Toward Interest Inarticulation: A Major Consequence of Corporatism for Interest Organizations

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The main issue discussed is the difficulties in collective action. Three logics of collective action are identified and discussed in terms of their implications for solidarity within interest organizations and for organizational action. Both solidarity and organizational action are important for successful policymaking. Policies can be decided without the support of the members, but their implementation may thus prove difficult. The theoretical issue of interest articulation by interest organizations is the important one here. The article concludes that encompassing organizations will most likely have difficulty in articulating a definite organizational policy. It is maintained that corporatism and public responsibility-taking can severely hamper the articulation of organized special interests. They lead to interest inarticulation. This may lead to legitimacy problems for the organization and be one explanation for the recent decline in certain established interest organizations in Sweden and recent discussions on the future of corporatism.

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of corporatism. It refers to the necessity for large, heterogeneous interest organizations to accept public responsibility for their demands and actions.

As noted in previous studies, one important aspect of public responsibility-taking is predictability on the part of the interest organizations and discipline from their memberships. Streeck (1982) discusses this in terms of organizational opportunity and constraint. He considers the changes within interest organizations that accompany corporatism. The changes are increased organizational professionalism, centralization, administrative rationalization, formalization, and decline of the structural potential for participation. Others have reasoned in a similar vein (Schmitter 1982; Olsen 1981; Offe 1981; Ruin 1974).

Yet it is surprising that more systematic attention has not been given to the question of the beneficiality of public responsibility-taking for how interest organizations represent the interests of their members. The question concerns both the democratic nature of interest organizations and the future of policymaking that is based on corporatist intermediation. This article addresses the question by exploring the internal problems facing large, heterogeneous, and encompassing interest organizations in Sweden.

Three logics of collective action are identified and discussed in terms of their implications for solidarity within interest organizations and for organizational action. Both solidarity and organizational action are important for successful policymaking. Policies can be decided without the support of the members, but their implementation may prove difficult. The theoretical issue of organized interest articulation is the important one here. As suggested by the title, the article concludes that encompassing organizations will most likely have difficulty in articulating a definite organizational policy. It is maintained that public responsibility-taking can severely hamper the articulation of organized special interests. This may lead to legitimacy problems for the organization, and it may be one explanation for the recent decline in certain established interest organizations in Sweden.

Problems in Interest Organizations

Social scientists have tended to ignore the complicated problems involved in collective action. Some scholars believe that collective action is simply the effect of a group with common interests. The group simply forms and begins to act collectively. Other scholars stress more the importance of selective incentives for collective action. The traditional approaches in political science have also overlooked the problem. On the one hand, one strain of the historical interest group pluralist approach tended to view interest representation and articulation as unproblematic. On the other

hand, neo-corporatist theory has generally taken organizational membership as given and concentrated instead on the disciplinary effects of corporatism on interest organizations and their memberships. The important research questions so pointedly raised by Mancur Olson in the 1960s, of why people join large interest organizations, and why they remain members of these established and heterogeneous organizations, need to be given serious attention by scholars. Also, they are very relevant in Sweden today.

The main issue taken up in this article is the difficulties of collective action. The point is not that interest organizations are failing to reach agreement on member interests. Agreement within interest organizations can still be reached in a dialectical fashion, i.e. organizational interests are shaped by individual interests that fashion and control those interests at the same time (Cawson 1985). Rather, factors leading to potential organizational stagnation are explored. The most extreme instance of stagnation occurs when an interest organization becomes useless to its members.

Encompassing organizations, such as those found in Sweden and certain other countries, rank high on all or most measures of organizational resources. They are characterized as representative monopolies. Also, they are problematic interest organizations. Possibly the most serious problem that they now face is interest aggregation. How are demands from various groups of members to be combined or given priority? How is solidarity between these groups to be upheld? Here member demands are defined on the basis of the objective situation of the members and their subjective perceptions and interpretations (Offe 1985).

Interest aggregation is a particularly sensitive matter when the membership of an organization has articulated its heterogeneity by coalescing into unsanctioned subgroups that articulate a (sub)special interest. Recent examples from the Swedish experience include the creation of guild-like groups by members of the Federation of Swedish Farmers (*Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund*, LRF) and protest groups by members of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (*Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation*, TCO) (Micheletti 1985a, 1990). Interest aggregation also becomes difficult when different groups of members explicitly present the leadership with irreconcilable demands (see Moe 1980, 133 ff. on subgroup members and leaders; Goldthorpe 1984 on dualism).

