four nights a week. I've settled down a lot. I feel better for it. I'm easier to get along with now.'

Caveman (ibid., p. 124)

## **The outlaw world as a tribal society**

In the first image presented, the main stream of police and journalist observers seem to have made their interpretation and analysis of the situation clear: the outlaw biker world is all about sex, drugs and violence, and they operate their clubs as regular, although illegal, for-profit companies. In a somewhat softer approach, the assumption is made that individuals making up the rank and file of the outlaw club membership are more or less understood as the left-overs of modern society. To combat alienation and broken family relations, they band together to create a new social context for themselves.

In an alternative framework, maybe best visible in the writing of Danish researcher Joi Bay (e.g., 1989; 1997), the outlaw biking phenomenon is instead viewed as a sort of tribal society on iron horses. This interesting alternative track is heavily supported by an in-depth study like Wolf's (1991). Wolf's (1991) empirical account of the life of the Canadian Rebels shows striking similarities to the descriptions of the Kabyle society in Algeria, and the relations between different tribes and villages there (Bourdieu, 1966), as well as to the relations and conflicts among the Bedouins of Egypt (Zeid, 1966).

Also in the texts by Lavigne (1987; 1996), on the Hells Angels in the United States, and by Simpson and Harvey (1989), on the war between the Comancheros and the Bandidos in Sydney, Australia, elements of a tribe framework can be found. Listen also to this account of 'tribal-like' relations within US outlaw biker gangs, given by Hopper and Moore (1990, p. 379):

The children of biker women were [...] integrated into the gang. Children went with their mothers on camping trips and or brief motorcycle excursions or "runs". When it was necessary to leave the children at home, two or three old ladies alternatly remained behind and looked after all of the children in the gang.

In line with the tribal perspective, it is often understood that the outlaw club and its activities are propelled by two major motives: (1) the drive to increase or protect the honor or pride of the club, and (2) the economic

importance of the club to its members. In a similar vein, Zeid (1966, p. 249) reports on bedouins in Egypt and their primary sources of pride:

A man feels proud of the size of his kin-group in the same way that he feels proud of the size of his flock and he defends both his kinsmen and his herds with the same zeal. Both kinsmen and livestock are important in regard to political power and social security.

## **Pride, honor, respect, solidarity and courage**

First priority of any club member is his feelings and respect for his colors and the club. They rate equal loyalty, and it has been said members would give their life for either one.

This statement on outlaw clubs and their priorities is found in the "US Marshals Service outlaw motorcycle gang manual", as cited in Lavigne (1987, p. 113). Often, reference to the colors of a club or the importance of 'respect' is mentioned as a explanation for the existence of rivalry and open combat between outlaw clubs. In what could be seen as face-saving operations, for example territorial disputes might be understood in a new light. But what is it that is so important to defend and protect? And why?

In an attempt to use the tribal perspective to explain this special feature of the clubs, some observers refer to the concepts of 'shame and honor' as they are used among different tribes as a good frame to understand outlaw biking (e.g., Bay, 1989). According to, for example, Bourdieu (1966, pp. 220-221), *nif* is the basic ingredient of honour in the Karbyle society and "*nif* is above all *amour-propre*, that is to say, in a society in which the individual exists only through the group, the respect and the love of the group." Bourdieu continues:

*Nif*, the cardinal virtue, the basis of the whole patrilinear system, is indeed essentially a respect for one's lineage, of which one is proud, and of which one intends to be worthy. The greater the bravery or virtue of one's ancestors, the more one is justified in being proud and consequently the more one must be punctilious in honour in order to match the bravery and virtue.

It has been argued, that an important element in the interpretation of outlaw clubs, as well as tribes, is the role and interpretation of basic civic virtues, such as honor, courage and solidarity, in the studied culture. In the outlaw terminology, these civic virtues are often expressed as 'class', 'respect', 'righteousness', or 'brotherhood'. The importance and function of these concepts are crucial to understand and describe behaviour or situations in the outlaw world. Listen to Lavigne (1987, p. 131):

*Respect* is the most common word in the Angels vocabulary. It precludes friendship and makes the club less vulnerable [...] "I don't want to be your friend," William (Wild Bill) Medeiros, former security officer and charter member of the [Hells Angels] Manhattan chapter, says. "Friends screw each

other. In the club, we weren't friends. We were brothers. If you respect me and I respect you, we won't screw each other."

It is important to note that, even if there is an individual as well as a collective side to the concept of honor within the tribal culture, the two are so interrelated that it is difficult to separate them. "A man takes pride in [...] the honour of his kinsmen, an honour indivisible which affords him protection, pride and security" (Peristiany, 1966, p. 16). The strong network in the outlaw clubs does obviously not include trading relations only but also nonmonetized relationships reproduced through a repeated interaction between the members in a manifold of social encounters. Through this close social interaction between the members, it could be argued that strong norms of acceptable behavior within the subculture developed in the outlaw clubs, a finding which is supported by similar findings in Ostrom's (1990) studies of the self-regulation of irrigation projects, fisheries, and high-mountain meadows around the world.

In this collective respect, the existence of strong civic virtues in a close-knit group of people could be seen as effective control instruments. Bourdieu (1966, p. 212) writes:

Perhaps the conclusion is that the important position accorded to sentiment of honour is a characteristic of 'primary' societies in which the relationship with others, through its intensity, intimacy and continuity, takes precedence over the relationship one has with oneself [...] In groups whose members are well-known to each other, such as the Karbye clan or village, the control of public opinion is exercised at every moment, and community feeling is experienced with the highest possible intensity.

On the importance of this collective dimension of the concept of honor, Bourdieu (1966, p. 229) later adds: "'Help your kinsmen,' runs the proverb, 'whether they are right or wrong.' The values of honour are part of the atmosphere ..." At the same time in history, and in the very same spirit, the US journalist Hunter S. Thompson (1966, p. 79) wrote on the US Hells Angels of the 1960's:

One of the Frisco Angels explained it without any frills: 'Our motto, man, is 'All on One and One on All'. You mess with an Angel and you've got twenty-five of them on your neck. I mean, they'll break you but good, baby.' The outlaws take the 'all on one' concept so seriously that it is written into the club charter as Bylaw Number 10: When an Angel punches a non-Angel, all other Angels will participate.

### **Civic virtues and women**

In this framework of civic virtues, the role of women become important and acquire a very special meaning, not in their own right but in their capacity to affect the overall honor of the group through their actions. A

parallel could be found to the role of women in the Kabyle society in the summarized account given by Bourdieu (1966, p. 223):

In short, since she is always 'the daughter of so and so' or 'the wife of so or so', her honour, the woman's glory is none other than the honour of the group of agnates to which she belongs.

In Zeid's words (1966, p. 253), this line of thought is somewhat more developed:

[T]he main contribution a woman makes to the honour of the lineage is through this passive role of preserving her chastity and purity. [...] Gossip may spread about a woman who does not keep strictly to the conventional rules of behaviour and her relatives may be taunted for this. In such cases, it is the duty of her agnatic kin to get rid of her.

Reflecting upon the practices of the tribes and clans in the Karbyle society, and especially what it is that is so worthwhile defending and protecting, Bourdieu (1966, p. 219) gives us the answer: "Kabyle wisdom replies to this question: "One's home, one's wife, one's rifles."

