

The Commons

**New Perspectives on Nonprofit
Organizations, Voluntary
Action and Philanthropy**

Roger A. Lohmann

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FORWARD

Books that shape emerging fields of scholarly endeavor are like this one by Roger A. Lohmann. Their analysis is as acute as that of policy analysts, which Lohmann was trained to be. Their purview is as broad as the interdisciplinary field of social work, the field Lohmann teaches. Their vision is that of a poet, which Lohmann proves to be with his original images of the subject of voluntary action. And their writing is as crisp and expressive as that of the social critic, which Lohmann also succeeds at being in this persuasive and original work.

I first started reading the papers of Roger Lohmann some years ago and was startled by the power of the metaphors he applied to the world of voluntary action and nonprofit organization. The concept of "the commons" to take the primary example, embodied brilliantly the core value of voluntarism in society: to create a protected space for the collective expression of what people find most important in their lives.

I made space for Lohmann's vision in the preface to my own book *Mapping the Third Sector* when I wrote: "It is within these commons--in neighborhood associations and interest groups, in houses of worship and secular places of contemplation, in nonprofit organizations and social clubs--that people communicate across the chasms between different life experiences and create meaning and value for their lives. It is in these modern commons that people learn the arduous joys of sharing what is good within the complex web of contemporary society."

Roger Lohmann has written a book that is in many respects the first definitive large-scale theory of the voluntary and nonprofit sector. Up until now, theory has largely been descriptive (an example is that of Michael O'Neill) or middle-range (the largely economic theories of Henry Hansmann, Estelle James, Dennis Young; the largely sociological work of Albert Meister, David Horton Smith, David Knoke; and the largely political work of me and Jennifer Wolch).

Readers, accustomed to earlier theory, should approach this book

as though they were embarking on a voyage to a new land. Think of it this way: we divide our institutions into four major sectors to accomplish our societal tasks. Corporations and businesses (the first sector) make most of our products and hire most of our labor: they provide jobs that amount to 80 percent of the country's payrolls. Government (the second sector) provides a military capacity and a number of ancillary regulatory and welfare services: it meets about 13 percent of the national payroll. Voluntary and nonprofit organizations (the third sector) address a number of educational, charitable, and membership purposes: their payroll amounts to more than 7 percent of the national total and is supplemented by much valuable voluntary effort as well. Finally, households and informal organizations (such as neighbors, kin, and so on--the fourth sector) perform the lion's share of home management and child raising, though without the benefit of the transfer of cash.

What Lohmann does is to help us look at the work of the third sector so that it becomes as familiar to us as that of business, government, and the family. He reminds us that voluntary choice is at the core of this sector, rather than the more febrile legal or economic concepts of "nondistribution constraints" and "sector failure" cited by earlier theorists.

Lohmann's broad-scale theory transcends disciplines; it is original, robust, and powerful. Moreover, the theory forces those who believe they know something about this field to think about it anew. The theory of the commons forces those who have swallowed the nonprofit metaphor whole to contemplate the wisdom of their diet. It fortifies those who have seen in voluntarism the core value of the sector with the power of that vision, both in empirical reality and normative preference. And it invites those who have yet to approach the work of the third sector to do so in a clear and caring fashion.

The Commons is a significant work. It has the potential of defining a field at the point of its full scholarly emergence. The author has done his work: it is now for the rest of us to read, learn, and apply.

Camden, New Jersey Jon Van Til August 1992

PREFACE

Sometimes the most familiar objects can be extremely difficult to speak and think about clearly. Such is the case with the patterns of human association we ordinarily denote as “nonprofit organization” and “voluntary association.” Empirical findings and middle-range generalizations about such entities are expanding very rapidly; in the process, however, some of our cherished assumptions about the exceptional role of volunteerism in American culture and the charitable nature (or lack thereof) of nonprofit purposes are eroding or being transformed. Conventional categories, such as the distinction between “profit” and “nonprofit” motives or orientations, and broad distinctions between competition, cooperation, and conflict are no longer sufficient in a global village of pluralistic cultures, insecure families, bureaucratic states, and mixed economies.

Nonprofit and voluntary action studies have a major problem of theory. For many readers, *theory* is an ugly, intimidating term that suggests irrelevance and impracticality. For others, *theory* has very exacting connotations of assumptions, precisely defined terms, and clearly states propositions. *The Commons* seeks to be theoretical in neither of these senses: it seeks to talk generally (and interestingly) about the social, economic, and political structures and processes of nonprofit and voluntary action and at the same time to redraw some of the major internal and external boundaries of the field. In undertaking this task, I made an effort to recondition some traditional, and even archaic, terms and to draw attention away from preoccupation with nonprofit corporations as sole representatives of the field as a whole. Nonprofit organizations, voluntary associations, and several other distinct types of related organizations are, in the theory which is offered here, subsumed within a larger category called *the commons*.

Audience

The Commons is written for all those who care deeply about the practice of social democracy and who continue to marvel at the multitude of ways in which people with similar interests seek out one another and commit themselves to shared purposes and joint

actions of all types. In particular, the theory of the commons is addressed to investigators, students, and practitioners of the several subfields of the science of association, which de Tocqueville called “the mother science”: social workers, sociologists, political scientists, economists, anthropologists, psychologists, lawyers, fund raisers, accountants, foundation staff members, volunteer coordinators, grant writers, and anyone else with a serious intellectual interest in this fascinating topic.

Organization of the Book

The introduction sets out the nature of the task undertaken in this book; it is built around and addressed to the expanding group of nonprofit organization and voluntary action researchers whose current quest is defining a commons devoted to the study and understanding of common action.

Chapter One reviews the current state of nonprofit and voluntary theory. Nonprofit corporations and nonprofit organizations are considered, along with nonprofit, voluntary, third, nongovernmental, independent, and various other sector conceptions.

Chapter Two sets out a basic theoretical framework called the theory of the commons. It begins with a consideration of eight alternative assumptions, and thus systematically attempts to adjust the theoretical footings of nonprofit and voluntary action theory. The chapter highlights the marginal status of nonprofit “firms” and shifts the focus to the much broader category of associations, clubs, groups, and gatherings that make up the commons. The term *commons* and its adjective form, *common*, are elaborated in terms of participation, shared objects and resources, mutuality, and fairness. Endowment is said to encompass cultural, as well as material, resources. Civilization is said to be the endowment of societies and cultures. The positive implications of patronage in terms of support and protection are emphasized. I coin a special term, *benefactory*, to summarize social organizations whose purposes involve giving and gift exchange in some fundamental

way.

Endowments of voluntary action in Western civilization are the theme of Chapter Three. Although the American nonprofit corporation may be a unique phenomenon, there is abundant historical and anthropological evidence of the prior existence of associations, endowments, and commons of many types throughout the history of the West.

Chapter Four is devoted to broadening the range of recognized benefactories; it examines, in addition to the association and social agency, other types of benefactory such as the solo trusteeship; public bureaucracies in the arts, sciences, and charities; common places or spaces devoted exclusively or primarily to commons; campaigns and committees; scientific, religious and professional conferences; and cooperatives and disciplines. Other types of commons examined include fiestas, foundations, holidays, journals, political parties, pilgrimages, institutes, secret societies, sciences, and trusts.

Chapter Five suggests ways for extending conventional nonprofit economics beyond its present concerns with revenue-oriented nonprofit service producers to the analysis of commons and comments on the production model.

Chapter Six addresses the question of the relation between the state and the commons. The relation is reciprocal because democratic states arise out of the political activity of parties and political interests to function as dominant protective associations in societies. Because of its singular position, the state must be constitutionally restrained from exerting control over common activities. We do this in the United States through the provisions of the First Amendment, with its related guarantees of freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and redress of grievances.

Chapter Seven expands the range of the theory of the commons by examining four types of nonmarket exchange involving voluntary labor and the exchange of common goods. These are termed tributes, gifts, potlatches, and offerings.

Chapter Eight explores the social structure and process of the nonprofessional charity world. Current explorations of mutual aid, self-help groups, volunteerism, and related topics suggest that the

professional, publicly funded world of social service contracts between state agencies and professionally staffed nonprofit corporations has grown up alongside another world of helping volunteers, friends, and neighbors. Charitable activity that involves mutual aid, self-help, and volunteers offers preeminent examples of commons in operation.

In Chapter Nine a large and somewhat unwieldy body of psychological research is introduced, reviewed, and shown to bear upon traditional issues and concerns of nonprofit and voluntary studies. Although its theoretical implications do not appear to have been closely examined, “prosocial” behavior appears to be emerging as a broad rubric for linking such important topics as altruism, charitable behavior, responses to fund raising, bystander behavior, free-riding, and other topics. Prosocial behavior involves both selfish (egoistic) and unselfish (altruistic) motives on the part of the actor (Dozier and Miceli, 1985).

Chapter Ten links the descriptive and explanatory discussions of the commons with the normative and value issues that practitioners, in particular, must struggle with. Rather than the misplaced reliance upon productivity, maximization, and efficiency, the standards of satisfaction, proportion, hermeneutics, conservation, and prudence are suggested. Chapter Eleven is a brief recap of central aspects of the theory.

The epigraphs to the chapters are slightly edited extracts from Alexis de Tocqueville’s famous Book Two, Chapter, 5, “Of the Use Which Americans Make of Public Associations in Civil Life.” Gender references to “men” have been modernized and specific references to Americans have been removed. This was done simply for reasons of historical currency, human dignity, and optimism.

Acknowledgments

Writing a book of this sort is a long-term process, combining periods of working alone preceded and followed by rare opportunities for dialogue and common exchange of ideas and

thoughts. Jon Van Til understands far better than most journal editors what it takes to transform half-formed “bright ideas” into something more. He has done for this project what he has done for dozens of others, encouraging and questioning and teasing out more implications. His editorship made the

Journal of Voluntary Action Research a true intellectual commons.

The Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) has been for me a genuine scholarly commons. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to several colleagues and fellow ARNOVA members: Ellen Nettig, Steve McMurty, Bob Herman, Felice Perlmutter, Steve Wernet, Nancy McDuff, Thomasina Borkman, George Floro, and Jeff Brudney. Numerous anonymous reviewers of conference papers and manuscripts also offered helpful comments and advice at various stages.

My colleagues and students at West Virginia University, particularly Ernie Barbeau and Barry Locke, also helped to shape my thinking on these issues over a number of years. Mary Sue Bracken, Seina Hahn, Debbie Williams, and my secretary, Penny Dailey, also contributed to this effort in many important ways.

Most important to me are the love and the sacrifices of my family growing out of this project: my children, Melissa and Andy, and daughter-in-law, Lisa, have always been generous and tolerant to a fault in sharing me with this and other projects. And I appreciate more than I can ever say the willingness of my wife, Nancy, to handle more than her share of the routine tasks of daily life while being brilliant at her own career.

To everyone who in any way contributed to this work, I say thanks. A great many authors might have been cited from the voluminous and rapidly growing literature. I tried, for the most part, to cite key works within and less well known works outside the field that seem most likely to contribute to enriched common understandings. The achievement is ours in common, but, of course, responsibility for all errors in fact and in judgment is mine alone.

Morgantown, West Virginia Roger A. Lohmann August 1992

Nothing is more deserving of our attention than the intellectual and moral associations.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

Introduction: Rethinking the Nonprofit Issue

People, it has been said, form associations at the drop of a hat. In fact, almost any such occasion may well provoke more than a single new association: One society perhaps will be devoted to promoting hat dropping as recreation, while another will be dedicated to keeping records on the longest and highest recorded drops. A third group may form to raise funds for victims injured while bending over to retrieve their dropped hats while a variety of ethnic, religious, nationality, gender and other self-help organizations are formed so that those who have dropped their hats may share this and other common experiences. Moreover, the network of organizations connected in some manner with the issue of hat dropping can give birth, at some point, to a kind of hat droppers' sub-culture or even a broad social movement devoted to transforming society.

While the tendency to organize for any civil purpose was once thought to be a uniquely American characteristic, recent events

have raised important doubts about the accuracy of this view. News stories in the 1970's of small groups of Russian dissidents meeting in apartments and passing *samizdat* literature from hand-to-hand in the face of rigorous attempts at repression by a totalitarian state apparatus were among the many widely available clues that this is a much broader phenomenon. Elsewhere in the world, 'American-style' associations and nonprofit organizations were adopted with an ease and for a diversity of purposes contradicting the supposed culture-boundedness of these social forms. Yet, few were exact copies of American way of associating; they were more like Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals—seemingly infinite variations on a central theme.

The amazing, revolutionary social, political and economic events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union beginning in 1989, accompanied as they were by reports of the formation of hundreds and perhaps thousands of new clubs, groups and associations provided proof for those who needed it that what we Americans tend to call nonprofit organization and voluntary action was part of a world-wide phenomenon. Either the world was adopting American-style voluntary association practices or (and this seems more likely) our perceptions were catching up with tendencies deeply embedded in a great many different cultures. Many of us are still not exactly sure which is the more plausible view.

This book is devoted to formulating a new multidisciplinary view of nonprofit organization and voluntary action to address these and other issues. Nonprofit and voluntary action scholars have made great strides in recent years in fleshing out detailed analyses of many separate aspects of this important topic. A recent bibliography, for example, contains more than 5,000 scholarly and literary listings on philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. (Foundation Center, 1989) However, specific research agendas have been addressed within an increasingly threadbare conventional wisdom about the basic nature of nonprofit and voluntary action built up largely from American experience over this century. As in any field heavily influenced by practical concerns, a large number of topics and issues of nonprofit organization and voluntary action and more than a few questions

of major importance, have gone largely unaddressed simply because no research agendas have crystallized around them.

In first looking at nonprofit and voluntary action, we might easily grant the rather obvious and frequently repeated (yet simplistic and misleading) assessment that "nonprofit" endeavor is characterized by the negative condition of lacking a profit. In doing so, we may still be at a loss for any real explanations of why and how they occur as they do; hard pressed to identify those positive traits or characteristics most closely associated with such "nonprofit" endeavors. Do churches, volunteer fire companies, nonprofit charities and symphony orchestras, for example, really have anything in common with professional associations, scientific journals or service clubs? Moreover, do any of these or other "tax exempt entities" really share any common characteristics with the political parties, or cemetery associations near which they are classified in the Internal Revenue Service Code? (Biemiller, 1991; Sloane, 1991) Or is the "nonprofit sector" actually only a residual category of the disparate and dissimilar--a kind of Victorian attic of the unrelated and irrelevant castoffs of a profit-oriented civilization?

For most of the recent history of social science, such questions have been of interest to only a handful of researchers and scholars at any given time. However, interest in nonprofit and voluntary action in virtually all of the social sciences has grown very rapidly within the past decade. The number of active research projects underway in this field has gone from a mere handful to dozens and perhaps hundreds in only a few short years. Part of the reason for this growing interest, of course, was politically inspired; as early as the mid 1970's and definitely after 1980, a newly vigorous conservatism professed an agenda of limiting government by passing many of its current activities and functions off to the voluntary sector with praise for a Thousand Points of Light. Another motive force was empirical: Data like that reviewed in the next chapter suggest dramatic increases in the number of nonprofit organizations, as well as substantial growth in public support and donations for voluntary action in recent years. Upon

closer examination, however, the data also point towards several entirely new, and related recent developments --the growth of “support groups” and “self-help groups” being one of the most dramatic examples.

Rethinking Nonprofit, Voluntary and Philanthropic Studies

Present interest in the nonprofit sector involves more than interest in simple growth and novelty, however. It has been evident to a number of scholars that rethinking and reordering of some of the larger questions of the place of nonprofit and voluntary action in the social world was overdue. (Van Til, 1988; 1989; Billis, 1988; 1989; Smith, 1988; 1989; etc.) Yet, despite tremendous progress made by research in this area, important questions about the fundamental nature of charitable and philanthropic action remain unanswered.