Not only may certain member groups feel that their leadership is less successful in representing their interests in material terms, they may also begin to wonder whether the different heterogeneous member groups form a common interest or common whole. The consequences may prove to be quite serious. Internal solidarity may be questioned. Another consequence is an awareness of group heterogeneity. This may lead the different groups

of members to play 'contingently cooperative strategically' against each other (Lange 1984, 103, 114). Chaos within the organization may result as the contradiction between group preferences and 'organizationally preferred' outcomes becomes more pronounced (Schofield 1980). Members may decide to leave the organization. Perhaps the decline in membership that has recently been experienced by many white- and blue-collar unions in Sweden can be explained in these terms.

When this sense of oneness within an interest organization is lost, the organization can be said to have substantively failed at forming an organizational goal and collective identity. It has not reached the 'universalistic' goal of representing the interests of all its members (Offe 1985, 159).

Why Organize and Stay Organized?

According to one logic of collective action, individual members and member groups demand predetermined results from their organizations. A process of distantiation takes place when such results are not forthcoming (Offe 1985, 152 f.). This means that certain members or groups of members may not see how their specific interests are reflected in the collective preference ordering of the organization (Barry & Hardin 1982, 367). They begin to view their organization as impotent and may even have difficulty relating the traditional reasons for membership with the actions taken by the organization. Explanations given by the leadership for these actions may not be satisfactory. The established and strong trade unions of Sweden are facing this situation today (see for example Elvander 1987). As a result, the interest organizations are forced to devote more resources to agitation: the message of the agitation is that members should organize for the selective incentives offered (Olson 1971).

Of course, it may also be argued that membership in interest organizations cannot only or always be based on this direct application of individual interest to collective action as formulated in the logic of collective action discussed above (Elster 1985). This view of collective action is called the thin logic. It is a fallacy of composition (Hardin 1982) because it assumes that a person or member has only one preference ordering and that this ordering is applicable to all collective situations. A quite absurd example of a consistent application of the thin logic of collective action that has been pointed out in the literature is the assertion that a group goal exists for three men holding the same individual goal of desiring to marry the same young woman (Cartwright & Zander 1960, 347).

A second logic of collective action assumes that an individual can and probably does have two or more preference orderings. Sen (1979, 102) formulates this point well:

A person is given *one* preference ordering, and as and when the need arises this is supposed to reflect his interests, represent his welfare, summarize his idea of what should be done, and describe his actual choices and behaviour. Can one preference ordering do all these things?

The second logic of collective action modifies the first or thin logic of collective action (Elster 1985). It emphasizes cooperation between heterogeneous groups of members and loyalty to the organizational cause. It assumes that members of interest organizations have their own preference orderings but that they can relate these personalized preferences to the larger context of the membership group.

Seen in this way, collective action is more than interest articulation. It is interest aggregation which can be defined as a means to mitigate conflicts within the organization (Williamson 1975). Organizational conflicts arise when individual members do not feel that their preferences or demands have been properly considered in the organizational policy or group goal. Also, conflicts within the interest organization may stem from the fact that many members are dissatisfied with how their preferences have been aggregated or integrated together. It is quite possible to analyze the recent deconstruction of the Swedish model of collective bargaining and the waves of strikes and lockouts in these terms (Elvander 1988).

This can lead to a type of prisoner's dilemma that is a high-order organizational problem. One part of the dilemma involves individual rationality, preference, and individual member voice or exit. This is the thin logic of collective action specified above. The other part of the dilemma is collective rationality or the necessity for dissatisfied members to put the (particular) conflict in a larger organizational perspective. This is the second logic of collective action (Barry & Hardin 1982, 71).

The foremost issue of the second logic of collective action is solidarity. This is the glue which holds the organization together. The idiomatic expression is 'sticking together'. It is also the most important issue for why members join and remain in organizations. Solidarity is the norm for many large interest organizations and the basis for their representative democracy. Yet it has rarely been the focus of scholarly analysis. The concept has been absent as an entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Social Science* (Sills 1968), *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Seligman 1930, 1942), *Social Science Encyclopedia* (Kuper & Kuper 1985), *Dictionary of Sociology* (Mitchell 1968), and *Handbook of Political Science* (Greenstein & Polsby 1975).

The issue of organizational solidarity raises a number of important questions for research. What kinds of membership and leadership responsibilities does solidarity entail? What are its implications for member criticism of organizational actions? What is the relationship between solidarity and the exit option? For example, is exit (always) unsolidaristic?

It is possible to distinguish between two conceptions of solidarity. The first one is consistent with the second logic of collective action. It can be summarized by the phrase tit-for-tat, i.e. cooperation that is not completely based upon concern for others or the welfare of the group as a whole (Axelrod 1984). But there is usually a higher payoff from cooperation than defection (Axelrod 1980). The second conception of solidarity goes much further and is based on a logic of collective action that involves the transformation of preferences and the emergence of commonality of interest (Elster 1985). It conceives solidarity as an essential by-product of a social state (Elster 1983) and is discussed later.