## **Territory**

The idea of territory, whether for status or revenues, seems to be at the heart of the purpose and organization of the outlaw club in the tribal framework. This focus on territory among the outlaw clubs is a finding confirmed by studies of youth and street gangs (Floyd, 1997; Spergel, 1995, p. 89). On the importance of territory in the outlaw world, Wolf (1991, p. 337) writes:

Territoriality is an inescapable part of outlaw-motorcycle club reality. Always dynamic and often violent, it is interwoven with the fabric of personal identity; it is a medium for expanding and expressing political power; it is a fundamental aspect of relating to the host community; and, for some clubs, it is a means of protecting criminal profits.

### **Club colors as territorial marker**

Club colors constitute the primary territorial marker for an outlaw club, to be compared a nation's flag or the colors of a military unit (Bay, 1990; Wolf, 1991). The colors signals the size of the territorial claim of the club, its anciennity, and are also used as a demarcation within the broader biker culture to demarcate the hard-core outlaw clubs from the others. Bay (1990, p. 236) writes:

There exist a number of [motorcycle] clubs in the Copenhagen area that do not use colors, despite their old age. The absence of colors depends either on the fact that the club has deliberately chosen not to be part of the circle of outlaw clubs, since they want to avoid being identified with the outlaw image that goes along with these patches, or because the club has not yet managed to acquire the right to wear a patch.

According to Wolf (1991, pp. 311-312), the ritual importance of club colors could not be over-emphasized. Still, he was genuinely surprised at the larger-than-life importance of the colors: a club does not exist unless its members openly wear their colors, and its existence is automatically terminated when they lose their colors.

The Highway Kings had the structure, organization, and membership of a club, and indeed they functioned as a club. Furthermore, the Rebels were fully aware of the growing and imminent threat to their territorial control and individual safety. However, the Rebels would not take countermeasures until the insurgent group publicly flew their colours within the city of Edmonton. It was a very macho and self-assured approach to the question of survival. If there was a public message from the Rebels to the Highway Kings, it was 'If they don't have the balls to fly their colours, then they don't exist!'

It has been argued that biker colors or patches have a peace-keeping effect within the outlaw world: since the order of rank between two unacquainted bikers is often settled from the start through the display of colors, further shows of force or demonstrations of courage are unnecessary (Bay, 1990, p. 242). Seeing the colors as symbolic manifestations of the prestige or honor of a certain group is also in line with the conclusion of Zeid (1966, p. 259) after studying bedouins in Egypt:

Thus, it is clear that honour and shame which are usually attributed to a certain individual or a certain kinship group have in fact a bearing on the total social structure, since most acts involving honour and shame are likely to affect the existing social equilibrium between the different kinship units which constitute at the same time political entities in which this society is ordered.

### **Market warfare or ritual feuds over territory?**

In this tribe perspective, police statements that the warfare between outlaw clubs is a struggle over the control of the local drug market is not really questioned. What seems to be attempted, rather is establishment of a more complex frame of interpretation than the uni-rational business profile. Instead of viewing this phenomenon – inter-club warfare – through the metaphor of a market struggle between two different firms, the more complex tribal frame is suggested. From this perspective, a fight over turf – as a grazing area for the cattle – is seen as one dimension, but a parallel complementary interpretation is also provided: as a ritual of conflict aimed at reproducing basic outlaw biking cultural values. A clear parallel is at hand in the wording of Peristiany (1966, pp. 15-16), summarizing Bourdieu's (1966) study on the Charbyle tribes:

Fights, war between the political and warlike leagues (*eçffuf*) and wars between the tribes are strictly regulated games. In this context they do not undermine social order but safeguard it. [...] This ritual of conflict, claims Bourdieu, constitutes a perfect expression of the logic of honour as it provides

society with a well-regulated social setting in which to display, in symbolic form, the values and beliefs it prizes.

Listen also to the words of Zeid (1966, p. 246) on the concept of *sharaf* – ‘honor’ acquired either by personal achievements or through belonging to a certain group who has attained prestige – among the bedouins of Egypt:

Heroic raids on hostile camps enhance the prestige of the raiding group and augment their *sharaf*, whereas defeat and hesitation to take reprisal eradicate the *sharaf* and bring shame. [...] Daring raids on large hostile camps which result in killing a number of men and driving away their camels are highly praised and deeply admired.

From this perspective, the destroying of one outlaw club by another can only be understood in a territorial context. On the practice of ‘patch-pulling’, Steve, the Rebels’ acting sergeant-at-arms, according to Wolf (1991, p. 306) states:

‘We maintain control over the clubs in this town. The police know that we’re doing it and they give us their cooperation. [...] Of course, they don’t help us. But if they see us ripping some guy’s colours off most of the guys will just look the other way [...] You see, neither the cops nor us want the scene to become fucked up with too many clubs.’

The display of colors from defeated clubs turned upside-down in the clubhouse is a common sight among well-established outlaw clubs. This ritualized threat enhances the reputation of the club as one that can handle territorial incursions, and thus adds on to the honor and prestige of the club. Listen to Wolf’s (1991, p. 308, 310) description of the Rebels’ hunt for trophies:

The Rebels began their territorial defence by isolating members of the Fearless Albinos in street encounters and forcibly confiscating their cut-off denim jackets with the Albino colours. By the end of the summer, all that remained of the Fearless Albinos MC was one set of colours that hung upside down on the Rebels’ clubhouse walls. [...]

The overwhelmed Skull Riders stood by and watched as their colours were seized and burned, with one exception. The final set of Skull Riders colours was taken to the Rebels’ clubhouse, where it was hung upside down on a wall alongside colours from the Fearless Albinos MC. Over the next ten years the Rebels would add club patches taken from the Shadows MC, Highway Knights Car Club, Satan’s Soul MC, Jokers MC, Devil’s Own MC, Renegades MC, Highway Kings MC, Loners MC, and the Sundance MC.

This ritualized patch collecting and disgrace of the beaten club are in line with the rationality found in the raids of the bedouins presented earlier (Zeid, 1966, p. 258):

[T]he raiders do not acquire honour merely because they have raided the camps of their enemies and shown daring courage, but also because in doing this they have tarnished their honour and disgraced them.

It is an unwritten law in the outlaw community that a club that is unable to defend its colors will not fly these colors. In actuality, lost patches could, of course, simply be replaced and the club could continue, but "not only would the club lose credibility in the eyes of the outlaw-biker community, such a 'classless' move would also increase the tenacity with which the replacement colours would be ripped from their backs" (Wolf, 1991, p. 311).

## **Women as cattle or items of trade**

It has already been argued that a club's colors is the primary territorial marker of the club. The colors are also used to indicate association with, or ownership by, the club. We have earlier elaborated upon the (passive) importance of women to the overall honor of the group. Accordingly, it must be important in tribe-like societies to keep track of the women. Listen to the account given by Wolf (1991, p. 153):

There are a number of clubs that do allow the ol' ladies of members to wear a 'property badge' on their jean jacket or leathers. An ol' lady wears a property badge as a matter of choice and prestige.