Such rethinking is, inexorably, a theoretical enterprise. (C.f., Langton, 1987; Ostrander, 1987) Yet, empirically and practice-oriented social researchers and practitioners interested in voluntary action are often highly suspicious of any exercise which smacks of theory, per se. A colleague at a recent meeting of the Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Associations put the matter rather directly, when she asked, “Why do you think we need a new theory of the nonprofit sector?” To a considerable extent, this book is an attempt to answer that question.

More formal considerations notwithstanding, any social theory is first and foremost an expressive vocabulary; a communication matrix, an expressive medium for articulating ideas and asserting premises. In the terms presented here theory, to the extent it is accepted and utilized constitutes a common good. It can offer a broad framework of shared terms, understandings, nominal and operational definitions, assumptions and conventional approaches within which discrete but related issues can be formulated and researchable questions addressed by many investigators.

Undoubtedly, some new terminology (or revitalized old terminology) is needed in the study of the nonprofit sector. Virtually everyone who attempts to say anything meaningful on this topic eventually finds themselves stumbling over the expression of certain key ideas. Researchers and scholars frequently find it necessary to add qualifiers to their work such as: “Of course, we are not looking at many other activities which are ‘voluntary’ in the sense that they are non-coerced.”

Devising a suitable vocabulary with which to share experiences and interact with others over common, shared issues and concerns is preeminently a theoretical task. The kinds of hesitations, qualifications and stumbling after words characteristic of nonprofit and voluntary action dialogue are clear signs of theoretical exhaustion, and point directly toward the need for some enhanced theoretical language within which to discuss nonprofit and voluntary action. It would be convenient, of course, if such new theories were to spring forth full blown, as if from the mind of God. The social sciences, unfortunately, have been noticeably short on divine inspiration and must settle for an often-faltering human dialogue full of fits and starts, misstatements and false leads. This book is conceived as a part of that dialogue.

Four-Part Dialogue

Four interrelated aspects of the on-going dialogue over rethinking the nonprofit issue are uppermost in importance. First, an effort is made to call attention to research on matters of importance to nonprofit and voluntary studies in the work of scholars in the broader scholarly community. It may be desirable, in other words, to expand the paradigm of nonprofit and voluntary action in a number of directions more or less simultaneously.

Second, in talking about important nonprofit and voluntary action issues, less attention needs to be focused upon the arcane jargon and particularistic perspectives of earlier isolated work in discrete academic disciplines. In many instances, simply because independent scholars were working in relative isolation, rather

than within the multidisciplinary academic community which has now emerged in this area, it may have been necessary to adopt unwarranted assumptions, misleading terminology, and unsuitable premises simply to fit their work within hostile or unsympathetic academic traditions. Instead of swearing continued allegiance to arcane terminology, we should pay more careful attention to the tremendous language resources available to the common community of speakers of English.

Third, less effort overall should be expended on the convention that research on nonprofit and voluntary studies is a value-free exercise in objective science and greater attention should be paid to explicit consideration of the underlying values operating in the arenas of nonprofit and voluntary action.

Finally, additional attention should be paid to questions of parsimony and the economic and thoughtful use of language in describing and discussing these matters. Each of these issues will be addressed more fully in the following pages.

In the this book, I shall be engaged in a task of theory building primarily concerned with three considerations: 1) developing descriptive terms and language that allow for adequate identification of the phenomena of nonprofit and voluntary action as we observe them; 2) developing explanations for the phenomena labeled by these terms; and 3) framing our descriptions and explanations within the context of values that we can observe in use by nonprofit and voluntary actors. My inspiration for this effort came, at least in part, from Bernstein's challenging work (1976) on "restructuring social and political theory."

Expanding the Scholarly Community

Nonprofit and voluntary action research today is a viable multidisciplinary concern, of interest to researchers, scholars and practitioners in many different disciplines and professions.

Aspects of the broad issue of the role of nonprofit and voluntary studies in society are of importance to a dozen or more disciplines in the social sciences and humanities and others are of potential interest and significance to a great many other fields in the humanities and the natural and life sciences as well. Moreover, this issue is complicated because the sciences, humanities and other academic disciplines and professions are themselves examples of nonprofit and voluntary action. Indeed, understanding the social organization of any scientific interest or discipline, from nonprofit and voluntary studies to the anatomy of wombats, is critical to understanding the central concept of the commons. In some cases, interest in nonprofit and voluntary action is a matter of day-to-day attention to practical questions and immediate concerns. For example, issues of accountability in social services can impact directly upon the ability of workers to continue delivering service to clients or of solicitors to raise funds. (Milofsky and Blades, 1991) In other cases, major issues of interdisciplinary theoretical and research importance are buried deep behind layers of arcane and specialized jargon within a particular field. The distinctive organizational theories of religious bodies are sometimes grounded in sacred beliefs, and buried deeply within theologies, for example.

Much of the contemporary knowledge regarding nonprofit and voluntary studies has emerged in interdisciplinary settings explicitly devoted to the topic. The Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Associations (ARNOVA), formerly the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars (AVAS) has, for more than two decades, provided a national and international forum for multidisciplinary discussion and consideration of important nonprofit and voluntary action issues. Through its annual conferences, proceedings and journal, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, ARNOVA has embodied many of the principles of nonprofit and voluntary action, which interest its members.

Recently, these efforts have been supplemented with the creation of two national periodicals, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* and *Nonprofit News*, and two new academic journals, *Nonprofit*

Organization and Management and an internationally oriented journal, *Voluntas*. More than a decade ago, Yale University broke new ground with the formation of the Program in Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, and Independent Sector, a coalition of national voluntary associations also sponsors an annual research conference. (Hodgkinson and Lyman, 1989) We have also seen the development of more than 40 academic centers and programs devoted to nonprofit and voluntary action research and teaching. Even so, the bulk of the scholarly work on nonprofit and voluntary action, as befits the topic, is still being done by independent scholars at institutions of all sizes and descriptions from the largest and most prestigious universities to small, independent one-person consulting firms and “think tanks”.

Taken together, these developments indicate the existence of a *scholarly community*. Such scholarly community is itself evidence of what we will be identifying as a commons in the pages which follow. We need to note that membership in such a scholarly community is not always simply a matter of affiliation, or even of regular attendance at conferences and meetings. Such activities merely define the formal core of contemporary scholarly communities. Such communities also typically include peripheries as well; in this case, those whose teaching, research, or practice is influenced by the body of nonprofit and voluntary action studies without any direct, formal participation. At present, the renaissance of nonprofit and voluntary studies has been sudden and dramatic enough that its periphery extends throughout most of the social sciences.

We must be careful to avoid thinking of the periphery only in terms of a passive audience. Despite a certain level of coherence and integration of efforts in the core of this particular commons, we cannot overlook the simultaneous existence of a host of independent scholars in a variety of disciplines and settings who have made important contributions to our collective understanding of nonprofit and voluntary phenomena. Much of the material produced by such past and present “independent operators” may be well known to members of the interdisciplinary community of

nonprofit and voluntary action scholars. For example, the central metaphor of this study --the commons --was first derived from an essay by a biologist. Hardin (1968) succinctly posed what has become known as the free-rider problem in an essay on “The Tragedy of the Commons.”

Reconnaissance on the Periphery

Review of materials for this volume suggests that some of these independent research efforts and work in non-traditional disciplines may have major implications for rethinking nonprofit studies. A wealth of interesting and relevant material is to be found in anthropological studies of other cultures and in medieval and ancient history. For example, an ancient Northern Indian ruler we call Asoka deserves to be ranked as one of the world’s notable philanthropists. Asoka patronized the institutional base of Buddhism just as Constantine did for Christianity, endowing hundreds--perhaps thousands--of monasteries, monuments and temples, and legitimating a distinctive set of Buddhist giving ethics and fund-raising practices.

Although attention has been lavished on various practical aspects of the contemporary relations between government and the nonprofit sector, systematic political insights are rare in nonprofit and voluntary action theory. Perhaps as a result, politics as nonprofit and voluntary action, and important political activities in political conventions and campaigns, party finance and organization, and interest group behavior have been largely ignored or only touched upon lightly in the existing nonprofit and voluntary studies literature.

Furthermore, any enterprise that seeks to deliberately expand the paradigm of a field by bringing in new evidence and additional questions must also raise the issue of parsimony as an objective of sound social theory, or risk simply adding to the cacophony. The qualities of appropriate brevity, succinct presentation and avoidance of redundancy are normally held up as desirable characteristics of any sound theory. However, parsimony is far

easier to talk about than to achieve in a multi-disciplinary context characterized by differing sets of taken-for-granted assumptions, variations in definition and variable emphasis of even basic terms and concepts. In a scientific world characterized by multiple exploding universes of knowledge and discourse, it is difficult even to gain access to all of the relevant materials, much less organize and collate them. In such a context, it is tempting to view any attempt at theoretical synthesis and parsimony as hopelessly naive and utopian.

Nevertheless, one of the principal justifications of the effort reflected in this book is a desire for greater parsimony in nonprofit and voluntary action theory. If the example of other sciences is a guide, classification and taxonomy are beginning steps toward more parsimonious theory. To begin this process, we can suggest that particular concerns found in six different social science disciplines form the emerging skeletal structure of a multi-disciplinary theory of the commons. In the following brief introductions, each of which is expanded later in the book, I introduce aspects of this theoretical anatomy.

Altruism

In some instances, independent examinations of nonprofit and voluntary action issues speak directly to matters of central importance to a particular academic discipline. For example, a number of psychologists have been interested in issues of motivation associated with charitable and philanthropic behavior. A number of studies of bystander behavior, for example, shed important light on the central issues of what motivates giving aid, donation and other forms of giving and helping behavior. In what follows, we will deal with these and other psychological concerns under the label of *altruism theory* and suggest that they are part of a pattern of concerns and theoretical issues concerning motivation and individual behavioral aspects of what we are calling the theory of the commons. In the context of contemporary nonprofit and voluntary studies, altruism theory can be seen as addressing behavior which occurs outside the family and not motivated by profit or gain.

Philanthropy

Researchers in sociology have been interested in the organized social relations of the associations, formal voluntary organizations and social institutions of "the nonprofit world." *Philanthropy theory*, in this sense, is concerned broadly with the social organization of all attempts to make the world a better place. Fisher (1986) defines it as voluntary giving, voluntary service and voluntarily association for the benefit of others. Nonprofit organizations and voluntary action are thus the principal medium of philanthropic studies.

Some researchers have examined primarily the internal and extramural relations of formal organizations, including inter-organizational coordination and community relations. More recently, groups of applied social scientists in gerontology and other fields have added extensive research on informal support groups to this list.

These concerns might be termed charity organization theory as they once were, or community organization, as they were more recently. Early in the present century, Amos Warner went so far as to suggest calling them "philanthropology". In this study, we shall designate them simply as *philanthropy theory*, and attempt to encompass the broadest possible range of concerns with the social organization of all efforts at social improvement.

Patronage

As noted earlier, one of the least examined aspects of nonprofit and voluntary studies is the political aspect of charitable and philanthropic behavior. This topic is actually part of a broader pattern of concern with the theoretical implications of patronage relations. Aspects of patronage theory, in this sense, have been of interest to a broad interdisciplinary community including historians and political scientists. *Patronage* is the giving of either protection or support. (Gifis, 1991, 346) Some of the most fascinating contributions to patronage come from the work of

classicists, art historians, literary critics and musicologists.

Patronage is the giving of either protection or support (Gifis, 1991) Patronage theory is concerned with an extremely broad range of hierarchical relations between patrons (or donors) and their clients. Such phenomena include status, power, authority and the state and all of its relations to the nonprofit sector, not just nonprofit service vendors, but also explicitly including political parties and party caucuses and conventions, interest groups, political campaigns and related political phenomena. Patronage theory explicitly includes not only the patronage of the nonprofit sector by the state, but also the unique forms of political patron relations by which the democratic state is constituted, and expressions of power and authority within nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations.

Gifts

The broad horizons of patronage theory open up to multidisciplinary scholars of nonprofit and voluntary scholars a significantly expanded view of nonprofit and voluntary action. The same may be said of a little-known area of specialized studies in anthropology and archeology. Following the lead of the French anthropologist, Marcel Mauss, a small but diverse group of researchers have made significant advances in understanding variations on "the gift exchange" in a cross-cultural context. The *potlatch* for example, is an important kind of serial gift exchange found in a number of different cultures.

Gift theory is a fitting label for cross-cultural and comparative studies that form an increasingly important aspect of our collective understandings of nonprofit and voluntary action. Because it deals with what is often centrally significant behavior in cultures very different from our own, gift theory must be approached very cautiously. In its broadest sense, gift theory is concerned with the consequences --including social integration and social equilibrium --arising from various forms of nonmarket and noncoercive exchange.

Charity

Many American social sciences, social work and parts of sociology in particular, originally arose in the wake of the reform Darwinism of Lester Ward and remain heavily committed to the pragmatic use of social science for social improvement. *Charity theory* is concerned with conscious, deliberate understanding and use of altruism, philanthropy, patronage and gift theories for the purpose of organizing and carrying out social improvement projects directed at aiding those in need.

Norms and ethics endorsing and advocating individual acts of charity can be traced to the brink of Western history and beyond. Organized eleemosynary efforts to aid the poor and disadvantaged were well established by the early Middle Ages. Beginning late in the nineteenth century, the scientific charity movement established the base of the contemporary model of social service with emphasis upon efficient and effective organization and the adoption of established routines and “methods” of charitable practice (Walter, 1987). Creation of the legal category of nonprofit corporations and the granting to such corporations tax-exempt status can be seen as by-products of those same efforts.

Endowments

Another major question of general importance that has been receiving increased attention in recent years, involves the economics of nonprofit and voluntary action. In its most general form, nonprofit economics is concerned with the economical use of a society's endowment--the social surplus of a productive society diverted from future production, public goods and private consumption and dedicated to various charitable and philanthropic purposes. Like other economics, endowment theory is a theory of means. In this case, however, the concern is with the uses of a society's endowment--its culture and its wealth--, which together define much of what we conventionally think of as its civilization. Ultimately, then, endowment theory is concerned with how a civilization uses what it currently possesses and what is known to

strive for common goods.

Business

Some researchers and scholars working in the area of nonprofit organizations and voluntary action are very enthusiastic about what might be called the *nonprofit business perspective*. In general, this approach is based on a categorical assumption, a critique and a viewpoint. The categorical assumption is that not-for-profit organizations, especially those that employ paid staff and receive fees or other compensations for their services, are more akin to commercial business organizations than they are to voluntary membership organizations. The critique based on this assumption is that these same organizations are often poorly managed, inefficiently operated and, all in all, rather poor specimens of the species. The resultant viewpoint is one placing heavy emphasis on management problems and perspectives.

Native Language Resources

One of the most basic common goods of any society or group is the spoken and written language, which its members share and through which they are able to express their thoughts, ideas and aspirations. In this sense, we are fundamentally concerned with the endowment of terms and concepts inherent in nonprofit and voluntary action studies. The objective of this book is modest in this regard: To state in words as plain and ordinary as possible what appear to be some of the most important aspects of how and why certain nonprofit and voluntary actions occur.

The theory of the commons as presented here does not answer all questions and resolve all issues, for in truth it is not yet fully clear what all of the issues and questions raised by an adequate interdisciplinary theory of nonprofit and voluntary action may be. Moreover, at least as many relevant disciplines are left out of this book for practical considerations, as are included. For example,

important contributions by geography and regional science, archeology, accounting and several additional major subfields of history are not discussed.

Another field of major importance only touched upon here is legal studies, in which a virtually unbroken chain concerned with inheritance, trusts and foundations and other relevant matters leads back to Roman law. We might expect that insights from each of these fields would broaden and enrich nonprofit and voluntary studies considerably. Others more familiar with these fields, however, must elucidate materials in those fields. It is sufficient to note that nothing currently suggests that evidence from any of the neglected areas would overturn the basic insights offered in this book.