Tit-for-tat solidarity is conscious and strategic. Frequently, it is tactical reciprocity. It is accommodation, commitment (Arrow 1974), compromise (Rustow 1970), acceptance (Wolman 1960), and cooperation. Tit-for-tat solidarity can be learned and taught. It is tolerance of others and patience. It is solidarity that is based on reasoned discussion and cognitive consciousness. It differs from empathy, which is seen here as a more intuitive identification with the situation of another person or group.

The importance of this type of learned or explicit solidarity should not be underrated. It signifies that a member voices or shows his or her explicit commitment to and trust in organizational goals and procedures. The member has a sense of duty to the interest organization. At times, the leadership must explain why the member should accept an action or a decision as necessary for the interest organization. If the argument is convincing, the leadership has succeeded in putting the action in a larger perspective for the members. Commitment of this sort is essential for organizational action (Lange 1984, 106). This is the case because internal conflict, which was described above as a type of prisoner's dilemma, frequently must be modulated by organizational norms. This is necessary for the maintenance of group cohesion (Bonacich 1972). This is the most important goal of solidarity. Scholars writing on corporatism often refer to the need of member discipline. The term discipline is also applicable here.

Solidarity is part of the organizational incentive system. It is a principal variable that affects organizational behavior (Clark & Wilson 1961). As with other kinds of incentive, it is vulnerable to re-evaluation. Changes in organizational size or environment and in the level of membership and leadership expectation can alter both the feeling and degree of solidarity in an interest organization. This is discussed later. Also, solidarity can affect two other important conditions of organizational action, which can also be described as the 'effectiveness of cooperative effort' (Cartwright & Zander 1960). They are motivation and commitment (Brunsson 1985).

The interest organizations that fit this category of solidarity may be termed mutual accommodation organizations (Wolman 1960). They differ from the strict instrumental organizations of the thin logic of collective action in which the criterion for membership is individual rationality. Mutual accommodation organizations do not immediately fail or lose their legitimacy with waning member enthusiasm over material results or disconcernment over organizational goals. But systematic and long-term discontent will eventually lead to severe problems of organizational solidarity. This is the case, since group attractiveness, cohesiveness, and solidarity are conditioned upon the ability of the organization to meet the needs of its members (Cartwright & Zander 1960).

The norms and sanctions of the interest organization will play a more important role when internal conflict over goals and actions increases and when general disillusionment and dissatisfaction among the members become serious. Norms and sanctions aim at socializing members to perceive accommodation and compromise as right and non-cooperation as wrong. Other rules encourage members to view themselves as integral parts of the interest organization rather than individuals with conflicting preference orderings. This is the learning in the solidarity of tit-for-tat.

Crisis in solidarity will lead the leadership to put more emphasis on such formal rules as procedural democracy and procedural rationality as it attempts to persuade members that its actions are consistent with the goals of the interest organization. Regardless of rank-and-file discontent, organizational decisions and actions are declared to be consistent with member interest because they were preceded by appropriate deliberation; they are representative (Simon 1979; Mortimore 1974). Behavior of this kind occurred frequently when the Confederation of Professional Employees in Sweden experienced internal conflict over the nuclear power and wage-earner fund issues (Micheletti 1985a).

Members who voice criticism on the substantive rationality of the actions of their leaders under such circumstances may be labeled as 'extra-parliamentary' and 'unsolidaristic'. This is because they disagree with and challenge the judgment of their leaders and the decisionmaking bodies within the interest organization. The implication is that, though the leaders of an interest organization encourage the active participation of members in organizational affairs, they tend only to accept the viewpoints of members who participate in the 'right' way (see Panebianco 1988, 23).

Standard operating norms of the interest organization may not always be able to mitigate internal conflict. More resources will be devoted to defending organizational solidarity when collective action by the organization is threatened to the point of paralysis (De Geer et al. 1986, 24 f.). The idea here is to try to reinforce and rejuvenate the basic ideological and institutional conditions that sustain solidarity and facilitate solutions to the problems of collective action (Buckley et al. 1974).

How is this done? One scholar suggests that ritualization and proliferation of cooperative interaction can make solidarity more durable (Axelrod 1984,

130). Other writers point to the role that metaphors, labels, and platitudes can play in organizational renewal, inculcation of organizational ideology, and commonality. Consultants are important (Czarniawska-Joerges 1988; Morgan 1983).

A frequent tactic that is used by Swedish interest organizations combines these alternative remedies. The leadership starts to elaborate opinion-making campaigns that attempt to encourage the members to rally around the organizational linguistic artifacts, study the organizational ideology, and interact with other members. The aim is the creation of a common 'social reality' (Cartwright & Zander 1960). For example, the Federation of Swedish Farmers spent quite a lot of money on formulating and discussing its attempt, which was called 'A New Grip – Together' (Nya tag – tillsammans) (Micheletti 1990).