In a parallel, however somewhat more far-going, Thompson (1966, p. 178) describes the common practice of 'tattoo branding' women related to some clubs:

... the Satan's Slaves [...] take their communal women down to the tattoo parlour and have 'Property of Satan's Slaves' etched permanently on the left rump-cheek. The Slaves feel that branding gives the girls a sense of security and belonging.

In early February 1966, Terry and a Frisco Angels named George Zahn were arrested for 'contributing to the delinquency' of a fifteen-year-old girl who had 'Property of Hell's Angels' tattooed across her back at the shoulder-blade level.

A similar account is given by Wolf (1991, p. 153), although in his description, dressed in a politically more correct language, the free choice of the woman is emphasized:

Like many members who have their club colours tattooed on their shoulders, an exceptional ol' lady may go as far as to have the property badge tattooed on her shoulder or some other area of her anatomy.

Bay (1990, p. 242) argues that this practice of property badging of the biker women – the use of ownership patches and the display of club leathers – has conflict-inhibiting functions:

The use of patches on women should be seen in the light of the same preventing purpose. On women already "taken", the patch with her old man's and/or his club's name is a signal of warning to other men.



Hopper and Moore (1990, pp. 382-383) argue that some of the actors in the outlaw world have experienced changing roles as a result of a shift from motives driven by pleasure and hedonistic values to economic interests among the clubs. In accordance with this development, they argue, also the use of club insignia by the women has come to shift meaning, and that the use of tattoos among the biker women may be decreasing – however not as a result of any equal-gender trends in the outlaw world:

To be sure, female associates of outlaw motorcycle gangs have never been on a pair with the men. Biker women have worn "property" jackets for a long time, but in the outlaw scene of 1989, the label had almost literally become fact.

Whereas bikers used to like their women to be tattooed, many we met in 1988 and 1989 did not want their old ladies to have tattoos because they reduced their market value as nude dancers and prostitutes. [...] The new breed [of bikers] did not want to damage the "merchandise".

The use of women themselves as merchandize, as opposed to selling their services, is, according to Lavigne (1987, p. 124), what happens when for example the Hells Angels no longer have any use for them or need something more desperately, like parts to the bike:

Then [the women] are murdered, sold or traded within the club or to other gangs for motorcycle parts, drugs or to clear debts. Some Angels even will their women to fellow members along with their bikes, cars and weapons.

A similar account is given by Hopper and Moore (1990, pp. 381):

If he wished to, a biker could sell his old lady to the highest bidder, and we saw this happen. When a woman was auctioned off, it was usually because a biker needed money in a hurry, such as when he wanted a part for his motorcycle or because his old lady disappointed him. The buyer in such transactions was usually another outlaw.

Reports on business based on sexual exploitation of their women – as seems to be a common practice in the outlaw world – is not found in the specific accounts of tribe societies used for this analysis. However, the usage of women in trade or as gifts have been noted, for example by Zeid (1966, p. 254) in his study on the Egyptian bedouins:

It may also be significant that the way of ending a long feud is for the aggressors to give one of their girls in marriage to the wronged party, not as compensation but as a sign of good faith, manifest in the act of entrusting them with such a precious 'part' and symbol of their honour.

## **Concluding remarks on framing**

Metaphors make the strange familiar and the familiar strange. They help us capture subtle themes that normal language can overlook. [...] Metaphors compress complicated issues into understandable images, affecting our attitudes, evaluations, and actions.

Bolman and Deal (1997, pp. 229-230)

Before moving on to the second part of the paper, a few remarks on the three interpretative frames presented above are necessary. Some issues concerning limitations or problems in the use of the different frames will be indicated but not solved. For example, in the case of the tribal metaphor, it is important to note that the use of an analytical model developed in a situation where tribes were the major and dominant phenomenon of the culture might be troublesome when applied to a situation when the studied social phenomenon rather is a sub- or even counter-culture.

### **Outlaw clubs as mafia**

In connection to the metaphor of the outlaw club as organized crime, the similarity between the outlaw world and the mafia is often brought up. Despite several striking similarities, however, life in the outlaw world differs from that in the mafia in a number of respects. Without going into excessive details, a couple of these differences will be presented.

Numerous empirical accounts of the mafia emphasize the biological family – the ties of kinship, as very important, and the right ethnic background as absolutely essential, if you want to ‘be made’ – become a true member of the organization. Neither kin nor specific ethnicity seem to have any pronounced relevance in the outlaw world, apart from the fact that many of the clubs tend to have a racist leaning (Abadinsky, 1994; Kenney and Finckelauer, 1995; Lavigne, 1987, 1996; Wolf, 1991). However, whether this lack, or played-down importance, of biological ties in the outlaw world (only scarce data being available) is a permanent and important characteristic of the clubs, or simply a result of the relative youth of the organizations (none of the major clubs being more than 50 years old and most of them first involved in extensive business during the 1980s), is difficult to say.

The other important difference – apart from differing emphasis on biological and ethnic ties – is the fact that if you become part of the mafia, you are also employed by it. There exist only few accounts of made members of the mafia with their basic employment outside the domains of the ‘family’ (see, e.g., Gambetta, 1993; Lappalainen, 1993; Maas, 1997). This does not, historically, seem to have been the general case in outlaw clubs (Lavigne, 1996; Harvey and Simpson, 1989; Wolf, 1991). Most of the bikers seem either to have a regular employment or a business of their own, often within the wider biker culture. There may also be members that are unemployed and others who make their living as seasonal workers. However, it might be assumed that also this is changing as a result of the

changed emphasis on economic interest in many of the major clubs today.

## **On the family concept and love**

In the second frame, outlaw clubs were understood as families. The creation of a substitute family is also an important feature of many criminal youth or street gangs: "The gang serves as a basic personal development, social identity, and morality-providing system. It recruits youths without a background of adequate family caring and social instruction and becomes a basic support system for members" (Spergel, 1995, p. 94). This family-like situation is also stated to be found in some of the more violent skinhead groups, as reported in ADL (1989, p. 29):

"We care about each other," said one Skinhead, "we're family." That sense of kinship is strengthened even further if the gang has been involved in violence together. Military sociologists have long known that soldiers who have fought together develop a deeper sense of solidarity.

Also in the world of outlaw biking, family metaphors are often used, by observers as well as among the members themselves. However, true family or blood ties are seldom heard of in the outlaw biker world. Instead, to mimic the cohesive role of family ties, a special language has developed and new recruits are screened to see whether they will fit in with the club or not. Wolf (1991, p. 273) exemplifies:

Their survival is dependent upon the maintenance of common values that are expressed by club members when they talk about 'love of biking', 'love for one's brothers', and 'love for the club.' A member's capacity and inclination to adhere to these underlying values was selected for, learned, and tested during the striking period.

This strong emphasis on 'love' within the club could be indicating that the outlaw club is something other than a 'normal' company. Listen, for example, to the words of Whitmyer (1993, p. 81):

Love is largely absent in the modern corporation. Most managers would never use the word in any context more profound than their feelings about food, films or games. They shy away from love's deeper meaning, fearing both its power and its risks.