As befits its subject matter, this book is in part a lighthearted language experiment; an effort to create word-pictures descriptive of the ways in which people in the nonprofit world think about themselves and their social worlds when things are functioning about as expected. It is also partly a thought-experiment into the possibilities of setting aside the materialistic and utilitarian “nonprofit” paradigms, which have so often guided public discourse and research on this topic.

I make no inflated claims about the overarching significance or public gravity of the language of the commons as offered up in this volume. The theory as presented here will not immediately cure human greed, ignorance or stupidity. Yet, some of its implications, consistently followed through, do appear to have promise of significant policy impact at some point in the future.

To those people suspicious of such cautious claims, take note: If physicists can indulge themselves with the fascinating wordplay of “quarks” like “up,” “down” and “charm” to give added meaning to their data, why can’t social scientists do likewise? Initially, it will be sufficient if the model presented here stands on its own as a description and explanation of an important slice of social, economic and political life. If it does, its practical

significance may be more appropriately assessed on a later occasion.

I do not suggest that what follows is presented as an objective or value-free exercise. Theories of nonprofit and voluntary action, like theories of the family, suffer from our limited abilities to describe and explain without simultaneously evaluating in every sense of the word. In the case of nonprofit and voluntary action, utilitarian theory--certainly through economics, but also through psychology, political science and the sociology of organizations--has proven to be particularly susceptible to this shortcoming.

For some people, the calculus of costs and benefits has become a universal index to what is rational. Yet it would be the most repulsive kind of reductionism to suggest that the fantastically diverse pursuits of nonprofit action should be conditioned or governed for all time by the narrow insights of twentieth century cost/benefit thinking. Enlightenment, virtue, beauty, rapture, truth, salvation, perfection, community, art-for-its-own-sake and untold other nonprofit objectives sought after by the philanthropists, philosophers, artists, scientists, athletes, religious and charitable of human history stand on their own merits as human endeavors. They do not need to be transformed into utility-maximizing or goal attainment in order to account them reasonable pursuits.

In developing the language of the model presented here, I sought to use what might best be called poetic license. The basic effort is to create a semantic model of various key elements of nonprofit and voluntary action. Considerable time and energy went into simplifying the basic terms. In particular, four and five syllable nouns ending in "tion" were cast out wherever and whenever possible. (Information and rendition, it must be acknowledged slipped through.) Also, I avoided meaningless meta-theoretical formalisms like *outcome* and *input* whenever feasible.

Substantial efforts went into exploring the connotations of ordinary English terms that might be used in the model, particularly those with a long history of practical use in this area. The English language is remarkably rich in ways of describing

and discussing aspects of nonprofit organization, voluntary action and philanthropy. Ordinary speakers of English have been dealing with nonprofit, voluntary and philanthropic issues in their daily lives for many centuries.

Some terms, like *dower* and *benefice*, were retrieved from linguistic oblivion. Others, like *endowment*, *commons* and *repertory*, were given slight tweaks to bring out latent or hidden implications of theoretical value. A few terms, most importantly *benefactory*, were deliberately constructed (in this case, by analogy with the terms *manufactory* and *factory* or *factors of production*) with an occasional dash of pun-intended.

Terms, such as *endowment*, *foundation*, *benefit*, and *trustee* stretch back hundreds of years and are anchored deep in western culture. (Chalmers (1827), for example, used the term in roughly the sense intended here nearly 200 years ago. Other terms (including borrowings from Latin, like *benefice*, or *fideocommissa* or from Greek, like *koininia*) express important contemporary ideas, but have either never been adopted or have fallen into complete disuse, and may be beyond recall.

In calling upon these rich linguistic reserves, any theory of nonprofit and voluntary action necessarily becomes a kind of reflexive exercise--demonstrating (or failing to demonstrate!) some of the very principles it asserts. All speakers of a common language are members of an association of sorts--mutual beneficiaries of common meanings and the resulting outlooks and worldviews that condition their actions in infinite subtle ways. At another level, the particular communities of researchers and scholars interested in nonprofit and voluntary studies declaim and sustain their joint interests through modes of communication and interaction and in so doing dramatize and demonstrate their subject matter.

Using a poetic frame of reference as a basis for social and political theory is not as whimsical as it may at first appear. Much existing work on nonprofit and voluntary action relies upon such literary devices, sometimes unintentionally. Nonprofit economics in its

current state has been built up from market economic theory with a whimsical series of analogies, ironies, metaphors and word play: Nonprofit organizations are treated "as if" they were profit-oriented firms. (Crew, 1975, 7) Such similes are a common poetic device, often used for irony or other dramatic effect. Nonprofit leadership is characterized ironically as "entrepreneurship". (Young, 1987) In the same vein, some existing nonprofit usages are suggestive of nothing quite so much as Lewis Carroll. The pretzel logic evident in compound negatives such as "the unrelated business income of the non-profit, nongovernmental sector" is an issue truly worthy of the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*. What can one possibly be asserting in such a phrase? Such terms often seem to operate at a strictly poetical level. Regrettably, at times they appear to convey largely negative images of disheveled, disorganized, unfocussed and unmanageable establishments peopled by the confused, impractical and erratic.

Overview of the Theory

The first task of any theory is to establish a suitable nomenclature. I call the interdisciplinary theory set forth in this book the *theory of the commons*. The theoretical rationale for using this name will become increasingly clear as the theory unfolds. The term *commons* plays upon many relevant meanings and connotations. For example, the conventional wisdom of a group is sometimes called common knowledge. The Anglo-American experience of common law arose out of custom and conventional practice and the much broader experience of common lands held in joint tenancy or ownership.

Several American states including Pennsylvania and Massachusetts are self-identified as Commonwealths, and the economic transformation of Europe was undertaken under the heading of a Common Market. Clubs and membership organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution, frequently have common rooms for the mutual use of members while public

elementary education often occurs in common schools and is thought by many to emphasize common sense, which was also the title of a political polemic at the time of the American Revolution. That revolution was undertaken as a common action of the people of the United States against the English state, which already included its famous House of Commons. Then as now, it was common knowledge that many of us engage in commonplace tasks, some of which like the Revolution may be undertaken for the common good. Each of these connotations of the term “commons” is related to the others, and as we shall see, and to the fundamental, constitutive ideas of nonprofit and voluntary action, as well.

A number of contemporary academic uses of the term *commons* support the usage in this book: Edney and Bell (1984) call their decision-making game, in which teams of participants harvest resources from a shared pool, *a commons game*. And, there is a rich tradition in social philosophy concerned with the *common good* roughly as we use the term in this book.

The term *commons* as it is used in this book may refer to a club or membership organization, social movement, political party, religious, artistic, scientific or athletic society, support group, network, conference of volunteers, or to several other forms of what we think of as nonprofit or voluntary social organization. As developed here, the term is an ideal type; it distills an essential set of related characteristics, that are seldom if ever empirically observable in pure form. As an ideal type, we should expect to find in any empirical commons, evidence of altruistic motives and behavior, philanthropy and charity, as well as patronage, various forms of donations and gift giving, as well as programs involving search, learning and other ways of expanding common endowments.

I hope that readers of this book, including members of the Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Studies and all those interested in nonprofit and voluntary studies may see themselves as collaborators in a commons of which the author is also a participant. The project of the book and of the theory of the

commons is partially to clarify the nature and purposes of the tasks facing this particular commons by pointing toward future directions for research and study of the multiplicity of other commons in contemporary society.

Attention to common purposes and objectives by the participants of any commons can be expected to result in the rendition of "common goods", which are distinguishable not only from the private goods on sale in the marketplace and the public goods of the state, but also from THE common good. Unlike public goods, no assumptions need be made about the universal desirability of such common goods. In most instances, it is sufficient that common goods are shared or held jointly by members of a particular commons, even in the face of indifference or downright hostility from others. Common goods may be transformed into true public goods only under very special circumstances.

Any set of common goods suitable for further use are said by the theory to constitute an endowment and the full set of all endowments in a society or group of societies are seen as constituting a civilization. The endowment of any commons ordinarily consists of its treasures of money, property and market goods, its collections of precious, priceless objects, and its repertoires of routines, cults, skills, techniques and any other meaningful behavior learned by participants in the commons or passed on to others for the common good.

Any endowment is a dynamic entity. Treasures, collections and repertoires carried forward into the present constitute a common heritage, while those made available as resources for future use make up a common legacy. Oft-quoted commentaries by de Tocqueville and others on the unique American penchant for voluntary action, for example, point to it as an important part of the heritage of American civilization and presumably its ongoing legacy as well. Children who learn basic repertoires of voluntary association in scouts and churches or synagogues, grow up to be parents who organize PTA's, little leagues and new political parties, interest groups and professional associations.

Practicality alone does not define an endowment. Among primitive tribes, past or present, many of the same skills, which go into tool making also go into decorative and ritual art forms. (Van Gennep, 1960; Shils and Young, 1953; Smith, 1972B) It is usually a moot question whether practicality preceded or flowed from decoration and ritual. Endowment theory, therefore, is concerned in part with the special circumstances of the rational choice between carving an ax and decorating a ceremonial pipe. In the life of any people, such choices may be equally as momentous as the better-known “guns and butter” choice between food and defense.

The social organization of any commons may encompass one or more benefactories, consisting of the organized social relations between patrons, clients and various intermediaries, or agents, devoted to various forms of gifts, grants or benefits. Two major contemporary types of benefactories are those engaged in various problem-solving efforts and those engaged in presentations of various types.

Other complex acts in the commons may link various benefactories together in a variety of complex ways. Thus, the conduct of voluntary action (like any other) research may be a particular form of problem-solving activity, while the discussion of that research at a scientific meeting such as the annual ARNOVA conference, or publication of the findings in a scholarly journal such as NVSQ constitute presentations. Yet, conduct of the research and presentation of the findings are clearly part of the same larger act (which we call “the research”). These and other acts derive their meanings in part from one another and from the commons, which encompasses them.

Commons are not physical entities or places, although a variety of common places may be set aside for shared uses. Indeed, the architecture of such common places and the unique architectural forms, which express and facilitate common values, is, itself, an important area of inquiry completely outside the repertory of the modern nonprofit and voluntary action scholar. (A few scattered

examples can be found. Taylor [1975] considers prisons and “moral architecture”, for example.)

Commons consist principally of acts incorporating dialogue or interaction and building up successive understandings and the aggregation of separate meanings between participants. Such aggregations may include events, situations as well as organizations and other complex acts, which link together many separate events, and typical situations.

The theory of the commons explicitly departs from the sociological practice of treating society as an aggregation of many separate institutions. Instead, the theory of the commons conceives of society as composed of four fundamental institutional sectors -households, markets, the state and, of course, the commons. The sociologist Arnold Rose, an early student of nonprofit and voluntary action, set forth a similar conception more than three decades ago: “Voluntary associations consist of all classes of functioning groupings except families, the formal government (including its specialized organs such as schools and armed forces) and economic enterprise...” (Rose, 1960, 667) See Ross (1977) for an appraisal of Rose’s work on voluntary associations.

The popular characterization of the commons as the third sector is usually derived by ignoring another sector – the household sector. No harm is done (and the phrase ‘third sector’ remains intact) if we merely acknowledge households as the fourth.

A fundamental goal of the theory of the commons is to set forth a base for greater common ground among disciplines in a model of nonprofit and voluntary action as rational behavior. While the issue of the rationality of common behavior has often been treated as a matter of little importance to social researchers, it is of critical importance in the politics and economics of nonprofit and voluntary action and, as we shall see, important also in establishing the practical basis for action in the commons. To accomplish this, we shall attempt to set the concepts of the theory and the value premises within a limited “rational choice” theory.

Conclusion

Van Til's metaphor (1988) of conceptual maps concisely sums up the status of third sector studies today. Both nonprofit organization and voluntary action studies have been historically distinct intellectual maps that appear to be converging at the very point where the compass of philanthropy studies – long thought extinguished – shows signs of pointing toward a number of new and interesting landmarks as well.

A great many different disciplinary maps of parts of the emerging territory are waiting to be discovered – in law, social work, history, anthropology, public administration, sociology, political science, economics, and many other fields of study. Some of the more important areas of study that overlap disciplinary boundaries have been labeled in this chapter as altruism, philanthropy, patronage, gifts, charities, endowments and business maps.

By present consensus, the vast territory of society has been divided into three sectors: state, market and the awkwardly unnamed “third sector.” This introduction offers a brief synopsis of some of the main terms of a theory of commons that seeks to make and further map this third sector. A number of additional terms and concepts as well as further explication of these basic terms will be introduced in the chapters that follow.

In Chapter One I shall examine a number of existing perspectives on the nature of nonprofit organizations and voluntary action. Taken together these perspectives delineate many of the major areas of interest to nonprofit, voluntary and philanthropic studies as the field is currently emerging and also raise a number of unresolved issues and questions.

Political and industrial associations strike us forceably; but the others elude our observation, or if we discover them we understand them imperfectly because we have hardly ever seen anything of the kind.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

1

Current Approaches to Nonprofit Organization and Voluntary Association

The central defining concepts of nonprofit and

voluntary studies are generally thought to be the following: The most pervasive and characteristic forms of nonprofit and voluntary behavior are nonprofit formal organizations. Together, the network of nonprofit organizations define a socio-economic “sector” known variously as the nonprofit, voluntary, independent or third sector, in contrast with the profit-making sector of business and the public sector of

government.

For many, this nonprofit sector (a.k.a., “the sector”) is the province of simpletons, knaves and fools: Those who lack a clear understanding of their goals and purposes and must therefore be aided in clarification; those whose declared purposes mask and conceal their real interests in personal gain and profit; and those whose goals and purposes are irrational, foolish, impractical and unattainable. In this chapter, we shall examine further some of the contemporary expressions of these formative ideas, finding a good deal that is worthy, as well as certain nagging theoretical problems. For others, particularly true believers of all stripes, the sector may equally be viewed as the province of the wise, brave, good and foresighted.

The Non-Profit Organization

The conventional way of approaching the sector is through the legal and economic category of the nonprofit organization--a residual category arrived at by negation or exclusion. (Lohmann, 1989) According to Anthony and Young, "A non-profit organization is an organization whose goal is *something other than* earning a profit for its owners. Usually its goals are to provide services." (1984, 35) Precisely what other purposes may be at hand here is not evident in such a definition. (But, see Elkin and Molitor, 1984)

There is general consensus that the simple presence or absence of profit is, by itself, an insufficient indicator. As an example, there is much concern today about enormous profits of professional sports, and their distribution in the form of large salaries and bonuses to players. Yet, when the Cincinnati Red Stockings did the first professional baseball tour in 1869, the total profit from the tour was reported to be \$1.69. Does that mean that in its early years, professional baseball was almost a nonprofit activity? The general consensus among nonprofit and voluntary action scholars would be that it does not.

It is largely to distinguish intent from result that some authors prefer

the term "not-for-profit". However, this usage is distinctly marginal. Blacks Law Dictionary, Kohler's Dictionary for Accountants, Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Funk and Wagnell's Dictionary, and American Heritage Dictionary, among others, make no mention of "not-for-profit". The principle object of this turn of phrase appears to be to distinguish *bone fide* nonprofit organizations from failing businesses (which are nonprofit in an entirely different sense), and without excluding successful nonprofits that may incorrectly speak of their undistributed surpluses as "profits".

The issue has been further complicated by statutes in a number of states (New York, California, Pennsylvania) which now allow types of "not-for-profit" business corporation whose purposes fall largely outside those under consideration here. (Oleck, 1986, vii) In what follows, those whose sensibilities prefer the term "not-forprofit" may safely pencil in two dashes and the word "for" wherever the phrase "nonprofit" occurs in this volume without seriously affecting the meaning. Note, however, that this work is grounded in the view that two-dashes-and-three-letters fail to resolve any of the underlying theoretical problems presented by the nonprofit concept.