When the campaigns succeed, solidarity is given a boost. Both the membership and leadership benefit. The impact of individual rationality in collective decisionmaking is modified, and the group identity of the members is encouraged and reinforced. Tit-for-tat solidarity is increased. All this makes it easier for the leadership to plan organizational action. In short, it creates a cooperative situation.

When such attempts fail, they become merely leadership strategy that aims to defend the status quo existence and politics of the organization. Appeals to solidarity do not really differ from disciplinary action. Rather than being an encouragement for understanding and cooperation, organizational solidarity is a plea for membership conformity. It punishes the members for their critical voice and 'incorrect' participation. Interest organizations that call for greater solidarity in this way want the members to acquiesce to the leaders. Solidarity comes to mean status quo maintenance rather than organizational development through accommodation. Solidarity also comes to mean member obedience; unsolidaristic behavior is questioning or defiance of the authority of the leadership by the members.

The failure of tit-for-tat solidarity to increase explicit commitment, mutual cooperation and exchange, and boost the feeling of 'we-ness' among the members causes severe difficulties for mutual accommodation organizations. The organization finds that the solidarity of its early years can no longer be relied or called upon. It will attempt to obtain solidarity directly. Such attempts ignore the fact that solidarity is a result of a conscious choice commitment to the organization. This is the basis of the second logic of collective action.

These problems are completely avoided in organizations that are characterized by a broader version of solidarity (Elster 1985). The important aspect of this third logic of collective action is commonality of interest. This underlying consensus over organizational values is brought about through the reasonability (rather than the rationality) of collective action

(Offerdal 1986). Collective action is a social relationship that is susceptible to change through 'communicative rationality' (Habermas 1984, 1986). The transformation of preferences rather than their temporary aggregation is the central concern:

The goal of politics should be unanimous and rational consensus, not an optimal compromise between irreducibly opposed interests. The forum is not to be contaminated by the principles that regulate the market, nor should communication be confused with bargaining (Elster 1985, 35, emphasis added).

Communication within the interest organizations is the key for the third logic. It should be conducted by people within the interest organization. Discussion should be unconstrained. It should not give consideration to the positions held by these people. Organizational roles are less important. All viewpoints receive equal attention. The organization is 'open to argument' because it wants to correct failures by identifying organizational mistakes. It is self-reflective and horizontal rather than vertical and elite democratic in organizational form and attitude. The broader view of solidarity is an example of how power in an open society is exercised (Petersson 1989). The leadership does not fear debate or criticism. Active social interaction is the essence of this broader theory of solidarity. It does not matter whether this interaction is forthcoming as arguments, criticism, or reassurance. It is the state of affairs that interest organizations of the second logic of collective action desire when they experience a crisis of member solidarity. But they can only react defensively when faced with crisis.

It is fully possible for one individual member to be rational. But it is, by definition, fully impossible for one individual alone to be reasonable. Reasonability is a creative discursive process. It requires public expression, exchanges, and discussion so that interests and demands can be aired (Offerdal 1986; Elster 1983, 17 ff.; Habermas 1986):

Reason achieves its creative effect through persuasion, that is, it works with natural forces rather than against or apart from them. It encourages some, redirects others, combines, balances, suggests changes, but never opposes directly (Diesing 1962, 242).

This means that individual rationality is not, as in the first logic and somewhat in the second logic of collective action, a necessary condition for membership in interest organizations. Potential members do not need to know exactly why they want to join a particular interest organization. Their reasons may be latent. To choose to join an organization 'establishes other interests for' the member (Schick 1984, 11). The leaders of the organizations 'formulate in language what others feel but could not tell' (John Commons cited in Williamson 1975, 24). The role of leadership is one of guidance rather than one of mediation between client interests or disciplinarian as in the second logic.

In other words, cooperation within the interest organization is closely

associated with the issue of its legitimate power and influence. It is the power of 'common convictions in unconstrained communication' (Habermas 1986, 85). Legitimate power entails that words and deeds must converge. Organizational symbols and metaphors are also important for this third logic of collective action. Yet, unlike the second logic where linguistic artifacts easily lead to manipulation and deception, the symbols of the organization in the third logic are important to communicate its reasonability and legitimacy (Offerdal 1986, 16; Parsons 1986, 103).

Organizational solidarity so conceived is a byproduct. This means that it can be foreseen and desired but not intended. One of the main problems for mutual accommodation interest organizations of the seond logic of collective action is that they desperately attempt to force broad solidarity on their members. They do this by trying to teach their members to learn the right ways of behaving within the organization. Examples from the Swedish case are courses for active members given by the interest organizations and their campaigns among the members. They employ advertising firms and consultants to help them run the campaigns. The efforts have generally failed to instill the true feeling of solidarity among the members.