## **An 'all-male' context and gender identity<sup>21</sup>**

The outlaw biker world is often stated to be all-male. It is a closed brotherhood with a strong solidarity among men. Women are welcome in

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21 I am grateful to Charlotte Holgersson and Anna Wahl for directing my attention to this interesting track found in the literature (e.g., Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1994).

subordinate roles at parties and other social events but can never become full members. This section highlights the impact of a male-dominated and violent outlaw motorcycle world in the (re)construction of a set of gender identities experienced lost or at least threatened in contemporary society.

The phenomenon of biking as such is, according to observers like Lagergren (1996, pp. 163-164) associated with a combination of physical toughness and mechanical skills, both typical features of a traditional masculinity. The mystique connected to the dangers and violence associated with an arcane outlaw life only tends to enhance this feeling.

One of the most compelling and frightening features of the outlaw world is the seemingly ever-present use of extreme violence. Understanding the role of this violence is a necessary ingredient in understanding the wider outlaw phenomenon. Specifically, it could be argued that it is important for the construction of one particular masculine identity. According to Kimmel (1994, p. 132):

Violence is often the single most evident marker of manhood. Rather it is the willingness to fight, the desire to fight. The origin of our expression that one has a chip on one's shoulder lies in the practice of an adolescent boy in the country or small town at the turn of the century, who would literally walk around with a chip of wood balanced on his shoulder – a signal of his readiness to fight with anyone who would take the initiative of knocking the chip off.

In this context, also the role of the woman in the outlaw world is important, although in no way equal to that of the man (see, e.g., Hopper and Moore, 1990 or Wolf, 1991). For example, the wives and girlfriends of Bandido members are only allowed to be honorary members. In this capacity, they can wear jackets proclaiming them to be "Property of Bandidos", but are not permitted to wear the fat Mexican, the Bandido trademark (Harvey and Simpson, 1989, p. 35). The subordination of outlaw biker women seems to be necessary to construct the wanted masculinity (see Connell, 1995, for some examples on the importance of the broader biking culture is in establishing gender differences). Wolf (1991, p. 132) writes:

The reason women do not ride their own motorcycles or become club members in the outlaw subculture does not relate to lack of interest, ability, or desire. Rather it is because the fabrication of male and female gender identity and roles within the subculture requires female participation only in a marginal and supportive manner.

This strive for a more traditional masculinity could also be interpreted as an attempt at reducing social uncertainty. Through the return to an

archetypal set of gender relations, a development experienced as threatening for the members might be avoided or at least delayed. Sernhed's (1997, p. 37) speculates that:

Perhaps this [outlaw biking] culture should, with its orgies of extravagant fallic symbolic language – powerful motorcycles, pistols, leather and chromium – in the first place be seen as an expression of an attempt to restore and defend a masculinity that no longer applies.

Another dimension of the same analysis is the obvious signs of homophobia found in the general outlaw culture. A common insult in the outlaw biker world is to insinuate that someone is unmanly. The most efficient way to do so is to brand the person as homosexual, especially if it is also possible to indicate that he is the weaker, more 'female', part in the relationship (Bay, 1990, p. 230; see also Bay, 1997, p. 6; cf. Kimmel, 1994).

The striking gender inequality found throughout the world of outlaw biking is often expressed and interpreted as being a one-sided identity creating project. In a somewhat more reflecting language, it might be argued that the gender role pattern and the relations between the sexes – unjust and destructive as they appear – is necessary for the constructions of one specific pair of *both* male and female identities. Some observers state that at least one type of women found within the outlaw clubs are looking for this type of relations, in the same way as the men. Listen to Hopper and Moore (1990, pp. 378-379):

In the opinions of the women we talked to, a strong man kept a woman in line. Most old ladies had the lowly task of cleaning and polishing a motorcycle every day. They did so without thanks and they did not expect or want any praise. To them, consideration for others was a sign of weakness in a man. They wanted a man to let them know who was the boss.

Reflecting upon the irony that the outlaw biker women in their study considered themselves free while they were under the domination of biker men, they conclude their article (*ibid.*, p. 384):

Biker women thus illustrated the pervasive power of socialization and the difficulty of changing deeply ingrained views on the relations between the sexes inculcated in their family life. They believed that they should be submissive to men because they were taught that males were dominant [...] it was evident that their choices were guided by values that they had acquired in childhood. Although they had rebelled against the strictures of straight society, their orientation in gender roles made them align with outlaw bikers, the epitome of macho men.

Viewed in a somewhat broader perspective, it might be argued, however, that this may not be so surprisingly. This might instead actually be an important part of the explanation to the question why they rebel. Exactly *just because* the outlaw women have these values – in a society that tends

to view them as archaic or at least old-fashioned – the actions and attitudes of these women could be seen as part of a social rebellion similar to that of the outlaw bikers themselves.

To paraphrase Sernhed's (1997) speculation above, the outlaw world might in this sense be seen as an attempt to restore and defend not only a masculinity but also a femininity that no longer applies. The respective role constructs demand the existence of each other.

## **A tentative typology of outlaw clubs**

To conclude this main part of the essay, it is important to note that the outlaw biker culture and the various groups populating it are not as homogeneous as I have treated them earlier (Wijkström, 1998). In this section, I will propose a tentative typology divided in three in an attempt to capture a wider variety of organizational types.

### **(1) Outlaw biking as a generational (cultural) rebellion**

First, a type of outlaw club with more random and rebellious activities can be conceived of. The features of this organizational type would be basically the same as for other groups of anti-social youth or juvenile gangs, where the group seems often to pursue nonutilitarian goals, in the sense that they do not afford the members any material or economical rewards. Even though I have been unable to find good empirical accounts of this type of gang within the general outlaw biking literature, parallels can easily be found in studies of other socially deviant youth phenomena (e.g., Floyd, 1997; Hopper and Moore, 1990; Spergel, 1995). In a parallel to the skinhead culture, for example Zellner (1995, p. 16) observes that:

There is nothing new about young people dressing and adopting behaviors that offend the adult community. The Skinhead counterculture offers a support network for teens rebelling against parental control and the accepted mores (strong norms) of the community.

### **(2) Outlaw biking 'proper'**

According to Wolf (1991, p. 268):

The Rebels are outlaws, but they are not professional criminals. When I rode with them, laws were sidestepped, bent, and broken, but rarely for profit. Criminal acts were usually confined to minor misdemeanours, such as the possession of soft drugs, weapons offences, occasional assaults, mischief, and drunk-driving charges, along with a plethora of vehicle violations and traffic tickets.

This statement could easily be coupled to the initial general orientation of the outlaw world, when clubs "were dedicated to mocking social values and conventional society through acts of vandalism and general

lawlessness" (Abadinsky, 1994, p. 270). This image of outlaw biking 'proper' are labeled 'romanticism' by some observers, often referring to the classic Hells Angels analysis by Thompson (1967) as the original source. This type of romanticism could also be traced in more recent accounts (e.g., Charpentier, 1995 or Wolf, 1991), but the issue pertains: a number of outlaw clubs still seem to feature characteristics of this tradition.