Initially, Anthony and Young have pointed to two defining characteristics of the nonprofit form: 1) preoccupation with "something other than profit" and 2) a tendency toward service provision. The first is hardly an exclusive criterion, unless one adopts the peculiar fashion of contemporary exchange theorists of viewing any and all attainments of goals, realization of objectives or fulfillments of purpose as "profit". (C.f., Becker, 1976; Alhadeff, 1982; Blau, 1967; Homans, 1961) On the basis of such an approach, the nonprofit world would indeed appear to be limited to the confused, deceptive and uninformed. Anthony and Young, however, clearly regard these two criteria alone as insufficient to define "nonprofit" activities, so they go on to expand their initial criteria to nine:

1. The absence of a profit measure
 - 1 The tendency to be service organizations
 - 2 Constraints on goals and strategies

- 3 Less dependence on clients for financial support
- 4 The dominance of professionals
- 5 Differences in governance
- 6 Differences in top management
- 7 Importance of political influences
- 8 A tradition of inadequate management controls

A key assumption of much of the current management literature on nonprofit organizations, widely shared by accountants, economists, public and business administrators and others is that "the absence of a single, satisfactory, overall measure of performance that is comparable to the profit measure is the most serious problem inhibiting the development of effective management control systems in non profit organizations." (Anthony and Young, 1984, 39) In the same vein, Gifis (pp?) says a *nonprofit corporation* is one chartered for other than profit-making activities. Thus, this particular construction of the theory of nonprofit organizations begins with the critical assumption that nonprofits are a flawed, or incomplete form of organization. () Advocates of this position tend to assume, based on the absence of a unitary performance measure, that nonprofit organizations as a class are inherently more inefficient in the conduct of their affairs than comparable for-profit establishments. It is important to note that this is an assumption, rather than an empirical finding, although it is seldom presented as such. Moreover, it is an unjustified assumption, in that, systematic empirical evidence of generalized "inefficiency" as a definitive characteristic of nonprofit organizations is simply nonexistent. In charity theory, for example, it has been assumed for decades that greater efficiency was needed in the delivery of social services. (Lee, 1937) As early as 1906, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce was calling for improvements in the efficiency of charitable activity. (Lubove, 1965) Yet, incredible as it may seem, there has never been an empirical or comparative study, which establishes the greater inefficiency of charities over other forms of profit-oriented organization. The matter rests entirely upon theoretical deduction! (And upon a theoretical lacunae, as we shall see below.)

A somewhat different tack toward defining the nonprofit organization has been taken by scholars less interested in nonprofit management

and more interested in policy issues. Hall (1987, 3) defines a nonprofit organization as “a body of individuals who associate for any of three purposes: 1) to perform public tasks that have been delegated to them by the state; 2) to perform public tasks for which there is a demand that neither the state nor for-profit organizations are willing to fulfill; or 3) to influence the direction of policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other nonprofit organizations.” This approach expands the residual “other-than-profit” approach to recognize what other sources call the “non-government organization (NGO)” dimension as well as the possibility of autonomous action.

This approach is particularly evident in the distinction of (nonprofit) museums and (for-profit) galleries. According to the National Academy of Art, as cited by DiMaggio (1987, 195), “All American museums are nonprofit... because the definition of *museum* the American Association of Museums (AAM) adopted excludes proprietary enterprises that mount exhibitions for public view.” From this vantage point, the first order distinction between profit-oriented and other activities necessitates a second-order distinction like “non-government organization” because the nonprofit heading encompasses both public (or governmental) and private (or nongovernmental) endeavors.

Legal Types of Organization

Current legal terminology makes a number of organizational distinctions worth noting here: An *association* as “a collection of persons who have joined together for a certain object”. (Gifis, 1991, 32) This is also very close to the original meaning of *company*, which is “any group of people voluntarily united for performing jointly any activity, business or commercial enterprise.” (Gifis, 1991, 83) A *corporation* is an association of shareholders created under law and regarded as an artificial person, with a legal entity entirely separate from the persons who compose it, and the capacity of succession, or continuous existence, able to hold property, sue and be sued, and exercising other powers conferred upon it by law. (Gifis, 1991, 103)

The issue of succession has attracted little interest among nonprofit and voluntary action scholars. It will be treated below under the twin headings of heritage and legacy. The heritage of Anglo-American nonprofit law, for example, is clearly traceable to the 1601 Statute of Charitable Uses, adopted by Parliament in the same year as the Elizabethan Poor Law. (History of English Philanthropy)

Legal terminology offers several clear alternative models of nonprofit organizations with interesting implications: First of all legally, a nonprofit corporation is not an organization, but a legal personality. A *cooperative association* is “a union of individuals, commonly laborers, farmers or small capitalists, formed for the prosecution in common of some productive enterprise, the profits being shared in accordance with capital or labor contributed by each.” (Gifis, 1991, 101) Perhaps nonprofit organizations are distinctive forms of cooperatives. A *syndicate* is a group of individuals or companies who have formed a joint venture to undertake a project, which the individuals would be unable or unwilling to pursue alone. (Gifis, 1991, 479) Nonprofit organization may be a constrained form of syndicate. By contrast, a *cartel* is a group of independent corporations...which agree to restrict trade to their mutual benefit. (Gifis, 1991, 63) Many of the systems, networks, collaboratives, and federations impart something of the character of syndicates.

Characteristics of Nonprofit Organizations

Local nonprofit organizations are often small, loosely structured and democratically governed and do not fit conveniently into traditional theories of organizational behavior rooted in management science and bureaucratic theory. (Milofsky, 1987)

The Nondistribution Constraint

The largest contribution of law to nonprofit theory to the present is the concept of the nondistribution constraint in state and federal law and tax policy. (Hansmann, 1981; 1987) As Hansmann points out, the legal concept of nonprofit does not rest on the theoretical basis of profit or profit-seeking motivation noted above. In law and tax policy, the concern is not with earning a profit, or how it is earned (by service or otherwise), or the degrees of freedom, client-dependence or professional domination involved, or differences in governance, top management or political influence, or the sufficiency of managerial control. The key issues in state and federal public policy have been two: The critical question for attaining the legal designation of a nonprofit corporation is, in most cases, “charitable purposes” broadly defined. And the critical issue in attaining exemption from taxation is what Hansmann calls “the nondistribution constraint.” (Clotfelder, 1985; Clotfelder and Salamon, 1982; Hansmann, 1987; Simon, 1987)

The Nonprofit Sector

The second formative idea of contemporary nonprofit and voluntary theory is the concept of the nonprofit sector. Together, nonprofit organizations are said to make up a distinct “sector” consisting of a number of discrete but related nonprofit organized, possibly classifiable into nonprofit “industries”. (Van Til, 1989) According to O’Neill (1989), this sector owns roughly ten percent of the property in the U.S., has as many employees as the federal and state governments combined and a bigger budget than all but seven nations. Even though there seems to be widespread agreement upon the existence of this “sector”, there is little agreement over its definition or organization. Anthony and Young offer one conception of this sector, discussed below. The chapter outline of O’Neill’s The Third Sector (1989) offers another, somewhat different, classification. The NTEE typology offers yet a third, and the Internal Revenue Service Code, with its labyrinth of classifications noted in Figure 2-1 below.

In general, these various efforts at classification point to at least two of the greatest and most controversial ambiguities in the contemporary

field of nonprofit and voluntary studies. First, there is the question of whether or not clubs, associations and other types of membership organizations should be considered as part of the nonprofit sector, or as (a) separate sector(s). (C.f., Smith, 1989) Is the nonprofit sector defined exclusively by formal organizations, or are the activities of membership organizations, individual volunteers, informal groups and private acts of charity and philanthropy to be included as well?

Equally controversial, especially among public administration theorists, is the issue of whether federal, state and local governments are nonprofit organizations. Federal and state nonprofit laws do frequently speak of private nonprofit organizations, and there is a long tradition in public administration, in particular, of treating private and public nonprofit organizations as a class (over against profit-oriented business organizations.) One must concede that public agencies do, typically, lack a profit orientation. On the other hand, including them as part of the nonprofit sector initially appears to make a complete muddle out of attempts to deal with the interaction between the “nonprofit sector” and the “public sector.” As we shall see in Chapters 8 and 9, it is indeed possible to make a satisfactory distinction between state and commons, without forfeiting the equally useful distinction between commercial and “nonprofit” ventures.

Introducing the question of tax-exemption further complicates the issue. As already noted, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) standard of “nondistribution” of profits to stakeholders offers a distinct alternative to the “profit-motive” criterion. Indeed, as we shall see in chapter 4, the concept of “profit-motive” (and the underlying distinction between self-interested and altruistic behavior) is an unnecessary oversimplification of the range of observable behavior. Although some contemporary nonprofit managers will undoubtedly be unhappy with the results, it may indeed be possible to make a stronger theoretically grounded distinction between tax-exempt and tax eligible nonprofits.

Nonprofit Typologies

Analysts of the nonprofit sector have long been concerned with

deriving an appropriate classification scheme for nonprofit organizations. Anthony and Young, for example, offered the following classification of nonprofit industries, in conjunction with the definitions noted above. (58-61) Note that items 5 and 6 explicitly incorporate government organizations into the nonprofit sector, rather than segregating them into a separate “public sector”.

- 1 Health Care Organizations
- 2 Educational Organizations
- 3 Membership Organizations
- 4 Human Service and Arts Organizations
- 5 The Federal Government
- 6 State and Local Governments

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code offers a somewhat different way to categorize nonprofit organizations.

(Numbers in parenthesis are the number of active organizations on the IRS master file, 1985)

Figure 2-1
IRS Classification System
Under Section 501 of the IRS Code of 1934

501(c)(2)	Title holding corporations (5,758)
501(c)(3)	Charitable corporations (366,071)
501(c)(4)	Civic leagues, social welfare organizations and local associations. (131,250)
501(c)(5)	Labor, agricultural or horticultural organizations (75,632)
501(c)(6)	Business & trade associations (54,217)
501(c)(7)	Social/recreational clubs (57,343)
501(c)(8)	Fraternal beneficiary societies and associations (94,435)
501(c)(9)	Voluntary employees' beneficiary associations (10,668)
501(c)(10)	Domestic fraternal societies, orders or associations (15,924)
501(c)(11)	Teachers Retirement Funds (11)
501(c)(12)	Benevolent life insurance associations of a purely local character (5,244)
501(c)(13)	Cemetery companies owned and operated by members (7,239)

501(c)(15)	Mutual insurance companies (967)
501(c)(17)	Supplemental unemployment benefit plans (726)
501(c)(18)	Employee funded Pension trusts (3)
501(c)(19)	Veteran's organizations (23,062)
501(c)(20)	Legal service organizations (167)
501(c)(21)	Black Lung trusts (15)

National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities

Under the federal tax code, only “charitable organizations” under paragraph 501(c) 3 are fully and completely exempt from federal taxation. This has led to a secondary concern with categorizing the types of organizations, which fall under this heading. A project spearheaded by Independent Sector has attempted to resolve this question. The National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities is described as “A System for Classifying Nongovernmental, Nonbusiness Tax-Exempt Organizations in the U.S. with a Focus on IRS Section 501(c)(3) Philanthropic Organizations.” The title alone reminds us once again of some of the signs pointing toward the need for more refined theory in Chapter 1. The NTEE Taxonomy incorporates a four-digit coding scheme in which the first digit, called the Major Group Code, is one of the 26 letters of the English alphabet; the second pair of digits, called the Major Activity or Program Code consists of generic fixed or reserved code numbers between 1-20; and unique code items 21-99 which may be unique to each particular Major Group; and a single digit alphabetic Beneficiary Code to identify the primary beneficiary class.

Figure 2-2

NTEE Major Group Code Items

- A -Arts, Culture, Humanities
- B -Education/Instruction and Related -Formal and Informal
- C -Environmental Quality, Protection and Beautification
- D -Animal Related
- E -Health -General and Rehabilitation
- F -Health -Mental Health, Crisis Intervention

G -Health -Mental Retardation/Developmentally Disabled
 H -Consumer Protection/Legal Aid
 I -Crime & Delinquency Prevention -Public Protection
 J -Employment/Jobs
 K -Food, Nutrition, Agriculture
 L -Housing/Shelter
 M -Public Safety, Emergency Preparedness & Relief
 N -Recreation, Leisure, Sports, Athletics
 O -Youth Development
 P -Human Service, Other
 Q -International/Foreign
 R -Civil Rights, Social Action, Advocacy
 S -Community Improvement, Community Capacity Building
 T -Grantmaking/Foundations
 U -Research, Planning, Science, Technology, Tech. Assistance
 V -Voluntarism, Philanthropy, Charity
 W -Religion Related/Spiritual Development
 X -Reserved for New Major Group (Future)
 Y -Reserved for Special Information for Regulatory Bodies
 Z -Nonclassifiable (Temporary Code)

The NTEE is, in part, a refinement and expansion of concepts incorporated into a social services classification project completed a decade earlier. (UWASIS-II, 1976) By itself, however, the NTEE is not a sufficient typology for theoretical purposes. It merely supplies labels for major categories of presently tax-exempt organizations. It provides us with nothing in the way of a rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of particular categories, or any of the relationships between them.

Size of the Sector

One of the issues, which has been of particular interest to advocates of the nonprofit concept, involves estimating the size of the sector. Until quite recently, there has been little in the way of demonstrated interest in information of this type. Even today, major measurement issues remain. Nevertheless, we can get some approximate idea of the extent of the phenomenon from a variety of existing sources. The following discussion is based on two sources: Information on organizations is based on a series of tables published in the Appendix of Weisbrod's *The Nonprofit Economy*. Information on nonprofit employment is taken from (1987).

Working from IRS data, Weisbrod (A-1) estimates that there were 887,000 nonprofit organizations in the U.S. in 1985. Of this number, 366,000 are estimated to be tax deductible (meeting the requirements of Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Breakdown of the 1985 figures for the other IRS categories are listed in Table 2-1 above. Our primary focus in this work is with the tax-deductible ("charitable") organizations, which are often thought of as the "core" of the nonprofit sector, although many of the perspectives offered apply to other categories as well.

There are about 120,000 officially registered nonprofit charities in the United Kingdom. (Weisbrod, Appendix B) Salamon (1983) found significant regional variations among nonprofits, with the South falling below the national average of 47.1 organizations per 100,000 population and the Northeast, North Central and West regions above. It is important to point out that this could simply mean that nonprofits in the South are larger. Data on expenditures suggest exactly the opposite, however. Nonprofit expenditures in 1977 were below the national average of \$323 per Capita in both the South and West and roughly half the per Capita expenditures of \$522 for the Northeast.

Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1986) estimate private contributions to nonprofit organizations in the three decades after 1955 to range

between a high of 2.7% of national income (1963) and a low of 2.21% in 1979. Over that same period, there was an uninterrupted decrease in contributed funds as a proportion of aggregate nonprofit organizational expenditures. Figures varied from a high of 70.7% in 1957 to a low of 31.2% in 1984. (Weisbrod, Table C2) In 1980, private giving was most important among religious organizations (93% of total receipts) and least important in health services (9%). The proportion of government support was highest in civic and social action (44%) and health and human services (43%). Service fees made up the greatest portion of total support of education and research nonprofits (79%) with all other categories falling at least 25% lower.