The presence of broad solidarity cannot be explained by reference to instrumental and semi-instrumental (tit-for-tat) rational action. Rather, broad solidarity is a byproduct of an action that has been undertaken for some other end. The end is usually goal attainment. Frequently, interest organizations have been praised for effects that are essentially byproducts. Examples include member efficacy, formulation of class interest, and legitimate powerbroking. A concrete instance of a byproduct involves the positive effect of the wage-earner issue on member activity within the LO (Elmbrant 1989). Interest organizations have also been considered to be in a state of crisis when these effects are not forthcoming. It is not surprising that the LO believes that it can learn something about true solidarity from the Polish union Solidarity. It will become more apparent later in the article that interest inarticulation inhibits the development of broad solidarity. Table 1 summarizes the discussion in this section on the three logics of collective action.

An important lesson for future research is that scholars of interest organizations who attempt to answer the question why people become members should give more attention to the distinction between intended organizational goals and desirable and indirect organizational consequences. Indirect consequences may, in fact, be necessary for long-term organizational success. Perhaps scholars have ignored this distinction because they have difficulty in distinguishing properly between effects and causes or 'what is glued' and what is 'the glue' in the study of social relations (Latour 1986).

Table 1. Logics of Collective Action in Interest Organizations.

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Instrumental it Mutual accommodation, ion, semi-instrumental iise Communicative, open	ogic	Type of interest organization	Preference of members	Basis for solidarity	Role of leadership	Method for renewal of organization
it Mutual accommodation, semi-instrumental iise Communicative, open	. Thin	Instrumental	One preference ordering, pre- determined before seeking membership	Explicit agreement on goals and activity of organization	Simple interest articulation Mouthpiece	Explicit criticism New groups of members with new preference orderings join organization
Communicative, open	. Explicit ooperation, ompromise	Mutual accommodation, semi-instrumental	More than one preference ordering: a personal one before seeking membership, a learned one after joining organization	Learned, strategic, disciplined, 'tit-for-tat' commitment and reciprocity	Interest aggregation Teacher, mediator, disciplinarian	Ideological control, ritualization, standard operating procedures Penetrating criticism by members is taboo
	. Broad	Communicative, open	Transformation of preference after becoming members	Communality of interest	Interest formulation Discussant, guide	Self-criticism, active social interaction

Organizational Size, Solidarity, and Action

As a consequence, scholars have also failed to distinguish between interest organizations that are held together by the membership and those which hold the membership together. Organizations which are held together by their members are characterized by the first and third logics of collective action. Those which hold their members together are the mutual accommodation organizations of the second logic, i.e. the encompassing organizations of Sweden. What does imperfect and modified solidarity imply for the future of interest organizations? Four basic considerations are important here: (1) the relationship between organizational size and organizational solidarity, (2) the role of the environment in organizational 'internal politics' (Goldthorpe 1984), (3) the impact of involuntary memberships on organizational design, (4) the tendency of interest organizations to overstate their goals. All considerations involve the issues of organizational effectivity and democracy.

Large interest organizations, especially peak or umbrella ones, include diversified groups of members within their ranks. The Swedish case shows that large interest organizations are also very heterogeneous. Not only do members differ from each other on many different objective criteria, for example education, place of work, gender, etc., they also differ from each other when it comes to how much they expect of their leaders and how they perceive the goals of the organization. Organizational heterogenization is present when a composite or universalistic understanding does not exist among the members or when this understanding cannot be taken for granted. When this occurs, interest organizations tend to react in particular ways. They tend to stress their organizational ideology, identity, and historical past or 'roots', as intimated earlier. All these reactions aim at creating an artificial consciousness for the organizational cause or raison d'être among the members.

The main peak union for white-collar employees in Sweden, the TCO, offers two wonderful examples. A few years ago it decided to concentrate its resources on an organizational project or campaign entitled 'Enduring Opinionmaking' (uthållig opinionsbildning). The decision to invest resources in the project came after the union experienced considerable member discontent over a number of years. The person employed as the organizational ideologue explained that the aim of the project was to create a popular or folksy (folklig) identity for the TCO. Recently, the same union movement has concentrated on leadership training. It portrays the development of the representative democracy within the white-collar movement in the following way. The first union leaders were agitators; they were charismatic and had close contact with the organizational grassroots, i.e. the members. Then the leaders became executives or managers (utförare)

in the 1950s and 1960. In these years, the white-collar movement became a representative monopoly: it grew in strength and became professional. Now in the coming age of postmodernism, union leaders must regain contact with the members. Union leaders of the 1990s are to be trained as leaders of teams of members. They are 'coaches', and the association with sports is a conscious one. A soccer coach has even been commissioned as a consultant (Närling 1990). This general development characterizes other large interest organizations as well.