### **(3) Organized criminal business**

Finally, referring to the alleged myths of rebellion and freedom to do your own thing that have been associated with outlaw biking, often conveyed through romanticizing books and movies, some observers argue that this has changed. Kenney and Finckenauer (1995, p. 292) for example state that:

[T]his perception of motorcycle gangs has changed over the last two decades. "Outlaw" motorcyclists have become much less romantic figures and are more likely to be viewed today as common criminals or worse.

Also Lyman (1989, p. 79) states that a "20 year transformation has changed the Hells Angels from a rowdy unorganized group of troublemakers to a modern, sophisticated organized crime organization" (see also President's Commission, 1986, p. 65). In line with these observations, it is often argued by many observers of contemporary outlaw biking, that a development from a pleasure to a business driven logic in some of the major clubs have been taking place (e.g., Hopper and Moore, 1990).

The basic reasoning is that some of the largest and most notorious traditional outlaw clubs (the 'proper' version) seem to have developed from more unorganized, status-oriented conflict groups to better organized predatory or criminal organizations focused on the drug, violence and sex 'industries'. This is a general development pattern also visible among, for example, gangs found in inner-city African-American communities (Spergel, 1995, pp. 61-62).

### **Different types or different stages?**

An interesting issue, that awaits more empirical evidence, is whether this heterogeneity among the clubs in the outlaw world is due to different types of organizations or a result of different phases of a club life cycle. According to Abadinsky (1994, p. 273), at least one US expert on outlaw motorcycle clubs, Allen McMillan, has proposed a model where an outlaw club – almost as on a predetermined track – is supposed to move through four stages to finally reach the status of a "fully committed criminal organization".

One observation supporting such a development is the pressure exerted on clubs with silly or less fearful insignia to change their colors into something more 'acceptable', in 'cleaning-up' operations by clubs with a more 'serious' attitude – displaying colors with terrifying motives like a death's skull, crossed bones or pistols. This development, described by for example Bay (1997, p. 9), is a clear example of institutional pressure.

## Reflections

The nature of this final part of the essay is – to use a metaphor – more similar to a smorgasbord than a fixed menu. The problem of uncertainty and how taken-for-granted relations within the previous images can be understood as instruments to reduce or cope with it, will be the focus of the first section. In the second will we briefly and from a limited point of departure, discuss the contribution to the (level of) social capital in society from outlaw motorcycle clubs. Finally, in an even more speculative third section, the essay will be finished, but not summarized. A couple of thoughts concerning the future of this type of organization and its role in future society will be addressed. The purpose of these further reflections is to indicate a number of interesting theoretical approaches that could be used to understand the outlaw world better, to shift the context in which to analyze the phenomenon.

### **(1) Uncertainty, commitment and designed relations**

We face problems caused by social uncertainty in various aspects of our lives almost every day. The trick seems to be how to avoid being cheated and yet maintain interaction with other people. However, in line with the alienation frame introduced earlier, it could be argued that the potential outlaw members have a larger measure of this commodity. According to Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994), the answer to the problem (ibid., p. 124) is the establishing of committed relations: "The simplest and the most readily available solution to the problem posed by social uncertainty would be to form committed relations with specific partners."

In line with both the family as well as tribe metaphor, it could be argued that this is exactly what the outlaw bikers do. Based on existing research in the field, reflected in the presentations provided earlier, it is safe to state that one of the most important motives for joining an outlaw club is the strong brotherhood component. According to Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994, p. 163): "American society seems to show signs of retreat to committed relations in response to increasing social uncertainty". In



this light, the habit of outlaw bikers to band together does not seem to be something particularly strange but a rather normal action.

In a similar, although more comprehensive model, Sjöstrand (e.g., 1985, 1992, 1997) proposes the use of a framework based on ideal-typical interpersonal strategies to be able to analyze how different types of relations between individuals can help them reduce or at least cope with uncertainty. These ideal-type relations are only to be used as analytical instruments and not to be seen as descriptions of empirical phenomena. Rather, it could be assumed that one and the same phenomenon would display several different types of ideal-typical relations, but also that it would be possible to identify one dominant rationale. The four ideal-typical basic relations proposed in Sjöstrand (1997) are: (1) calculative, (2) genuine, (3) ideational, and (4) coercive relations. Adopting this model on the three different images of outlaw clubs produced earlier provides us with a new interesting analytical tool.

### **Calculative relations**

The usage of a business metaphor to describe an outlaw club indicates, in line with this model, that the observer has found evidence of the fact that the main rationale behind the creation of the outlaw club, and the coming together of its members, is calculative relations. A problem possibly associated with this perspective on the outlaw club as a business enterprise, is the difficulty involved in the calculation of the negative value (the 'cost') for the individual in the risk of spending several years in jail or even losing one's life, due to the potential conflicts with the law-enforcement or other outlaw clubs.

### **Genuine and/or calculative relations**

In the alienation/family metaphor framework, the formation of an outlaw club with strict internal discipline, far-reaching commitment between the brothers, and the establishment of genuine relationships, could be seen as an antidote to social uncertainty. The creation of genuine relations, according to Sjöstrand (1997, p. 25), is one of the four possible interpersonal relationships based on non-calculative rationales suggested to cope with uncertainty. Within the tribe metaphor, the existence of both genuine relations (as in the family) and calculative relations (as in the business metaphor), as systems to cope with social uncertainty, can be traced. An empirical account that supports the view that outlaw clubs offer their members a vehicle for multi-rational relations is provided by Wolf (1991, p. 97):

The ties of brotherhood are multifaceted and serve a multiplicity of interests. Members assist each other in matters such as the repair and maintenance of their motorcycles, the loaning of money, the sharing of living accommodations, finding employment, and the solving of personal problems. Just as one's brothers come to represent the good times – riding, partying, hunting, and drinking together – the brotherhood also provides assistance in times of duress, be it jail, hospital, or personal threats.

In this essays, we have so far lacked images or frameworks in which the outlaw biker culture could be viewed as an attempt to cope with or reduce social insecurity through the creation of either ideational or coercive relations (Sjöstrand, 1997, p. 26) between the members. However, a number of new metaphors in which the outlaw phenomenon could be dressed, can be found in the literature.

### **Ideational relations**

The different groups of outlaw clubs could, for example, be seen as a social movement. Traditionally, mainstream social movement theory views social conflicts as – in the words of Melucci (1988, p. 246) – "conflicts concerning social relationships constituting a given system and struggles for the extension of citizenship: that is, for the inclusion of excluded or underprivileged groups in the domain of rights and the rules of the political game." When using a social movement approach on the outlaw phenomena, it seems to produce a paradox. It could well be argued that the classic outlaw member is both marginalized and underprivileged in today's society. It is argued that, to the extent that people who have their basic living conditions changed – or experience a "threat" of change – are formed or will form in social organizations, this situation could lead to conflicts (Thörn, 1997, p. 111). Dressed in the wording of Wolf (1991, pp. 52): "An outlaw biker is often a man who feels that he has been cheated, used, or denied by society."

However, in their clubs, the outlaw bikers do not seem to struggle for citizenship or a democratization of new areas of social life. On the contrary. This social phenomenon is rather characterized by an *exit* from society by its members, and the general direction of the democratization process in the everyday understanding of the term is that areas are taken *away* from the overall democratic system in a traditional sense. This extreme kind of self-empowerment, to take full control not only over one's life but also over several of the processes that create identity and form norms, is in apparent conflict with the overall democratic-society project that many observers understand social movements to be involved in.