The Minority View

As noted above, one way to classify nonprofit organizations is by the degree to which revenues and charges meter their activities. According to a random sample of 274 IRS-990 tax reports, nonprofit organizations are clearly bimodal on the question of contributions, gifts and grants as a proportion of total revenues. We shall call such resources public support or simply support (after the manner of United Way of America). For the largest single group of nonprofits (47% of the total) such support constitutes less than 20% of total revenues. These correspond with the Type A nonprofits noted by Anthony above, and could reasonably be expected to be most “firm-like” in their behavior. For the second largest group (27%) of Type B’s such support constitutes 80% or more. The remaining 26% (which we might call A-B’s) are disbursed rather evenly from 21-79%. From these data, we can generalize that roughly half of all nonprofit organizations are likely to be, “firm-like”, while one-quarter are clearly not and the remaining quarter represent a continuum of variations of a blended type. It is important to note also that these data reflect only the measured or counted portions of total nonprofit and voluntary action in the U.S. The legal protections and requirements of incorporation and tax-exemption are likely applied disproportionately to Type A organizations, while Type B’s may be somewhat more inclined to rely upon factors such as trust and mutuality between donor and recipient.

This would suggest that Type B nonprofits are disproportionately represented among the unreported and underrepresented in the above. At any rate, the primary focus of this book is on the smaller half --the quarter which are clearly dependent primarily on We must, for the time being leave open the question of the degree to which the perspective offered here applies to Type A nonprofits.

Counting organizations may not give a true picture of the role of the total nonprofit sector in the economy. Consequently, some sources have favored paid employment instead. These same sources have also tended to locate nonprofit employment within a broader “service sector.” (Ginsberg and Vojta, 1981; Rudney, 1987) According to Rudney, employment in philanthropic organizations (nonprofit service organizations, which tend to be labor intensive) totaled roughly 6.5 million in 1982.

This was roughly 13 percent of total private (nongovernmental) employment, and an increase of 43% since 1972. In 1980, philanthropic organizations employed only 5.7% of all workers, but disproportionately large portions of total professional employment (14.1% of all professionals) and service workers (15.3%). As a result, about 40% of all philanthropic employees were professional and 36 percent were service workers. Data on nonprofit employment also tend to present a minimal picture, since they do not take volunteer labor into account.

Another category of “the sector” is the philanthropic foundation. According to the Foundation Center, there were 21,967 non-governmental foundations operating in the United States in 1981-82, with total assets of \$47.6 billion, total gifts received of \$2.4 billion and total grants awarded of \$3.8 billion (or about 7.9 percent of total assets). (Statistical Abstract, 1984. #651. p. 385) Table 17 shows the number of grants, total amount of awards, and percentage distribution of grants of \$5,000 or more reported by 450 foundations representing about 42 percent of all grant dollars awarded in 1983. The categories of health, education and welfare together account for about two thirds of the awards, with the remainder divided among culture, science, social science and religion. (Statistical Abstract, 1984. #652. p. 385.)

Nonprofit Action and Unproductive Labor

We might ask to what extent it is possible to identify the theoretical origins or conceptual basis of the nonprofit concepts outlined above. At first glance, the nonprofit concept appears to be derived directly from direct experience and recent practice; none of the broad range of legal, economic, political or social “grand theories” or formative doctrines of any of the social sciences make any mention whatsoever of “nonprofit organizations” or a “nonprofit sector”. In contrast with Tocqueville’s references to associations, the nonprofit concept appears at first glance to be a mid-twentieth century invention.

Yet, upon closer examination, the theoretical (as distinct from the practical) origins of the concept of nonprofit action can be traced to the neglected half of a dichotomy made by Adam Smith in The Wealth of Nations, first published in 1776. In that work, Smith dichotomized “productive” and “unproductive labor”: “There is one sort of labor which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed; there is another which has no such effect. The former, as it produces a value, may be called productive and the latter unproductive labor. Thus the labor of a manufacturer adds, generally, to the value of the materials, which he works upon, that of his own maintenance, and of his master's profit. The labor of a menial servant, on the contrary adds to the value of nothing. Though the manufacturer has his wages advanced to him by his master, he, in reality, costs him no expense, the value of his wages generally being restored, together with a profit, in the improved value of the subject upon which his labor was bestowed. A man grows rich by employing a multitude of manufacturers; he grows poor by maintaining a multitude of menial servants.” (Smith, 1973, 430)

In making this distinction, Smith set out the basis for the contemporary view of nonprofit organizations outlined above. Robert Anthony, whose model of nonprofit organizations was discussed above, has updated Smith’s exact distinction and translated it into the contemporary organizational context by distinguishing between “Type A” nonprofits, which generate revenues (usually because of sales or

user fees), and "Type B" nonprofits, which do not. (Anthony, 1978) In a two-by-two typology of nonprofit organizations, Henry Hansmann (1981, 503) uses this same distinction to differentiate "commercial" and "donative" nonprofits.

Although Smith's concept of unproductive labor applies to donative nonprofits as a class, one should not conclude that Smith (an "unproductive" moral philosopher) meant to be critical of unproductive labor. Smith went on to say that "The labor of some of the most respected orders of society is, like that of menial servants, unproductive of any value, and does not fix or realize itself in any permanent subject, or vendible commodity, which endures after the labor is past and for which an equal quantity of labor could afterwards be procured." (432)

Smith continues: "Unproductive laborers, and those who do not labor at all, are all maintained by revenue; either, first, by that part of the annual produce which is originally destined for constituting a revenue to some particular persons, either as the rent of land or as the profits of stock; or secondly, by that part of which, though originally destined for replacing a capital and for maintaining productive laborers only, yet when it comes into their hands whatever part of it is over and above their necessary subsistence may be employed indifferently in maintaining either productive or unproductive hands." (432)

That Smith had many of the activities later labeled nonprofit in mind when he spoke of unproductive labor is clear from his references to "the declamation of the actor, the harangue of the orator, or the tune of the musician" Smith also affirms the basic quality that led Anthony and Young and others to associate them with services: their intangible, immaterial character. Like the services of actors, orators and musicians, Smith said, "the work of all of them perishes in the very instant of its production." (431)

Once the distinction between productive and unproductive labor was introduced, however, Adam Smith, like most of the economists who followed him for the next 200 years, devoted his complete attention to

productive labor. One of the few notable exceptions to this was the American institutional economist John R. Commons, who also noted the nonmarket character of unproductive labor. "The physician or surgeon, the lawyer, statesman or politician, the minister or priest, the teacher, the musician or actor, the scientist, the domestic servant, the housewife, were 'unproductive' because the usefulness of their labor did not appear in a commodity which could be saved and sold on the markets, or exchanged directly for other commodities or for the labor of others."

Commons was more interested in the paradoxical implications for economic value than in the nonprofit question. "The only way in which the value of such services could be measured was in terms of money, as wages or salaries, or in terms of the commodities directly exchanged for them. For this reason, labor itself could be treated only as a commodity, whose value was its exchange-value. Personal services had exchange-value, but their use value appeared only in the happiness of other people and there were no units of measurement, like tons or yards, which could measure happiness." (180) His argument is often echoed in later discussions of the economics of services, wherein the point is made that due to inability to measure the productivity of nonprofit services, employment and wages must be used as proxy measures of output. (Stanback, 1979)

Commons, it should be noted, does not make any distinction between commercial and nonprofit ventures or declare further interest in the matter. Yet, his line of reasoning is of critical importance to the nonprofit question: "A hundred and fifty years of economic theorizing has puzzled over the problem of giving a decent status to these personal services." Even though we now have over 200 years of such theorizing, his basic point remains the same: "If they are use-values how can we measure them except by the dollar? But the dollar measures their scarcity-value and not their use-value." (Commons, 1961, 181)

A somewhat different slant has been taken up by the sudden emergence of nonprofit economics in the 1980's. In general, the nonprofit economics literature skips over the Smith distinction

completely, on the strength of near-unanimous acceptance of an operational simile whereby the economic performance of nonprofits is analyzed “as if” they were profit-oriented. () Weisbrod (1988, 67; 130141) approaches the unproductive labor dichotomy in terms of “volunteer labor”, a largely operational concept the definition of which he terms “vague and inconsistent.” (See also Wolozin, 1975; Stinson and Stam, 1976) Volunteer labor in this sense represents a narrowing of Smith’s concept, which embraces all non-revenue endeavors, and Commons’ concept, which embraces all intangibles. The vagueness and inconsistency noted by Weisbrod are probably related to the unresolved issues raised by Smith and Commons. However, it is unlikely that these conceptual problems can be resolved within economics alone. Any economic concept of volunteer labor as the action associated with production of nonprofit services and the implicit dyadic concept of leisure as the action associated with consumption of those services will remain vague and inconsistent. The reason for this is quite simple: modern social science understandings of the “unproductive” efforts to which Smith alludes, the “intangibles” to which Commons refers as well as the “volunteer” labor cited by Weisbrod are bound by important constraints the understanding of which are the explicit domain of other social sciences. The same might also be said for “leisure” which also figures prominently in what follows. Leisure has a very narrow and restricted meaning in economics and is virtually ignored in other social sciences. (Except, see Rybczynski, 1991) One can no more ignore those constraints and understand nonprofit activity than one can construct an economics of energy, which ignores the laws of thermodynamics.

Voluntary Association and Civil Society

Until quite recently, the concept of a nonprofit sector has been of interest primarily to public officials, lawyers, accountants and public and association administrators. Despite the theoretical anchor in economics noted above, economists remained largely indifferent to nonprofit activity until the early 1980’s. Meanwhile, social workers, sociologists, fundraisers, administrators of volunteer programs and others have tended to emphasize voluntary association concepts for

denoting approximately the same phenomenon. (Babchuk and Schmidt, 1976; Caulkins, 1976; Kramer, 1966, 1973, 1981; Lanfant, 1976; Lenkersdorf, 1976; Perlstadt, 1975; Ross, 1977; Rogers and Bultena, 1975; Rose, 1954; Smith, 1974)

Current usage in nonprofit and voluntary action studies suggests a possible connection between nonprofit and voluntary. The name of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Associations, for example, suggests just such a link. Yet “nonprofit” and “voluntary” are hardly synonyms. There appear to be important, if subtle, differences between the two, including different theoretical origins and different accents or points of emphasis. Most importantly, the emphasis on social behavior evident in the voluntary action tradition can be seen as complimentary to the nonprofit concept addressed above addressing the unresolved definitional concerns of the “unproductive labor” approach. We can begin to see this more clearly by examining various definitions of voluntary associations.

“A voluntary association develops when a small group of people, finding that they have a certain interest or purpose in common, agree to meet and act together in order to satisfy that interest or achieve that purpose.” (Rose, 1960, 666) Another sociologist, Sutton defined associations as “functionally specific nonascriptive structures” and claimed them as an essential feature of modern industrial society. (Douglas, 1972)

MacIver and Page (1949) defined associations as “groups organized for the pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common” and called them the most characteristic feature of modern complex society. Norbeck (1972) suggests the existence of a broader category of “common interest associations” of which voluntary associations are a sub-category. Cavallaro (1983) identifies the study of “participatory” voluntary associations, marginalized deviant groups and political studies of pressure groups to be three of the five most predominant current approaches to the study of social groups.

Laskin (1962) and Kerri (1972) defined voluntary associations as “any private group, voluntarily and more or less formally organized, joined

and maintained by members pursuing a common interest, usually by means of part-time, unpaid activities.” Berelson and Steiner term them “organizations that people belong to part-time without pay, such as clubs, lodges, goodworks agencies and the like” (1964,364) David Sills makes explicit a connection to leisure by defining voluntary associations as “spare time participatory associations” (Sills, 1968, 363)

Smith (1966, 483) defined formal voluntary associations as “formal organizations the majority of whose members are neither paid for participation in the organization nor physically coerced into such participation.” Smith (1972; 1974) identified five basic categories of voluntary action: occupational or self-interest; consummatory or self-expressive; philanthropic/funded; issue/cause oriented; and service oriented. Stinchcombe (1973, 53) distinguished the voluntarism of the activities of the members as opposed to the process of becoming a member.

This complex of meanings is also very close to the anthropological concept of sodality, which Hill (1970, 15) defines as “nonresidential associations having corporate functions or purposes that serve to integrate two or more residential units...” including warrior societies, ceremonial societies, kachina societies and ritual groups. Smith and Friedmann also briefly discuss sodalities in their review of the voluntary association literature. (1972, 16-17)

The theoretical origins of the voluntary association are somewhat more clear-cut than those of the nonprofit organization. The idea is usually tied explicitly to the 19th Century French social analyst Alexis de Tocqueville, whose observations on the unique and distinctive role of associations in American life are cited by advocates of pluralist democracy. (Tocqueville, 19) At approximately the same time that Alexander Hamilton was warning Americans against the dangers of faction in Federalist Paper #10, Tocqueville articulated the doctrine of associations as “mediating institutions” between individual citizen and the state.

Yet, as Peter Dobkin Hall (1987, 24) notes, the original formulation was an explicitly political one. “Tocqueville did not view private

voluntarism as an amusing carnival midway of private intentions, but as a fundamental part of a national power system. At its core there was, as he observed, 'a natural and perhaps a necessary connection' between civil associations and the political associations through which citizens combined to influence the state.

(II: 123)." In this important sense, the view outlined in this book is fundamentally Tocquevillian. (See also Pennock and Chapman, 1969) To the model of nonprofit organizations components of a service economy noted above, we must add this view of associations as components of civil society.

Arnold Rose made a compatible distinction between two types of voluntary associations: "expressive" and "social influence" groups: Expressive groups were said "to act only to express or satisfy the interests of their members in relation to themselves" while social influence groups "wish to achieve some condition or change in some special segment of society as a whole." (Rose, 1954) This dichotomy has since been supplanted by the more apolitical distinction between expressive and instrumental purposes, seemingly removing any trace of the essential Tocquevillian insight noted by Hall above. (Gordon and Babchuk, 1959; Bonnett, 1977; Palisi and Jacobson, 1977)

The citizen participation movement is grounded in such democratic aspirations and has attracted a good deal of practical and research and practical interest among nonprofit and voluntary action scholars. (Barker, 1979; Faramelli, 1976; Flynn and Webb, 1975; Gluck, 1978; Heshka and Lang, 1978; Klobus-Edwards and Edwards, 1979; Molnar and Purohit, 1977; Ostrom, 1978; Paris and Blackaby, 1979; Rosenbaum, 1977; Salem, 1978; Schulman, 1978; Sharp, 1978; Stinson and Stam, 1975; Thornton and Stringer, 1979; Van Til, 1975; Walker, 1975)

The theoretical Achilles heels of the "voluntary sector" concept appear to be twofold: First, as in the case of the adjective "nonprofit" the idea of a voluntary sector seems to connote a set of discernable establishments and a level of formal organization which may at times prove misleading. By itself, this objection can be easily overcome. The term sector does not have to mean a set of industries, establishments or

formal organizations exclusively. Sector can also mean category, type, division, genre or even territory (as in the American sector in postwar Berlin). As with the nonprofit sector, however, asserting the existence of a voluntary sector also introduces the problem of typology noted above. However, there has been far less effort at exhaustive classification and censuses of the voluntary sector. In fact, many voluntary sector adherents regard such an exercise as essentially pointless. One of the major recent stumbling theoretical stumbling blocks to voluntary sector theory have been the multiple connotations of the term “voluntary”, since it seems to refer to all behavior which is uncoerced. Does this not mean, for example, that unconstrained buying and selling in the marketplace is part of the voluntary sector? “Sex between consenting adults is usually voluntary,” one colleague is fond of pointing out. “Does that mean that sexual intercourse should be included in the voluntary sector?” Although the question may be frivolous, the underlying issue of definition is not.

Further, there is the complex question of the relationship between the nonprofit and voluntary sectors as posited? Are these two conceptions completely independent, overlapping or identical terms? Because usage divides so neatly along disciplinary lines, the issue has generated remarkably little interest or attention. However, the overlap view has gotten increased attention recently. The terms “Independent Sector” and “Third Sector” were both coined, for example, to seek a compromise between adherents of the “Nonprofit” and “Voluntary” labels. New labels arrived at through committee compromise, however, fail to resolve underlying theoretical issues, and entirely new issues are raised by these labels, threatening to create further distractions: In an open society, aren’t markets and families independent also? Several sources have already asked whether there are really four sectors, rather than three, and at least one has asked whether there are four or five (Smith, 1991).