The basic problem reflected in the activities by the TCO and experienced by other encompassing interest organizations in Sweden is stagnation. Stagnation is due to a crisis of solidarity and policy dis- or non-orientation. The members and even the general public find it difficult to understand the underlying rationality for collective action in these types of bureaucratic interest organizations which may, following the TCO, be called 'non-folksy'.

The problem is a complex one. On the one hand, active participation in an encompassing organization does not tend to lead to a feeling of efficacy or the thrill of fighting for a cause. Active participation in these types of organizations has become professionalized. It is a career, and it may provide members with relief from less than stimulating employment situations (Panebianco 1988). On the other hand, passive or checkbook membership does not necessarily signify that the interest organization can represent the interests of its members in an effective way. Politicians may believe that the leaders of the interest organization do not truly represent the interests of the members. Many members may conclude that active participation is not worth while and that membership is neither advantageous nor disadvantageous. Membership has become conventional behavior. The problem now facing some Swedish organizations is that members are increasingly willing to act unconventionally. Recent statistics on organizational density within the unions show that a growing number of people are deciding to either leave their union entirely or only maintain membership in its employment insurance fund (see LO 1989 for statistics on organizational densities).

Problems of member solidarity affect interest organizations in different ways. Members' discontent and distantiation from encompassing organizations may be a catalyst for the creation of new social movements. Participation in organizations of smaller size and scope may allow members to experience what they feel is lacking in established organizations. What larger organizations lack is 'individualization' (Hamburger et al. 1975; Festinger et al. 1952), genuine solidarity, worthwhile participation, and specific goals. Interest organizations of smaller size and scope are more similar to the ideal speech situation of broader solidarity and the third logic of collective action (Elster 1983; Homans 1950). It may be the case that

smaller units are more inclined to encourage differences of opinion as a step toward further development. The importance of self-reflection and self-criticism for organizational maintenance or development has not been given the scholarly study it deserves (Petersson 1989).

Recent evidence from Sweden shows that citizens in general feel less affinity or sympathy with larger size interest organizations (Petersson et al. 1989). These include the unions and cooperative associations for consumers and farmers. A wonderful example comes from the unions. Over a year ago, a trans-union group for female members of the white- and blue-collar unions was established. It was not sanctioned by the unions, but it received 50,000 SKR from the Ministry of Public Administration for member recruitment. One of its founding members and entrepreneurs is an employee of the TCO who was responsible for the TCO policy on sexual equality. The group is a network of women who believe that their unions do not represent them adequately on issues involving women, e.g. shorter workdays, parental leave of absence, better wages for typically female employment, and sexual harassment. They believe that the unions represent an older, more hierarchical form of democracy, i.e. the second logic of collective action. The Infra describes its aim metaphorically:

The project is developed as a sunflower. Every petal is a part of the sunflower and consists of a group of women who will work together in an area that really interests them over a shorter or longer period of time. The contents of the petals and their scope can vary over time depending on the participation of the members. Petals can wilt and new ones can develop. The different leaves work in the way and with the issues that the group itself decides upon. The central flower stands for the work that the group undertakes together. It takes the form of yearly meetings which may be similar to yearly meetings and assemblies that are characteristic of traditional voluntary associations (Infra 1989; my translation).

The quotation offers a good example of the difference between the characteristics of smaller organizations and encompassing ones. Encompassing organizations must always balance the need for effectivity with the desire and necessity of solidarity and representative democracy (Cartwright & Zander 1960; Offe & Wiesenthal 1980; Hirschman 1970). Self-criticism and self-reflection have not been their characteristics. For example, unlike the Infra, all tendencies toward particularism in established and professional voluntary associations and encompassing organizations tend to threaten disruption. This is the case since tit-for-tat cooperation is the only solidarity possible in these cumbersome interest organizations. The greater the impact of organizational heterogeneity on organizational activities, the more difficult it is to create tit-for-tat cooperation.

An exception here seems to be the Swedish Employers' Association (Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen, SAF). The SAF is attempting to renew itself. It is using ideological control to discuss the effects of corporatist intermediation for the organization itself and Swedish political democracy.

As of yet, the proponents have not convinced the entire organization that the SAF should withdraw from corporatist settings (Rothstein 1988). Also, it is developing toward the first logic of collective action. Instrumental rationality is becoming the key for membership. Service to members and selective incentives are replacing tit-for-tat solidarity as the meaning of the organization.