I have elsewhere argued that the organizations in the outlaw world display less similarities with social movements than do the group of Ku Klux Klan chapters and related organizations (Wijkström, 1998). This idea was based on the fact that social or political change in society does not seem to be a main motive for members of outlaw motorcycle clubs to band together. However, another way of understanding the relations between individuals in the outlaw clubs is through a religious metaphor.<sup>22</sup>

In an interesting article, Watson describes the similarities between the broader biker culture and religious sects in a metaphor he calls secular sect (Watson, 1982). Also the idea of a revitalization movement, where the members strive for an alternative society, as described by Wallace (1956) might be a good candidate to understand more ideal-based motives behind the outlaw culture. According to Wallace, a revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, conscious and organized effort by members of a certain society to create a more satisfying culture, not necessarily with religious content. Wallace (1956, p. 279) continues: "The revitalization movement as a general type of event occurs under two conditions: high stress for individual members of the society, and disillusionment with a distorted cultural *Gestalt*."

These two images – secular sect and revitalization movement – are both close in nature to the idea of a civil religion, and could very well be parts of an image construction addressing important dimensions of the outlaw world. According to Simon Coleman (1996), a civil religion is a means by which citizens of a nation-state represent their shared identity to themselves in symbolic and ritualized ways. He continues (*ibid.*, p. 26):

In the United States, the Stars and Stripes (the flag) is seen as a sacred object; a ritual calendar is provided by celebrations on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, etc.; other important rituals involve the inauguration of Presidents, the President's annual address, and many sports events such as the Super Bowl ...

Rituals, traditions and ceremonies are important parts of the outlaw biker culture, as I have demonstrated earlier (Wijkström, 1998). Some of these rituals take on an almost religious or larger-than-life meaning. Hopper and Moore (1990, p. 369) provide us with these empirical observations from their study:

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22 I am grateful to Jonas Hartelius and Emil Uddhammar for proposing important literature contributing to the civil religion metaphor. The texts by, for example, Wallace (1956) and Simon Coleman (1996) were important for this analysis.

Several men remained in front of a television set, watching a wrestling match. Because we looked upon professional wrestling as a humorous sham, one of us made a light reference to it. Immediately the bikers became tense and angry [...] In this way, we accidentally learned that some bikers take television wrestling seriously. [...] For practical purposes, both male and female bikers worship the Harley Davidson motorcycle. One Mississippi group that we studied extensively had an old flathead "Hog" mounted on a high tree stump at the entrance to their clubhouse. When going in and out, members bowed to the old Harley or saluted it as an icon of highest order. They took it very seriously.

### **Coercive relations**

I will conclude this elaboration upon different types of relations as instruments to cope with uncertainty found in metaphors of outlaw biking. The coercive element found in the images of the outlaw world will be addressed. In the public understanding, not seldom enhanced by the attention provided by press and media, outlaw motorcycle gangs are often associated with the use of violence, and the outlaws are, almost per definition, organized as paramilitary units. Another possible image of outlaw clubs is therefore that of armies (on the use of military metaphors on organizations, see Morgan, 1986, pp. 22-25). Often, conflicts between outlaw clubs are referred to as 'battles'.

The army image is not far-fetched. The outlaw clubs feature insignia and terminology clearly inspired by military traditions, e.g., colors, sergeant-at-arms, road captain, and the use of violence and weapons is not foreign to them. Further, the similarities are also strengthened by the fact that some of the members have previous military experience and the formation of motorcycles when on a run, seems to be organized with military precision (see, e.g., Wolf, 1991, p 220).

Since the outlaw club is precisely an *outlaw* club, the sergeant-at-arms also holds a key position. In the law-enforcement vacuum that arises when the club disqualify the surrounding society's system to handle the enforcement of rules and the legitimate use of violence, in internal as well inter-organizational matters, these issues must instead be handled internally. The statement made by Wolf (1991, pp. 287-288), that the sergeant is the club's own policeman and "is the only officer who is entitled to use physical force on a member to enforce club policies. When strong-arm tactics are deemed necessary to 'straighten somebody out,' the other members will fully support the sergeant", indicates that the fourth type of relation, the coercive, might play an important role in the outlaw world.

### **A concluding remark on images and ideal-typical relations**

The use of a number of new metaphors or images of outlaw biking has in a way given new meaning to practices and empirical accounts earlier observed by researchers, but not yet put in a meaningful context. With the help of an analytical framework based on metaphors as important for our understanding of social phenomena. The idea that different types of ideal-typical relations, within these larger ideal-typical images, fill different functions in the strive to reduce or handle uncertainty found in the writing of Sjöstrand (e.g., 1997) have guided us in an effort to distill some extra metaphors out of the literature.

## **(2) Outlaw biking and social capital**

One important debate within the social sciences of today concerns the creation and maintenance of social capital in society. Social capital, as understood by James Coleman (e.g., 1988, 1990) and later popularized by Robert Putnam (e.g., 1993, 1995), is created by individuals through repeated social interaction. Social capital in this definition is based on principles of cooperation, reciprocity and mutual obligation. To link the discussion in this section back to the previous, it is sometimes argued that trust is an essential component of social capital since "[t]rust lubricates cooperation" (Putnam, 1993, p. 171). Unlike physical or human capital, this particular form of capital inheres in the structure of relations between and among actors. It is stated to encompass social norms, trust, information channels, networks, obligations and expectations.<sup>23</sup>

To briefly recapitulate the main themes in the thinking of, e.g., Putnam, on this general theory on social capital: The claim is that members of voluntary associations, through an active participation in the day-to-day activities and administration of the association, learn to cooperate with each other. Bonds of inter-personal trust and solidarity between them are created in the process. This trust and solidarity contributes to a common pool of social capital from which all contributors in a subsequent step can benefit.<sup>24</sup>

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23 For two critical reflections on Putnam's (1993) work, see Margaret Levi (1994) and Sidney Tarrow (1996).

24 This 'local' version of social capital seems to be in line with what Bourdieu terms social capital. In his use, the term is described as various kinds of valued relations with significant others. This capital is ingrained in the relations between individuals, relations that could develop between family members, students from elite universities, etc (Broady, 1990, pp. 180-181; Jenkins, 1992, p. 85). One nuance of a slightly different emphasis between the two

Found in the concept of social capital á la Coleman or Putnam, one important property of is that the denser the networks of voluntary associations in which people take part are, the stronger the social capital grows. "The denser such networks [of civic engagement] in a community, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 173). Another interesting and special feature of this kind of capital is that the more often the participants make use of the social capital, the more is produced: "the more extensively persons call on one another for aid, the greater will be the quantity of social capital generated" (Coleman, 1990, p. 321).

The next step in their argument is that this 'local' social capital not only is confined to the small and personal setting of face-to-face interaction in which it once originated. Through the development and socialization of strong norms of reciprocity in micro-social relations, this 'local' social capital is believed also to carry over to a larger regional community where people do not know each other personally (see also Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994). This institutionalized trust or society-level social capital is, by Putnam, stated to have positive effects on the formal political system, as well as on the economic development. It is argued that this is achieved through the creation of a platform of trust, cooperation and mutual understanding, that has developed in the region.