Tabulating the voluntary sector is an even more daunting task than tallying nonprofit organizations or philanthropic employment, because of the ease with which groups are formed and members move into and out of them. Indeed, it could well be argued that the best approach to the voluntary sector might be to tabulate the average number of groups

and associations in which populations are active at any given time. In general, however, data of this type are spotty at best.

Smith (1991) and others have sought to differentiate voluntary action into an organized corporate realm, which appears to correspond closely with nonprofit organizations and an “informal” sector of unincorporated associations, clubs, groups and organizations that have never incorporated or sought tax-exempt status. One source claims the Internal Revenue Service estimates at least a million such organizations in the U.S. (Society of Association Executives, 1991) Another frequently cited estimate of the scale of this portion of the informal sector is the proportion of the adult population reporting “volunteer work” in any given year. Studies by the National Center for Citizen Involvement found that 52 percent of all Americans reported that they “worked in some way to help others for no monetary pay” during 1980, and that in 1982 the comparable figure had risen to 55 percent. (Statistical Abstract, 1984. #647. p. 384.)

Each of the various sector concepts has its uses. A *nonprofit sector* can be defined as consisting of those corporations which are constrained by legal and/or ethical constraints on the distribution of surplus revenues incidental to the corporation’s activities (that is, “profits”) to shareholders, stockholders or stakeholders. In this, we follow Hansmann’s useful emphasis upon the “nondistribution constraint”. (Hansmann, 1987) Most authorities today would probably define a nonprofit sector somewhat more broadly as encompassing both those corporations legally bound to the nondistribution constraint and other organizations ethically bound or voluntarily subscribing to the same standard. (It should be noted that such an approach denotes a legal/ethical, or formal/informal distinction that will be important throughout.)

Whether or not it includes nonprofit corporations, a *voluntary sector* can be defined as those clubs, associations, groups or other, similar social organizations characterized largely or exclusively by noncoercive membership and/or free and unconstrained participation, especially in leisure rather than employment settings. Recalling Stinchcombe’s objection above, it may also be desirable under some circumstances to denote a *club sector* along the lines Smith (1991)

suggests, in which membership rather than participation is the key delimiter. A *nongovernmental sector* is defined as those organizations or institutions outside the political state and functioning independently of state oversight or direction, but interacting with the state frequently enough to justify differentiating them. The modern welfare state in the United States and elsewhere frequently incorporates such a nongovernmental sector. (Kramer, 1981) An *independent sector* is presumably one able to function autonomously and without external interference or involvement. A *third sector* is simply the non-business, non-government side of public life outside the family. (O'Neill, 1988)

Further, voluntary action from the voluntary tradition, which is the social interaction which occurs among participants in voluntary associations, can be seen as sharing several important characteristics with volunteer labor, as put forth by the nonprofit tradition. The full implications of this important linkage, however, remain to be dealt with below.

Conclusion

Modern nonprofit and voluntary action studies, as exemplified by the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) are occurring at the intersection of two distinct, but related research traditions. The nonprofit tradition can be traced to Adam Smith's concept of unproductive labor, and is animated by a central concern for what might be termed the appropriate uses of the surplus product of an affluent society. In contrast, the voluntary tradition can be traced to Tocqueville's concept of intermediate institutions, and is animated by a central concern for the individual and social consequences of uncalculated and uncoerced participation in organized social endeavors within civil society.

These two concerns are connected in numerous ways in the ongoing social reality from which they have been abstracted. At present, however, the traditions of nonprofit organization studies and voluntary action studies are upheld along largely disciplinary lines, with only a few genuine evidences of crossover. In the chapters which follow, a preliminary attempt is made to sketch the outlines of a "fusion"

perspective known as the theory of the commons, which seeks to reconstruct voluntary action as unproductive labor (or leisure action), and broaden the conception of nonprofit organizations to include both formal and informal (or communal) organizations.

In democratic countries, the science of associations is the mother science; the progress of all others depends upon the progress it has made.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

3. Theory of the Commons

In the first issue of the *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, Smith (1972A) identified definitions and conceptual issues of voluntary action first in a list

of “major analytical topics of voluntary action theory and research” identified by the interdisciplinary voluntary action task force planning conference held earlier that year. That same article asked “Can there be a theory of voluntary action, or must/should we pay major attention to theories and models about one or another aspect of voluntary action without attempting to put it all together for the moment? Clearly, the latter proved the prudent course and “the moment” lasted for more than twenty years.

Two decades later voluntary action theory and its cognate, nonprofit theory, even with the various extensions identified in the preceding chapter are still insufficient for clarity of understanding, policy or practice. Simon notes for example that tax policies “have been unaccompanied by a coherent theory of intervention or by empirical support for intervention.” (94, 1987) Because the ground on which such an adequate theory of nonprofit and voluntary action must be constructed is an explicitly interdisciplinary one, the task of theory construction should begin at an elementary level with the statement of assumptions. In this chapter, a number of key assumptions will be identified and definition of some of the fundamental concepts of such a theory will be set forth. This will be followed in succeeding chapters with further empirical and theoretical investigations of the implications of this theoretical approach. Finally, this effort will conclude with a number of propositions.

The approach here is an attempt to identify a set of interdisciplinary “first principles” rather than the more conventional residual approach, which according to the introductory editorial statement of *Voluntas*, treats the voluntary sector “as what is left over once government and commercial agencies, and probably also the ‘informal sector’ has been put to one side...” Especially important in defining the sector in this way is value for comparative studies in the international domain. (Anhier and Knapp, 1990, 4-5)

We are not primarily concerned in this study with all nonprofit organizations, nor with all members of the legal category of nonprofit corporations, nor with all members of the subcategory of tax-exempt corporations. The primary concern here is with eleemosynary or donative associations, organizations and groups engaged in unproductive or volunteer labor, whether or not they are incorporated, recognized by the state, tabulated in national data or hire paid employees. This broad category of social organizations will be termed “commons” for reasons set forth below, and generalizations about them will be said to constitute theory of the commons.

Initial Premises and Assumptions

The following discussion sets forth eight basic assumptions upon which the theory of the commons is premised. Some of these assumptions are explicit alternatives to other commonly employed assumptions set forth about the nonprofit and voluntary sector, and as such may be controversial. Others are straightforward and uncontroversial.

Social Action

One of the most interesting and challenging characteristics of nonprofit and voluntary 'services' is their intangible character. Thus, a basic assumption of the theory of the commons is that nonprofit services and "unproductive labors" are composed of social action, or substantively meaningful experience emanating from our spontaneous life based upon preconceived projects. (Schutz, 1970, 125) Or, as Max Weber () put it, "In 'action' is included all human behavior when and in so far as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. Ignoring or explicitly rejecting profit orientation, said by some to be the defining characteristic of nonprofit action, constitutes such a subjective attachment of meaning.

Action, in this sense, is social in so far as, subjective meaning attached to it by acting individuals, "it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course." (Weber, 1968) Philanthropy as action for the good of humanity; charity, as action for the good of others; altruism, as in the interest of others, all involve social action in this sense. Thus, the various organizations and structures of nonprofit organizations and voluntary action will present predictable, recurring and institutionalized as well as ideosyncratic patterns of social action. (Billis, 1991)

Affluence

Coherent, self-aware actors in nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations capable of social action are aware that they were acting outside of the institutional contexts of markets, households and the

state. Under ordinary circumstances overriding ethical considerations of philanthropic, charitable and altruistic purpose discourage the priority of personal gain and mandate that individuals in the commons deny, downplay or ignore their own self-interests. The appropriateness of such self-denial, however, is conditional upon the absence of any immediate threats to the safety, security, health or well-being of those involved. (One cannot, for example, ethically demand of a starving person that they take time out from the pursuit of food to aid others who may be ill or homeless.) One might ask under what circumstances is such self-denial reasonable? An answer to this is offered by the condition of affluence.

Bona fide participation in the commons is available only to the affluent; those whose individual and group survival and reproduction are sufficiently assured that their own self-interest is not their paramount concern.

Only those whose basic needs for survival and reproduction have been met are in a position to rationally choose or reject self-interested behavior. It is unreasonable to expect that persons who are starving, under siege or assault or threatened with extinction should rationally choose to ignore their own interests or that any society or association can have a legitimate interest in encouraging them to do so.

Substituting an assumption of affluence for the customary economic assumption of scarcity has major implications for future research (Neal, 1984). In the theory which follows, it is assumed that commons can only emerge where the fundamental problems of material, human and social reproduction have been, at least temporarily, overcome. (Wolfe, 1985, 9-13) *Under conditions of affluence, when the problems of material, human and social reproduction are overcome, even momentarily, the choice of whether to engage in profit-maximization or some other "nonprofit" activity is, itself, a rational choice.* In the American context, intentionally creating a tax-exempt, non-profit (501-c-3) corporation signifies creation of a commons and knowingly accepting the legal obligations of board membership for such an organization indicates a willingness to abide by its standards.

Authenticity

The theory of the commons also assumes that actors operating in nonprofit and voluntary settings are authentic, that is they are what they appear to be to informed others also operating in the same context. (Etzioni, 1968) Affluent actors who seek to pursue their own self-interest in the commons, or whose individual or organizational goals include utility maximization are operating under false pretenses, and subject to penalty or expulsion from the commons. Norms of authenticity may not be universally or consistently invoked in reality, but when they are the result is usually consistent and convincing as in the collapse of various televangelical empires in the past decade. State charity fraud statutes almost universally seek to enforce such norms of authenticity.

Theoretically, persons who adopt a self-interested (or "profit oriented") posture at any time are assumed to remove themselves from the commons. Such abnormal behavior is treated as evidence of deviance, and invoking the "profit orientation" to justify or sanction such deviance serves no useful theoretical purpose. This is a simplifying assumption, intended to focus clearly upon the issue of the basic nature of the commons. In the real world, commons often appear to be inherently unable to enforce contested claims and the practical problems of enforcing the norm of authenticity is often left to the coercive powers of the state. Whether this is because of the weakness of particular group norms or inherent limits on common social action is not clear.

Although it may appear to be somewhat pretentious or moralistic, the norm of authenticity points up the fundamentally ethical core of common social action and encapsulates numerous examples of actual empirical practices in the commons: Professional oaths in helping professions usually prohibit placing the professionals' own interests above those of their clients, for example, and scientific research in most disciplines is subject to severe sanctions for falsifying data or results. Thus, although enforcement may be complex and problematic, there is little doubt of the importance of assumptions of authenticity in nonprofit and voluntary action.

Continuity

The experience of charitable, philanthropic, altruistic and other common action is also associated with consistent life-style choices and the experience of others in nonprofit and voluntary action is an on-going one, characterized by past, present and future and a sense of connectedness between them. The experience of continuity offers a basis for explanation and prediction:

"I trust that the world as it has been known to me up until now will continue further and that consequently the stock of knowledge obtained from my own experiences will continue to preserve its fundamental validity. . . From this assumption follows the further and fundamental one: that I can repeat my past successful acts." (Schutz, 1970, 7)

The on-goingness of common experience and the social nature of the commons mean that desirable purposes and goods also have inevitable intergenerational aspects. Because individuals involved in many types of commons will be of different chronological ages, decisions of on-going groups, will as a consequence, inevitably take on an intergenerational character, as old members die and new ones are born or socialized into the group. Intergenerational continuity is an important characteristic of religious commons, for example, where organizations and practices often stretch over decades, centuries and millennia.

Continuity is not simply a matter of rational action. Continuity in nonprofit and voluntary action is often experienced in the form of tradition. I (and others) will continue to exist in a known and knowable world through the repetition of time honored ceremonies, habitual and familiar ritual acts. The continuity of present experience may also be experienced as rational. We will act in the appropriate manner because it is reasonable, predictable or productive of desirable consequences to do so. Occasionally the experience of continuity even takes the form of transformative, "inexplicable" or other charismatic experience.

Practical questions of an intergenerational nature often arise with

respect to the appropriate division of an individual's estate between heirs and commons. Legal issues of this type are among the oldest and most long standing and thorniest of issues of the law as it relates to common goods. This was a fundamental concern of the 1601 Statute of Charitable Uses, for example, and also a major concern of Islamic law. (Gray, 1967, 35f; Coulson, 1978, 254) Recruitment of new members and the quest to keep and restore particular heritages figure large in decision-making of many commons.

Rationality

Moreover, we shall assume that actors in the commons, engaged in acts of philanthropy, charity and altruism, act rationally, *in the sense of observable consistency between the intentions they announce to themselves and others and the results they hold up to be successful outcomes*. The rationality of actors in the commons is a practical rationality, concerned with the exercise of reason in solving the problems which arise in the conduct of daily affairs. It is often also a prosocial rationality, devoted to solving problems primarily affecting others and to engaging in various forms of presentation, and to obtaining the resources necessary to carry out these pursuits.

The rationality of the commons is not merely a matter of moment-to-moment consistency of thought or behavior. The term "rational" refers, instead, to the wider philosophical sense of having (and following) a life plan. Decisions and actions are rational, in so far as they implicate and contribute to a broader life plan. (Rawls, 1974, 408) Thus, practical rationality, in this context, involves the day-to-day decisions which must be made in consistent pursuit of a life plan.

Finally, as Suzanne Langer notes, "Our standards of rationality are the same as Euclid's or Aristotle's -generality, consistency, coherence, systematic inclusion of all possible cases, economy and elegance in demonstration --but our ideal of science makes one further demand: the demand of what has been called 'maximum interpretability'. This means that as many propositions as possible shall be applicable to observable fact." (1967, 273-4)

Near-universality

Commons are assumed to be near-universal cultural forms, known in some manner in most, possibly all human cultures although the degree and exact ways in which the theory transcends the American cultural context and history remains to be determined. (Brown, 1991) Research has already been supported on a variety of countries and cultures. See, for example, studies of Ghana, (Gray, 1976); France (Lanfant, 1976); Jamaica and Caribbean (Fletcher, 1977; Gray, 1976) Norway (Anderson and Schiller, 1976; Caulkins, 1976; Hallenstvedt and others, 1976; Kvavik, 1976; Moren, 1976;) Mexico (Lenkersdorf, 1976)

Nonprofit corporations and philanthropic foundations are the distinctive products of Anglo-American legal traditions. American voluntary associations are the unique inventions of an open society devoid of a long heritage of intermediate institutions and intent upon creating an open society. Both are members of a larger class of related groups, organizations and institutions to which the name commons is applied.

In all known cultures, self-defining collectivities of voluntarily associating persons act jointly outside of markets and households and independent of the state in pursuit of common purposes. Even among itinerant hunter-gathers and farming and fishing village cultures leisure time not spent in subsistence activities can be devoted to group participation in common activities: construction of kivas and other spirit centers, organization of spirit quests and initiation rites, 'donations' of beads, feathers, and shells, drums and other valued objects to dance and ceremonial activities are just part of the broad range of endeavors.

The issue of whether, like families, commons are found in absolutely every human culture ever known, or like markets and states they may be found in most cultures, is an empirical question. Until it can be answered, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is good reason to assume universality, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Autonomy

Organized action in the commons is also assumed to be autonomous, in the sense that actors in the commons are capable of acting independently and exercising both individual and group self-control. Such autonomy may merely be assumed or take institutional form as freedoms of speech and association, or under repressive conditions may invoke conscious choices to engage in covert actions or secret societies. The autonomous character of rational action in the commons supports several related assumptions:

Actors in the commons are assumed to be able to create and sustain autonomous social worlds. Although this is most evident in the case of certain social movements and religious zealots, it is also implicit in everyday clubs and associations of bird watchers and stamp collectors and peace or environmental activists. (Baer, 1979; Cavan, 1977; Cummings, 1977; Hurvitz, 1977; Kelly, 1978; McMillen, 1978; Richardson, Simmonds and Stewart, 1979; Ross, 1977) The ability to act with others to create and sustain an autonomous social world is one of the most fundamental characteristic of nonprofit and voluntary action.