The dilemma is that the more encompassing and strong the organization, the greater the risk for subgroup establishment. Another complication for encompassing interest organizations is the lack of alternatives for those who want to become members. Membership in large organizations is not obligatory, but it is frequently non-voluntary (Cawson 1982). Group cohesion in these organizations more likely will be based on the strength of forces restraining organizational 'exit' and promoting non-internalized conformity (Cartwright & Zander 1960). This is tit-for-tat. Selective incentives have become important in restraining the use of the exit option as well.

Highly heterogeneous memberships create problems for interest organizations. One problem arises from the representative monopoly of encompassing organizations. When monopoly status is granted by the government to an interest organization, the organization is required to aggregate internal interests in a predictable, responsible, and decisive way. If the interest organization cannot perform this task, its corporatist credibility is threatened.

Another problem involves the implications of interest aggregation for interest articulation. Here interest articulation is seen as the main task for interest organizations. It is considered an aspect of the internal politics of the organization and involves organizational activity and the formulation of organizational goals. There are three basic problems here for encompassing organizations. (1) Member heterogeneity will tend to lead to internal disagreement on the exact nature of the goals and tasks of the organization. (2) Certain member groups may be given higher priority than others as a consequence of irreconcilable internal differences or their importance to the organization. (3) The organizational leadership may decide to formulate vague organizational goals and imprecise preferences in an attempt to regulate internal conflict or avoid conflict over the issue of which group of members to give priority. It may do this in its effort to aggregate heterogeneous internal interests (Olson 1971, 1982; Marsh 1976).

This explains why interest organizations may engage in interest inarticulation rather than interest articulation. Interest inarticulation is defined as vaguely formulated organizational goals and policies. When inarticulation is fully developed, it is difficult to know what to expect of interest organizations. Expectation is an important cognitive condition of organizational action and solidarity. It can begin to wane if members find

that their participation is not worth while, i.e. when it does not result in goal attainment (Brunsson 1985, 19 f.). Goal ambiguity can be said to have a snowball effect. But most likely it cannot be avoided in encompassing organizations. This type of interest organization is usually an amalgamation of smaller organizations or a federal organization that must rely on superordinate goals for a minimum of unity (Sherif 1967).

Superordinate goals define the basic purpose of the organization, but they are difficult to specify and tend to be inoperative (March & Simon 1958). As a consequence, organizational action that is based on these goals rarely occurs. Instead, action at best centers around well-formulated operative subgoals that symbolize qualities that are valued by the organization (March 1981). Yet if these subgoals do not have 'some plausible linkage to the basic goal', they will be more similar to selective benefits or peripheral goals (Cartwright & Zander 1960, 353).

Interest inarticulation is a vicious circle. The inability of interest organizations to act on their goals furthers inarticulation. Goal ambiguity and overcommitment promote inarticulation. Goal ambiguity results from indecisiveness (March 1981). Calculated obscurity deliberately presents goals as unclear in order to avoid conflict or blame (Weaver 1988). An interest organization which formulates its goals obscurely can keep open respectable alternatives for retreat, make an idea or action more morally acceptable, and hide actual disunity or even unity (Vedung 1985). Goal obscurity also gives the leadership the chance to explain itself: When members complain that their organization does not attain its goals, the leaders can maintain that the members have misunderstood them. Thus, responsiveness of the organizational leadership to member demands is difficult to access (Regini 1984). Goal obscurity can help leaders 'cool out' member disappointment and lower member expectation: 'Organizations thus may attempt to influence members to want less, to delay their gratification and, in any case, to view the refusal as rational and equitable' (Izraeli & Jick 1986, 172). Obscurity promotes interest inarticulation because it makes goal displacement and dissolution feasible. Also, it can lessen the 'disappointment potential' of member expectation.

Ambiguous goals lead to ambiguous action. The problem is compounded because interest articulation can also lead to difficulties in member recruitment and external negotiations. Potential members may not want to join an interest organization that does not have a clear profile, high aim, or an ambitious policy. Why join an interest organization if one does not know what it does? Current members may ask themselves why they remain as members. It is possible that encompassing organizations may be forced to overcommit themselves in attempts to satisfy the diverse demands that are raised by their heterogeneous member corps. This is a defensive stance and reflects insecurity. Corporatist negotiation will strongly encourage

encompassing organizations to take on issues vital for extrinsic reasons. In this sense, they may 'take off in directions unanticipated by the original sponsors and often unwelcome to them' (Hirschman 1982, 100). The sphere of activity for the interest organization is enlarged, and commitment to the organizational raison d'être is attenuated. Anthropomorphically-speaking, interest inarticulation signifies that organizations 'lose muscle tone'; they lose their soul and spirit, and this leads to organizational decline or atrophy (Kimberly et al. 1981).