### **Associations and social capital generation**

The question that naturally present itself after first reading about images of outlaw motorcycle clubs, and then being introduced to the idea of social capital in society, is: How is the level of social capital in society affected by the existence and activities of outlaw clubs? An immediate reaction would be to assume that the clubs and their activities are negative to the overall level of social capital in society, and this might very well also be the case. However, I will in the following briefly discuss a general model of how an association's impact on social capital in society can be understood.

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usages, however, might be that in Bourdieu's use of the term, the social capital of a particular group of people seems to be constituted very much in relations to people *outside* this group. Thus, it is not as much the social capital *between* people within one and the same group that is in focus, but more the groups collected social capital versus external agents, and the use of this external social capital the members of this focal group could have. For the purpose of this text, I will leave Bourdieu's understanding of the concept, since it is not clear to me how or if it relates to the (re)creation of generalized social capital in society.

According to some observers, one type of answer to the question posed above could be found in organizational features. One such example is Putnam (1993), who argues that horizontal relations within associations are better for the creation of social capital in society than are vertical. Another idea, found in the writing of Granovetter (1978) could also be of interest. He makes a distinction between weak and strong ties and argues that the more weak ties we have in a community, the more cohesive will the community be, and the more capable of acting in concert (ibid).

If we return to the images of outlaw clubs presented earlier, it could probably be assumed that they support assumptions on outlaw clubs as being hierarchically (i.e., vertically) organized rather than laterally or horizontally. Further, it is also safe to assume that they understand outlaw clubs as featuring strong ties among their members. This would lead us to assume that the outlaw clubs are less successful in the creation of social capital, than are other, more horizontal associations that feature weaker ties among their members.

There is also an ongoing debate focusing on whether social networks are built upon norms of already strong reciprocity and trust, i.e., that the present level of civicness or social capital in an organization very well could be a result of the previous levels of social capital for the members, *before* joining the associations. Or if it is the other way around; i.e., that social networks instil or reinforces citizens' capacity to trust and reciprocate (Newton, 1996).

For some of the members of outlaw gangs discussed in this paper, it could be argued that it was an earlier lack of trustful and reciprocable relations with others, that made them eager to join. In the tight-knit solidarity found in the club, these persons create a strong brotherhood of trusted others. This could be seen as a support for the idea that strong social networks foster robust norms of reciprocity (cf, Ostrom, 1990). However, for the moment, I would intuitively say that it is an iterative process.

To continue this discussion, we need a structure, a model. I will assume that an association has impact on the total level of social capital (as broadly defined by, e.g., Putnam) through activities in three types of relations: (1) internally, among its members; (2) externally, between the club and specific others, people in close (direct) contact with the club; and (3) in the interaction between the club and unknown others. I further assume that the nature of these actions either can be negative or positive in their effect upon the social capital. We have thus constructed a

model, a three-times-two matrix, on how the impact from a club's activities on social capital in society can be viewed. According to this model, to be able to say anything about the total impact from a specific association on the level of social capital, six questions must be answered.

In Figure 1 below, I have tried to fill the different fields of the matrix with examples found in the literature on outlaw clubs. The negative examples on the left hand side of the model are easily understood. Also the upper right corner, including such positive internal effects as mutual trust and reciprocity among the members could probably also be comprehended. The other two fields might offer some more trouble.

Figure 1. A model of impact from outlaw club on social capital.

		EFFECTS	
RELATIONS		Negative	Positive
Internal		Internal violence	Mutual trust
		Negative social coercion	Reciprocity
External (specific)		Violence against specific others	Neighborhood helpfulness
		Sexual exploitation	
External (general)		Illegal drug sale	Crime prevention
		General fear	

The general impact of an outlaw motorcycle club on the neighbourhood would, of course, be understood as negative. However, contradicting this general negative opinion, examples can also be found where individuals in the outside society still argue that they benefit directly from actions of the clubs. Surprisingly often, positive accounts are given in the literature by people in close proximity to the clubs. Harvey and Simpson (1989, pp.



10, 13), for example, give us these accounts of more positive effects of an Australian outlaw gang on the surrounding local neighborhood:

One cold winter morning when her [Mrs Proudman, a neighbour] car wouldn't start, one of the men came over and got it started for her. She had been particularly grateful, but the mechanic merely said, 'No worries, lady'.

'The crime rate's dropped around Birchgrove,' Mick would tell his old retired mate Alan. 'It's since those boys moved in – you know that? It's those bikies that keep the weirdos out of the park mate. That's for sure.'

### **An association is an association is an association ...**

To end this speculative section on outlaw clubs and their impact on social capital, I will relate to an issue within the broader discussion on social capital that have caught some attention recently. The question is whether certain types of associations contribute more or less to the generalized social capital than others. It has been argued that, even though all associations may contribute to public social capital, associations aiming at different purposes will have different effects on this development. As a response to this understanding is there, within the field of political science, attempts to establish some kind of scale based on differing social-capital or civiness-generating capacity of different types of organizations (e.g., Stolle and Rochon, forthcoming).

This is an important question and the research will certainly provide new interesting data. However, I will in this section briefly address another question that might be of interest in this debate. The basic question is which type of people a specific type of organization organizes and what would happen to these persons if they were not active. Considering, for example, the character and life situation of most members of outlaw clubs described in the literature, it is hardly plausible that a membership in an outlaw motorcycle club easily could be swapped or replaced with one in the Red Cross or Rotary, or vice versa.

I would argue that, considering the effect on society at large from the internal relations only and from another point of departure, one relevant comparison for the case of outlaw clubs (and other associations) is *not* if the members of an outlaw club score higher or lower on any type of general 'civic-ness meter index' than do members of other, more traditional voluntary or nonprofit organizations like a political party, a neighborhood association or the YMCA. The crucial question, from this perspective, is whether those individual members would score higher or lower if they join their respective organizations than if they would *not*

have joined. In this case, the interesting question instead focuses on the relative *improvement* of trust, not on the snapshot state of it.

Let us conduct a hypothetical test. If members of an outlaw club were asked questions about the level of their generalized trust or confidence in unknown others, one would expect these levels to be significantly lower than among the average citizens. As seems to be argued by many students of outlaw biking, however, this low overall trust is often the main *reason* for banding together – not a sub-sequent *effect* of joining the club. It could be argued that the individuals in these organizations, maybe for the first time ever, experience anything like (generalized) trust; in the local chapter, within the national federation or in the international outlaw biker society. That is, *considering their internal affairs only*, this discussion indicates that the existence of outlaw clubs could actually contribute to a higher total level of civic-ness in society than if they had not existed. Whether this improvement of social capital among their members procentually is smaller or larger than that of other organizations remains an empirical question. Note also, once again, that this reasoning does not take into account other, external effects of the organizations and their activities, which – in line with the proposed model – of course is necessary.

### (3) The outlaw club and the future

The fragmented and even shattered community in which modern man seems condemned to live tempts one to suppose that the appropriate unit for democratic life might be the village or small town. Only there, it might be thought, could one ever hope to find a center of life small enough so that it permits wide participation, and small enough besides to foster the sense of unity, wholeness, belonging, of membership in an inclusive and solidary community which we sometimes seem to want with such a desperate yearning.