Intrinsic Valuation

This leads to the further assumption that the proper basis for evaluating an autonomous common world is on the basis of values arising within it. This assumption is consistent with those found generally in qualitative social research, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. Following Garfinkel, the theory of the commons refuses to give "serious consideration to the prevailing proposal that efficiency, efficacy, effectiveness, intelligibility, consistency, planfulness, typicality, uniformity, reproducibility of activities -i.e., that rational properties of practical activities --be assessed, recognized, categorized, described by using a rule or standard *outside actual settings within which such properties are recognized, used, produced and talked about by settings' members.*" (emphasis added) (Mitchell, 143)

Ordinary Language

A related assumption is that a satisfactory theory of nonprofit and voluntary action must be stated in language which philanthropic, charitable and altruistic actors can recognize and understand. While subjects are not accorded veto power or monopoly control in interpreting the correctness or applicability of the theory, their views may be taken into account. This ordinary language assumption mandates that language regularly in use by charitable, philanthropic and altruistic actors may also be employed in theories of their actions. In this case, terms such as endowment, benefit, gift, patron, legacy, heritage and treasury, are among those borrowed from common usage and applied in the theory of the commons.

Terms and Concepts

On the basis of these assumptions, we can now look more closely at the basic vocabulary of the theory of the commons. It should be clear to anyone who examines the issue closely that new ways to speak and think more clearly about nonprofit and voluntary action are needed. The very first necessity, therefore, is to identify some terms and concepts which are both clearcut and faithful to the observable realities of action in this arena. In particular, we need an adequate summary term to describe the range of nonprofit and voluntary action usually associated in law, statistics and tradition and to set it apart in a general sense from other human endeavors. In the following discussion, a set of related terms are set forth as fundamental to an understanding of nonprofit and voluntary action: common, benefit, benefactory, endowment, heritage, legacy, treasury, collection, repertory, regime and patronage. Together, they provide a basic theoretical language for discussing nonprofit and voluntary action.

Benefactory

The largest, most important and, from defining subclass of nonprofit organizations are those 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporations which are exempt from federal taxation on the basis of their “charitable

purposes.” Such organizations are part of a larger class of service organizations in which no tangible product is produced, marketed or sold and no individual or group of owners or stockholders should legitimately expect to profit. In the voluntary tradition of social services, such entities have been known as “agencies”. Theoretically, this term is a legal one, intended to highlight their role in acting as agents for the interests of others. Such organizations also corresponds closely with the conception of “Type B” organizations engaged in unproductive labor discussed in Chapter 2.

A good deal of additional conceptual work defining social agencies has already taken place. Etzioni (1963) laid the theoretical groundwork for the “three-sector” view when he distinguished these normative from coercive (state) and remunerative (market) organizations. Hansmann (1987) divides organizations into "mutual" and "donative" types, based upon the origins of their resource inputs. They are also sometimes lumped into a broader class of producers of public or "semipublic" goods. (Austin, 1981; Austin, 1983; Weisbrod, 1977; Weisbrod, 1988)

The use of the term benefactory is grounded in the tendency to categorize nonprofit organizations by the types of benefits they produced. A *benefit* is an advantage, useful aid or financial help. (Gifis, 1991, 1991 46) In a social action context, it is also an increased opportunity for future action resulting or arising from present or past action. Categorizing organizations by the benefits they create dates at least from Blau and Scott ‘s(1962, 43) distinction of mutual-benefit organizations, whose primary beneficiaries were their members, from business concerns, whose primary beneficiaries are their owners; service organizations, whose primary beneficiaries are their clients; and commonweal organizations, where the primary beneficiaries are the public at large. All four types can be labeled benefactories in the sense that they are “producers” of benefits, albeit for different groups.

The Blau-Scott typology has been applied and extended in many different directions in nonprofit and voluntary organization studies. In an examination of voluntary associations in Malaysia Douglas (1972) leads off with a 2x2 table: ascription-universalism as the horizontal

axis and diffuseness-specificity as the vertical axis. He labels the four cells (from upper right) interest groups, mass collectivities, kin groups and communal organizations. According to Douglas, the 1962 Blau-Scott typology fits as a diagonal from kin groups (lower left) to interest groups (upper right).

Smith (1991) revived interest in this four part classification with his suggestion of a fourth (or fifth) sector. His four beneficiary classes -- owners, public, clients and members--correspond with the market, state, nonprofit and membership (or informal) sectors. This class of private organizations which we will call "benefactories" do not distribute surpluses to owners or stockholders, and most engage in unproductive or voluntary labor on behalf of primary beneficiaries who are either members or clients. The term benefactory as used here is a play on the economic terms factor and factory, intended to highlight the central place of benefits. Benefit, in general, involves enhancing or assuring the wealth, health, well-being, safety or security or advancing the interests of any person or group. A benefactory, then, is any network of organized social relations established for the purpose of aiding, assisting, helping, improving, supporting, comforting, enabling or in other ways benefiting persons or groups of others. Likewise, within organized benefactories, those who act to enhance the interests of others in any way have traditionally been termed benefactors and recipients whose advantage or gain is an organizational purpose are beneficiaries. In English, both benefit and benefice have been traditional terms for the gain or advantage conferred.

Obviously, charities such as soup kitchens or a free counseling centers, would be benefactories in this sense. However, the term can also be extended to encompass churches, symphony orchestras, experimental theatre groups and dance companies, museums and galleries, and all types of artistic and athletic events in which a performance or presentation by one group (actors, athletes, priests, political candidates and others) has as its purpose enhancing the interests of others (congregations, audiences) whether that purpose is to save, inform, entertain, startle, "actualize" or in any way benefit those others. Catharsis, or the benefit of emotional release for the audience, is the principle motive behind the Aristotelean theory of

Greek tragedy.

In keeping with the assumptions of autonomy and authenticity discussed above, there are two tests for whether or not an organization should be considered a benefactor: First, there is the test of authenticity: Is the potential benefactor what it appears to be, or is it merely a “front” for some other type of “nonbenefice”. This, for example, is the test ordinarily applied by legal authorities in prosecution of charity scams and telephone solicitation “boiler rooms” where false charitable claims are made. Secondly, there is the test of purpose: Does the structure of the organization identify classes of benefactors and beneficiaries, and are the goals or purposes of the possible benefactor intended to benefit individuals or groups other than the benefactors?

As organizations, benefactors are distinct from firms, government bureaus and families. If we follow the logic of Blau and Scott and Smith, benefactors are also intrinsic, extrinsic and mixed. Intrinsic organizations, including self-help groups, social and recreational clubs and membership associations, fraternal societies, trade associations and employee’s beneficiary associations focus their benefits upon members. Extrinsic benefactors, including charitable organizations, foundations, civic associations, legal aid societies and others focus their benefits upon nonmember clients. Mixed benefactors engage in both intrinsic and extrinsic benefactions. Most churches, for example, combine ecclesiastical and missionary efforts.

The distinction between revenue-oriented and nonrevenue nonprofits discussed in Chapter 2 can also be applied here. “Type B” benefactors like churches, free museums and community theaters, non-revenue intercollegiate sports and amateur athletic associations, settlement houses and soup kitchens can be distinguished from “Type A” nonprofits like hospitals, museums and theatres charging admissions, nursing homes, fee-based social service agencies, intercollegiate football and basketball and other revenue-based activities in which the level of involvement or activity is metered by revenue inflows.

Particular benefactors (most notably voluntary associations) have

been seen to fall functionally into two additional major types: purposive and expressive.(Babchuk, Rose,) Purposive organizations are goal-oriented, devoted to solving particular and often clearly identifiable problems from among a repertory of known and workable solutions. Expressive benefactories are those devoted primarily to presentations: exhibitions, performances, dramatizations, rites, and ceremonies. Once again, mixed benefactories would combine purposive and expressive elements. The unique combination of religion and social service of the Salvation Army, for example, has been confounding and infuriating those devoted to a solely purposive and instrumental interpretation of charitable work for decades.

Commons

The concept of benefactory as employed here corresponds with many usages of the generic term organization, albeit with an explicit emphasis on the dispensing of benefit to designated target groups. It necessarily implies a second level of organization of relations between the benefactors (or patrons), beneficiaries, and those who, in turn may be acting as benefactors to the benefactors (as in the case of government agencies, foundations, United Ways or others providing grants to service agencies so that they may, in turn, provide grants or services to clients.) In the case of membership associations and intrinsic benefactories, this relation involves a strictly internal division of roles; the relations of members to themselves, as it were. In the case of extrinsic benefactories, however, it gets into complex questions of defining who is “in” an organization, the nature of interorganizational relations and ultimately of community organization.

In both cases, a concept is needed to denote the complex of organized relations between benefactors, intermediaries (defined as beneficiaries benefitting others as a condition of their benefit) and end beneficiaries. This is one of several related meanings we will attach to the term “commons”. The main characteristics of what we intend by the concepts of commons are encompassed by the Greek term *koinonia*. According to the ancient historian M.I. Finlay (1974), there were five prerequisites of *koinonia* for the ancient Greeks:

1) Participation must be free and uncoerced. 2) Participants must share a common purpose, whether major or minor, long term or short. 3) Participants must have something in common which they share such as jointly held resources or a collection of precious objects or a repertory of shared actions. 4) Participation involves *philia* (a sense of mutuality; often inadequately translated as "friendship"). 5) Social relations are characterized by *dikiaon* ('fairness'). This five-part definition encompasses all of the major elements sought by advocates of "nonprofit", "voluntary", "independent" and "third sector" terminology, and does so in a manner which is at the same time simple and elegant.

Defined in this manner, the commons is an explicitly interdisciplinary concept which links under a single rubric the separate concerns of the nonprofit organization/ voluntary labor perspective with the voluntary action concern for associations and groups. Definitions of groups tend to emphasize stable patterns of interaction and feelings of unity and shared consciousness of which parallel shared purpose and mutuality in the definition of *koinonia*/commons. (Smith and Preston, 1977; VanderZander, 1977) Defining organizations as groups "deliberately formed to achieve a specific goal or set of goals through a formalized set of rules and procedures" connects purpose with a specific set of means. Voluntary participation is ordinarily implicated by placing the modifier "voluntary" before group, organization or association. Two of the five elements of the commons are not ordinarily inherent in definitions of group or organization. The treatment of jointly held resources is an explicit economic concern. *Dikiaon* as fairness or justice (Rawls, 1976) can be interpreted as an explicitly political concern. Thus, any set of related social acts characterized by uncoerced participation, common purpose, shared resources, mutuality and fairness can be characterized as common, and social organizations and institutions in which such norms predominate can be termed commons.

A commons can be thought of as an economic, political and social space outside the market, households and state in which associative communities create and reproduce social worlds. Associative social worlds are composed of the images, meanings and sense of reality

shared by autonomous, self-defining collectivities of voluntarily associating individuals. The following table shows a systematic comparison of the five key characteristics of the commons with markets and states. Market participation is free and uncoerced, just as it is in the commons, while the potential for coercive participation (as in military drafts or prosecution of tax evaders) is a fundamental characteristic of states.

Comparison of Commons, Market and State Sectors On Five Dimensions

	Commons	Market	State
Participation	Uncoerced	Uncoerced	Coercive
	Shared	Maximization	Authoritative
Purpose	(Common Goods)	(Private Goods)	(Public Goods)
Resources	Common	Private	Public
Reciprocity	Mutuality	<i>Quid pro quo</i>	Equity
Social Relations	Fairness	<i>Caveat Emptor</i>	Law

While shared purposes, goals and objectives are characteristic of commons, profit or utility maximization is the presumed universal purpose of markets, while authoritative allocation of values is the fundamental defining characteristic of state purpose. (Easton, 1965)

While private ownership of property is the basic market expectation, and universalistic state conceptions of public goods (such as beaches, roads and national parks) are characteristic of market and state, common resources held jointly and allocated collectively are characteristic of commons. Existing economic theory makes a fundamental distinction between market goods and services and the special characteristics of public goods. An additional category of common goods will be introduced below.

A basic characteristic of social action in commons is the norm of mutual reciprocity, whereas participants in markets and states feel no such mutuality. Instead, market participants are usually governed by the norm of *quid pro quo* (or give and take) and concepts of the democratic state place emphasis on equity --in particular, the equality of citizens before the state. Finally, social relations in the commons are governed by the basic norm of fairness, whereas market relations are governed by *caveat emptor* (literally, "let the buyer beware.") and social relations in the state are governed by law (including rules, as in the Weberian model of bureaucracy.)

Norbeck (1972) presaged the approach to the commons introduced here when he advocated "common-interest associations" as a broader, cross-cultural classification under which voluntary associations are a sub-category. (Norbeck, 1972, 39) Specifically, the Japanese "common-interest organizations" examined by Norbeck met some but not all of the five criteria noted above: membership was not "voluntary" and governance was not democratic, yet participants appear to have shared purposes, joint resources, and distinctive norms of mutuality and fairness.

As commentators since Adam Smith and de Tocqueville have noted, commons include some of the most intrinsically interesting of human endeavors. In addition to their examples, also worth noting are religious celebrations, ceremonies, rituals and observances, dialogue and contemplation, basic scientific research above the level of idiosyncratic projects ("hobbies") of interest only to their perpetrators, from butterfly or insect collecting, to astronomy, geology, archeology, or other natural sciences, anthropology, sociology, economics, and

other social sciences, literary criticism and hermeneutics, drama, painting, sculpture, photography, dance, music, poetry and prose writing, and other arts, intercollegiate, Olympic and amateur athletics, including baseball, football and basketball, but also golf, rugby, track and field, swimming, polo and squash, counseling and psychotherapy, care of abused or neglected dependent children and adults, the mentally and physically handicapped, aged, dying and incompetent. We might even induce political activities such as electoral campaigns, legislative or administrative advocacy, political parties and caucuses, labor unions, and trade associations, in so far as their immediate goals are non-commercial.

Commons in art, religion, philosophy, and athletic games, are cultural universals found in diverse forms in all human societies. In addition, achievements in these commons are frequently among the elements cited as hallmarks of the attainment of high civilization. Thus, the philosophical schools of Plato and Aristotle and the temples and amphitheatres of ancient Athens are intrinsic to our understandings of the Greek origins of western civilization. (Matson, 1968) Likewise, the patronage of the Medicis must be recognized as a fundamental factor in the Italian Renaissance. (Acton, 1967)

Wherever and whenever commons are found, we find the coordinated social action of benefactors, agents and clients. Indeed, commons are inherently social. The existence of a community--a plurality of mutually interested and interacting persons is a fundamental precondition of religion, games and ceremonies, art and science, social service, and all true commons.

The essential character of commons rests in their role in presentation and dramatization of profound symbols of community--in the affirmation of the most fundamental human values of the community through human communication. (Goodman and Goodman, 1960; Hillary, 1963; Nisbet, 1953; Warren, 1963;) No civilization can afford to ignore or deny this role of the commons without trampling underfoot its most sacred values. To see an American Fourth of July celebration only as an activity of state, for example, is to miss much of its fundamental character as a celebration of the nation --itself a kind

of commons.

Commons are not places any more than are markets or states. Commons consist of sets of complex social acts which are basic, universal and not reducible to other, more fundamental categories of social behavior. The mutual, collective purposes, ends or objectives which participants in these complex acts share (regardless of their "rationality" or "irrationality" as perceived by outsiders) constitute the common goods which are the real economic products of the commons.