Organizational Disruption and the Future of Corporatist Politics

The structure and style of interest articulation has traditionally been seen as one of the most important characteristics that define the political culture of a country. The traditional view maintained that a particular form of bargaining occurs when interest articulation by associational interest groups – to use the term current at that time – is instrumental. This type of bargaining implied that the negotiated results were 'realistically spelled out' (Almond & Powell 1966, 25). This view is clearly associated with one strain of pluralist reasoning: that interest groups compete openly over policy results while the state remains relatively neutral and passive (Cox 1988). Articulation of interest by interest organizations with obscure or ambiguous goals leads to a different kind of bargaining and probably a different kind of public policymaking. Interest inarticulation is only one example of a more indistinct relationship or boundary between the state and civil society that has developed in many Western nations. This view generally characterizes corporatist theories of interest organizations.

Interest inarticulation signifies that interest organizations evolve from representing special interests toward more general interest representation. They begin to represent the public interest. One consequence is that encompassing interest organizations give greater priority to corporatist cooperation than internal goal formulation and the priorities of their members. Corporatist cooperation or intermediation has become the point of departure for interest articulation for these organizations (Chamberlin 1978; Berger 1981). When interest organizations take public responsibility for their actions, the importance of environmental considerations for organizational survival becomes more pronounced. It may be the case that organizational struggle against external control is the most important aspect in the analysis of organizational action and goal formulation (Sunesson 1985; Panebianco 1988).

It is often maintained that compromise and flexibility characterize corporatism. Compromise is said to come about since interest organizations, political parties, and representatives of the state can meet together, present their positions on important political issues in a non-politicized way, and reach agreement on a policy proposal. The agreement that is reached is frequently seen as satisfactory for all involved actors in either the short or the long run. Flexibility refers to the assumption that these corporate actors can modify their positions and the position of the organizations they represent. They are assumed to be able to anchor their decisions in a well-disciplined, passive, and functionally-organized membership.

This general description raises important issues for future research. Are encompassing organizations capable of engaging in corporatist exchanges once their memberships have become very heterogeneous and when members demand more of a say over organizational politics? What is an interest organization to do when groups of important members criticize the leadership for not formulating a more articulate stand on crucial issues? Are selective incentives the answer here? If so, what are the implications for the logics of collective action which were discussed earlier? Can corporatist exchanges survive these changes?

These questions are not easily answered. Evidence from the Swedish case also shows that encompassing organizations are starting slowly to move from elite to participatory democracy, from the vertical to the horizontal society. Organizational structures are slowly becoming less hierarchical, and organizations can be said to be deconstructing to some degree. Postmodern approaches to internal conflict are being developed (Petersson 1989).

The question becomes whether corporatist intermediation is a product of the vertical welfare state society that sought solutions that were generally applicable to all groups. This is the 'fair weather product' thesis that is common in the literature on corporatism (see Norby Johansen & Kristensen 1982; Panitch 1979; Offe 1983). Can corporatism be accommodated to the postmodern society?

Corporatism has often been praised for enhancing predictability among political actors. It has tended to check political spontaneity by not granting legitimacy to certain organizations and viewpoints. Corporatism has signified that 'the establishment' has retained its political position, though their organizational platforms may give them less than adequate support.

Current reality is showing that this description is becoming less characteristic of Sweden. Member heterogeneity is leading to organizational disruption. Less established social movements are threatening the legitimacy of the encompassing interest organizations. New political ideologies, for example environmentalism, may gradually replace social democracy and liberalism or force these ideologies of modernism to adapt to changing circumstances (Paehlke 1989). Leaders continue to dominate organizations, but it is more difficult for them to steer their memberships.

Where exit from traditional organizations may be impossible, voluntary internal isolation becomes the entrance to newly-formed, unsanctioned extra-parliamentary groups. The Infra is one example. Loyalty to encompassing organizations no longer equals solidarity. Interest organizational representation in government is decreasingly a channel for the direct articulation of organizational interests. It can be argued that demonstrations, deviant behavior, media attention, new social movements, and threatening strikes are beginning to replace corporatist intermediation as a method for the articulation of member interest.

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Elvander, N. 1987. 'Regeringen och avtalsrörelserna.' In Lewin, L., ed., Festskrift till professor skytteanus Carl Arvid Hessler. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International. Where exit from traditional organizations may be impossible, voluntary internal isolation becomes the entrance to newly-formed, unsanctioned extra-parliamentary groups. The Infra is one example. Loyalty to encompassing organizations no longer equals solidarity. Interest organizational representation in government is decreasingly a channel for the direct articulation of organizational interests. It can be argued that demonstrations, deviant behavior, media attention, new social movements, and threatening strikes are beginning to replace corporatist intermediation as a method for the articulation of member interest.

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