Speaking for myself, I doubt whether man can ever recapture his full sense of tribal solidarity. Like childhood itself, there is no returning to the childhood of man.

Robert A. Dahl (1967, p. 960)

To see the Hell's Angels as caretakers of the old 'individualist' tradition 'that made this country great' is only a painless way to get around seeing them for what they really are – not some romantic leftover, but the first wave of a future that nothing in our history has prepared us to cope with. The Angels are prototypes. Their lack of education has not only rendered them completely useless in a highly technical economy, but it has also given them the leisure to cultivate a powerful resentment [... and ...] mass media insist on portraying [HA] as a sort of isolated oddity, a temporary phenomenon that will shortly become extinct now that it's been called to the attention of the police.

Hunter S. Thompson (1966, pp. 265-266)

An outlaw motorcycle club is an experiment in utopian communalism; it is a personal grasp at self-fulfilment and a collective search for community that rides on wheels along the inner-city streets and sprawling highways of industrial society.

Daniel R. Wolf (1991, p. 340)

The mind boggles when you read the above statements. Two of them were made some thirty years ago by political scientist Robert A. Dahl and the journalist Hunter S. Thompson, and one is a more recent (Durkheim-inspired) account by anthropologist Daniel R. Wolf. A number of questions pop up. In this final section of the essay, I will address one of these: How do you delimit the collective sphere of individuals and relations to which an individual belong? How to delimit the 'field' in which an individual can contribute to, and benefit from, a build-up of social capital?

Do these 'fields' have to be geographically or physically demarcated? All of the four examples provided by James Coleman in his article from 1988, for example, are found in very narrow geographical constructs; diamond merchants living in the same very close community; small groups of South Korean students from the same high-school, hometown or church; families with young children playing in a particular city; or a certain market in Cairo (Coleman, 1988). Is this close proximity really necessary?

Could this discussion on social capital in some way be connected to Dahl's (1967) question on what size and kind of administrative unit that is most appropriate for democratic government? In 1967, he wrote (*ibid.*, p. 954):

Should democracy be based on a territorial unit, like a town, state, or country, or a non-territorial unit, like a labor union, business firm, or industry? How big should the unit be? Small, like a committee or neighbourhood, large like a country or world region, or something in between like a state, province or region?

An interesting issue in this discussion on outlaw biking, is the idea of imaginary 'societies' or 'communities' based entirely on, for example, calculative, genuine, ideational or coercive relations (Sjöstrand, 1997), instead of on the traditional, geographically delimited territorial borders. Examples could be the Catholic Church, or the Odd Fellows found in the nonprofit world, but also large multinationals in the highly international corporate world would probably display the same features. Members of these organizations can travel all over the world and will often be accepted into the same organization in the new country they are visiting only on displaying some kind of evidence of membership.

There are some accounts supporting that a similar practice exists also in the case of outlaw bikers and skinheads. In this way, the new and existing

members of an outlaw club can draw on contacts and relations built and established by earlier and older members. As a member of the right type of organization, you are often offered food, protection and somewhere to sleep if you are able to produce the right form of credentials, e.g., a badge, tattoo, or a personal recommendation. This is probably partly a function of the fact that the members of outlaw clubs are, in the words of Abadinsky, "highly mobile – they can find support and safety in any city that has a club charter" (Abadinsky, 1994, p. 282).

There are even examples in the outlaw literature where unknown outlaw bikers help each others, only because they are outlaw bikers. You might be able to borrow a motorcycle while visiting overseas, receive legal advice or even borrow money from complete strangers. The accounts run from problems with flat tires or running out of gas to the lending of large amounts of money and bikes.

Previous generations have created, so to speak, 'plug-ins' which new members can connect to, and benefit from, almost immediately. But you also have the practice where someone gives a helping hand to a complete strangers, without expecting any future direct face-to-face reciprocity, i.e., no possibility to "call in the outstanding social capital credit slip" that have arisen, in Coleman's (1988) vocabulary.

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## Major authors and some articles used

There is not an extensive line of research (nor writing) focusing on outlaw clubs. Of the existing sources found on the international scene, I have used a small number more than the others. In a couple of books on organized crime it is also possible to read about outlaw clubs. However, most of the information in these seems to come from some of the major books on the topic and are rather general in its nature.

### Books:

**Sandra Harvey and Lindsay Simpson;** Australian journalists that wrote a book on the Father's Day massacre in Sydney in 1984. They followed the trials and did also interview many of the members in the two feuding clubs, the Comancheros and ther Bandidos.

**Yves Lavigne;** Canadian journalist who wrote his first book on the Hells Angels in 1987 and since has published a number of other books on the same topic. His perspective is very much that of the classic police and media image. His tone is rather aggressive and he often gives detailed accounts of sensational events, e.g., drugs, sex and violence.

**Hunter S Thompson;** US journalist, writing on the US Hells Angels in the 1960s, after riding and partying with them for a couple of years. His book is a 'classic' for everyone interested in the field and provides a first detailed and well-argued picture of what it all is (or was) about. He gives an ugly picture of the phenomenon but still, he is often accused of being too romantic about the outlaw world.

**Daniel R. Wolf;** Canadian anthropologist, teacher at the University of Prince Edward Island. He has been riding as 'a friend of the club' with the Canadian Rebels for three years and written a book based on that. He seems to have a more complex understanding of the phenomenon than many of the other writers, but maybe one could trace a slight romanticism.

### Academic Articles:

Watson, J. Mark (1982) "Righteousness on Two Wheels: Bikers as a Secular Sect", in *Sociological Spectrum*, No. 2, pp. 333-349.

Hopper, Columbus B. and Johnny Moore (1990) "Women in outlaw motorcycle gangs", in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 363-387.

Cunneen, Chris and Rob Lynch (1988) "The social meanings of conflicts in riots at the Australian Grand Prix motorcycle races", in *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 7, pp. 1-19.

### **Writers/researchers in the Nordic countries:**

**Joi Bay;** Danish researcher in criminology at Copenhagen University, Denmark. He has written extensively on the Danish and Scandinavian outlaw world from various perspectives, e.g., in the form of tribal metaphors and about the heraldics of the clubs, their colors and other symbols.

**Carl-Johan Charpentier;** has a PhD in anthropology, but are today active as journalist and author. He is also editor of Scanbike, a large Nordic biker magazine. He has been riding Harley Davidson himself for some years and seems to have very good personal contacts within the Scandinavian outlaw/biking world. His latest book is written in a rather positive tone and he is often understood to be close with at least parts of the world of outlaw bikers in Scandinavia.

**Lars Lagergren;** researcher at Linköping University, tema T, in Sweden, with a special interest in the broader culture of motorcycling in Sweden. He uses a historical approach and focus, among other themes, on gender issues. He will during 1998 publish a couple of book chapters on the topics male ideals and the motorcycle and on the development of the larger Swedish motorcycle culture.

**Ove Sernhed;** researcher and teacher at the Department for Social Work at the University of Gothenburg. His tone is critical but informed, has also used a gender perspective on outlaw biking in some of his writing.