Significant common acts include worship, contemplation, helping, inquiry, self-expression, and play (the latter often dignified as "leisure", "recreation" or "athletics"). Each of these is a fundamental human activity at least as basic as production, consumption or exchange and not reducible to them. Any economics which reduces common goods to the basic categories of production, consumption and exchange is necessarily reductionistic and misleading.

A commons is not *primarily* a physical place (although it may be a place as well, as in the case of temples and other common spaces). However, a commons can be any social space for interaction within a community or coparticipants. Common space may be a committee room, a conference center, a restaurant dining room or almost any other public or private space. It may also be the social space of a newspaper, scientific journal or electronic bulletin board. The commons can be anywhere in the community where the baseline assumptions discussed above are played out.

Commons are fundamentally "universes of discourse". They are composed of groups of people who understand one another, speak common languages, and over time evolve specialized terminology and language. Such discursive universes are a type of commons whose shared understandings have, in the case of scientific commons, become known as cultures (Urban, 1991), communities (Schwartzman, 1992) or paradigms. (Berger and Luckmann, 1970; Bernstein, 1983; Kuhn, 1962) In this sense, philosophers, librarians, physicists, Roman Catholics, philatelists, joggers, and social workers are all terms for such commons, and realism, information science and

Copernican cosmology are the names of particular paradigms.

Commons tend to be organized both informally, through use of common languages and a common world view, as well as formally through associations, and other non-coercive groups. The structure of a commons consists of a community of one or more benefactors and related basic institutions. Three such institutions are most basic:

Common language is essential, because without it meaningful common activities would be literally impossible. Certain elementary types of "trading", tool-making and usage can be observed among primate species. Also, there are recorded instances of human economic activity between non-communicating language communities, such as the "silent trade" between Ghanaian and Arab traders during the Ghana Empire in Africa (3-1200 A.D.). However, the existence of all types of common activities on a significant scale requires substantial language ability. This is particularly so with commons where the community functions as a reference group to set and reinforce attitudes and values--processes which occur primarily through the medium of spoken and written language.

Another set of institutions basic to the commons are those necessary for education, training and socialization of participants. Because knowledge, as the combination of available meanings and information, is a key element in the commons, ways and means of passing knowledge among members of the community, and from one generation to another are basic to any commons. This applies equally to the socialization rites by which primitive youth are initiated into the mysteries of tribal dance and legends, the apprenticeship of medieval cathedral builders, and the "management training program" of the modern private nonprofit settlement house.

In the American context, on-going associations of all types tend to be incorporated, because of explicit tax concessions and limits on participant liability offered by incorporation. Incorporation, however, represents the legal adaptation in a particular society and not a fundamental defining characteristic of commons. Even within the Anglo-American tradition stemming from the Statute of Charitable

Uses, a great deal of "voluntary" common action occurs outside the formal limits of incorporation, and numerous cases of incorporated and unincorporated organizations performing similar functions can be pointed to.

There is a danger in over stating the importance of corporations and seeing commons primarily in terms of sets of discrete benefactories. Commons also constitute associative social worlds, which have two important characteristics: 1) Collectively, participants are free to order their behavior as they choose, so long as their actions do not threaten others or the community as a whole; and 2) Participants are free to leave at any time to join another social world (such as another association, the social world of the marketplace, or the "private" social worlds of the household.) In associative social worlds, such action occurs all the time, as lodge or fraternity members become inactive and take up the church choir or political campaigning, for example. Nozick (1974) has defined the ability to leave a social world as one of the characteristics of his utopia.

As associative communities built up of benefactories, commons are composed of three basic classes of participants: patrons, agents, and clients. Patrons contribute, give or donate resources in nonmarket transfers, or "grants". Agents or intermediaries, process or coordinate the transfer of resources. Clients are usually the presumed recipients or beneficiaries of these transfers. Publics (in the behavioral political science sense of the term) are aggregates from which both patron classes and client classes are organized. Memberships are special cases of patrons who constitute their own publics.)

Social actors throughout history have known that there is public space outside the marketplace and the state. The public space of the commons is not predominantly a space for buying and selling, or of ordering and forbidding. It is a space for talking and listening (dialogue), and for seeing and being seen (presentation). This should be evident to anyone who has ever attended an association meeting, given a speech to a public gathering, or in any way participated in an associative community. It is evident as well by the frequency with which community terms such as "fellowship", "congregation", etc. are

used in describing such communities.

It is useful, therefore, to locate the Commons alongside the marketplace, and the state, with its distinctive concerns for the authoritative allocation of values. (See Figure 3) The metaphor of the commons is particularly appropriate in the context of American history, where important historic cities as diverse as Boston, New Haven, Philadelphia and Sante Fe have such public areas even today, and the town square is a major feature in many smaller communities as well. Similarly, most associations have an annual "meeting" or "conference" whose function, at least formally, illustrates the potential for open dialogue in the commons.

Governance of Commons

The model of the self-governing association is characterized by a special vocabulary. *By-laws* are rules adopted by a group to regulate its own actions. Under common law, in the absense of any other law to the contrary, the power to make by-laws rests with the constituent members. (Gifis, 1991, 58) *Minutes* are the record of official proceedings of an organized group. Legally, the self-governing association can be either incorporated or unincorporated, tax-paying or tax-exempt. (Oleck, 1986)

Meetings are official gatherings, sessions or assemblies of the group. Plenary means full, complete, entire or unqualified. (Gifis, 1991, 357) As such, a *plenary* session, such as annual meetings are meetings open to the full or entire membership. *Articles of incorporation* are the legal instruments which create nonprofit and other corporations. (Gifis, 1991, 30) Articles are sometimes also called charters. A charter is usually a document issued by government establishing a corporate entity. The term derives from the practice of medieval monarchs of granting charters specifying certain rights, privilges and powers. (Gifis, 1991, 69)

A *committee* consists of "a person or persons to whom the consideration or determination of certain business is referred or

confided.” (Gifis, 1991, 82) The board of directors or trustees is a special committee, elected by rules or precedures held by the group to be fair, and usually spelled out in the bylaws or articles. In most state law, boards are held responsible for the overall management of the affairs of the association or corporation. (Oleck, 1986)

Endowment

Another key concept in the theory of the commons is that of the endowment, or the set of resources (potentials for action) held jointly by a commons. The term endowment is taken directly from historical and contemporary usage. The concept of resource endowments is linked by definition to the central concept of the commons. One of the components of the definition of the commons offered above is the conception of a “fund” of common, or shared, resources. In any commons, that fund or pool of shared resources is its endowment. The term endowment has been used in this way in English at least since the Middle Ages.

In this case, the term endowment is used to specifically include what are today called foundations. The term foundation, as the name of a special type of managed endowment, does not figure importantly in the vocabulary of the commons. In medieval usage, it originally referred to the act of creation of an endowment. In both medieval and modern times, a founder, often the first donor whose act enabled creation of the entity was afforded special status. (Gifis, 1991, 198)

There are many clues for those who wish to see them to this usage. Thus, the specialized accounting of the nonprofit sector is known as fund accounting (as is public accounting, where common funds are also held). Unfortunately, in some financial circles this robust and useful term has taken on specialized connotations not of a fund or pool or shared resources generally, but of such funds only when their use is, in some way, restricted. Thus, a college’s endowment, or an endowed chair of a professor means for some only those particular restricted funds.

It is important to note, therefore, that we can restore the broader historical usage of the term endowment, without disrupting in any way

this more restrictive meaning. We can also restore some of the derivations of this term, including dowry (meaning gift, as in bride-dowry, certainly, but also in the more generic sense of any gift or donation, including the creation of a restricted endowment) and the archaic verb dower (meaning to give). In Chapter 7 we shall further refine the concept of endowment by identifying various types of resources, including treasuries of financial resources, collections of tangible objects and repertoires of acts which can be learned.

Legally, an *endowment* is “a permanent fund of property or money bestowed upon an institution or a person, the income of which is used to serve the specific purpose” for which it was created. (Gifis, 1991, 158) The legal concept of endowment explicitly links the dimensions of common purpose and resources and implicates mutuality and fairness as well. As such, it is a species of *trust*, or real or personal property held by one person for the benefit of another. (Gifis, 1991, 501) This explains why nonprofit board members are sometimes called *trustees*, for they hold legal title to property in trust for another. (Gifis, 1991, 505) Such persons have *fiduciary* obligations under the law which are created by their accepting the trust, to act primarily for the benefit of another in matters connected with the undertaking. (Gifis, 1991, 189) To violate those obligations is a *breach of trust*, or “violation by a trustee of a duty which equity (that is, justice) lays upon him, whether wilful and fraudulent, or done through negligence, or arising through mere oversight and forgetfulness.” (Gifis, 1991, 54) This is closely related to the *cy pres* doctrine that “equity will, when a charity is illegal or later becomes impossible or impractical of fulfillment, substitute another charitable object which is believed to approach the original purpose as closely as possible. (Gifis, 1991, 116; Young, 1926)

An endowment may be created by a *gift*, or voluntary transfer of property made with out consideration, or for which no value is received in return. (Gifis, 1991, 207) Legally, these may be individual or *class gifts*; that is gifts to a body of persons uncertain in number all of whom receive equal or other definition portions. (Gifis, 1991, 74) estates, or all that a person owns in real and personal property. (Gifis, 1991, 165) A gift may be *inter vivos* (between living persons) or *causa*

mortis (in anticipation of death) as in a will. (Gifis, 1991, 207). An inheritance is an estate distributed to heirs according to the laws of descent and distribution. (Gifis, 1991, 237) A bequest, or gift of such property contained in a will. (Gifis, 1991, 46) Property is, simply, “every species of valuable right or interest that is subject to ownership, has an exchangeable value or adds to one’s wealth or estate.” (Gifis, 1991, 380) Property, in the legal sense, can be *incorporeal* with no physical reality (Gifis, 1991, 230) or *intangible* with no value in itself, but merely representing value. (Gifis, 1991, 245) The usual term for tangible goods is commodities. (Gifis, 1991, 82)

Personal Endowments

The concept of personal endowment has been used in psychological research in a manner consistent with its proposed usage in the theory of the commons. It has been used, for example, in studies of minority issues in mental health (Lorenzo, 1989), creativity (Shainess, 1989), instinct (Schneider, 1988; Gutmann, 1982); intelligence (McGlashan, 1986; McGee and Brown, 1984); personality (Huang, 1984) and mother-child bonds (Kestenbaum, 1984). Piechowski and Cunningham (1985) addressed the “psychological endowment” of artists. Erikson (1985) speaks of the “sensory endowment” of artists, as well as the possibility of expanding sensory endowment through education. Kodym and Kebza (1982) employed the concept in a manner completely consistent with the use of repertoires as endowments: They studied “musical endowment and talent”, which they say involves special components (including auditory and rhythmical components, memory, harmony and counterpoint, tonal feeling, and musical thinking) and general components (such as cognitive processes, volition, and motivation). Five particular types of musical endowment identified were technique, singing, teaching, conducting, and composing.

The endowment concept also figures large in physiological psychology, psychoanalytic psychology and genetic studies. In particular, the concept of the “genetic endowment” (Lidz, 1976; Graham, 1986) of an individual has been related to a number of phenomena including aggressive and violent behavior (Eichelman,

1985); aphasia (Gainotti, Nocentini, Sena and Silveri, 1986); delinquency (McManus, Brickman, Alessi and Grapentine, 1985) and more. Another antecedent of the use of endowment is found in game studies where endowment is used routinely to denote the level of resources available to a player. (c.f., Rapoport and Eshed-Levy, 1989; Rapoport, Bornstein and Erev, 1989).

Civilization

Hill's (1984) treatment of what he terms the "concept pool" offers a useful pointer to the concepts of civilization and paradigm as human endowments. The full connotations of the term endowment in the theory of the commons become clear only in light of the concept of civilization. Every commons, it is suggested, is endowed with a dowry of jointly held resources, some created by its benefactors, some received from markets, states and households, and some handed down from benefactors of previous generations (and thus constituting its heritage). Thus, the rituals and practices of The Book of Common Prayer are part of the endowment of the Church of England, and the collection of books in its library are part of the resource endowment of any school or college.

Some portion of every endowment consists of public goods, for the simple reason that any good which is available equally to everyone will be available in the commons as it is elsewhere. Thus, the Library of Congress is part of the resource endowment of every American school, thanks to inter-library loan. Current economic arguments notwithstanding however, the production of public goods is not a fundamental objective in most commons. Members of religious groups, lodges, fraternities, sororities and other social groups do not indiscriminantly seek to share participation, and mutual relations with every other social organization, but with others of similar affiliation (and presumably similar outlook).

In the theory of the commons, we shall employ the term common goods for this phenomenon. Private goods can also be made available to the commons by donation. The bulk of common goods, however, are characterized by the rather remarkable fact that while they may not

be universal, in the same sense as public goods, they are treated as universal within the commons. This is one of the most difficult concepts to realize or implement in the case of money and market goods entering the commons. Perhaps some examples will help.

It is well illustrated by the system of metric measurement as a common good. Metric measurement is not yet a public good in the United States: It is not indivisible, in that some people can practice it while others do not; and it is not universal. Members of the human species are not born with intrinsic knowledge of the metric system, nor is such knowledge universally available to everyone. Indeed, the majority of contemporary Americans still struggle with even understanding metric measurement and many simply do not. Yet in scientific communities in which any type of exact measurement is important, the metric system is a common good. It is in precisely this sense that metric measurement (indeed, mathematics as a whole) is an important component of the endowment of modern science --and presumably a part of its legacy to future scientific development.

In this same sense, the astronomical observations and calculations of a great many ancient civilizations were part of their endowments, but important parts of this legacy have been lost to us. This point can be generalized to the level of entire civilizations. Living civilizations consist of a great many such legacies, whose monetary value is truly priceless (that is valuable, but not for sale and consequently without price). While they may be more than we can count, and sometimes we even take their very existence for granted, their impact upon our daily lives is important nonetheless.

The particular legacy of western civilization which we call humanism, humanitarianism, or more recently, the much derided "secular humanism", is another such resource endowment which is especially important in the modern private nonprofit/ voluntary sector world. Virtually every contemporary benefactor --including those religious institutions which explicitly reject certain values which they deride as "humanistic" --relies upon the rich resources of the humanist/humanitarian legacy to realize those common goods which are most important to it.

One should not get the impression that it is being suggested here that there is a unique role for the commons as producers or creators of civilization. Civilizations represent the total product of all institutions of which they consist, and it is a matter of historical interpretations which contributions were most important and valuable.

It is the role of the commons in preserving, restoring and utilizing the heritage of a civilization where its true uniqueness lies: In applying resources of our heritage to solve what might be called the puzzles or the mysteries offered by a particular cultural heritage -whether religious, scientific or modern day attacks upon social problems. Thus, scientific research “paradigms” do not just include formal theories, but a complex array of associated (and mutually reinforcing) research evidence, techniques and methods, tacit assumptions and practical ways of doing things.

The value of a particular endowment may be realized only in dramatizing, presenting and thereby preserving it. Thus, the endowment of the Latin language was irreversibly transformed when it ceased to represent the resource of a living language. This is as true of jazz musicians seeking to preserve their legacy in after hours jam sessions as it is of the concert halls, museums and theatres of the culture industry. Until the advent of writing, literature, myth and lore could only be preserved through the oral tradition of retold tales. In a similar way, prior to visual recording techniques and systems of choreographic notation, dance could only be preserved through actual regular performance.

At one level, one might speak of the transformation of social surpluses of wealth, power and status, into culture. Such transformations have two distinct dimensions, both of which have important common (as well as public and commercial) examples. The instrumental, problem-solving mode associated with innovation can be linked with social change through the creation or discovery of new cultural values (artifacts and symbols as well as larger complexes of value embodied in art, music, literature, science). Thus, unique to the endowment of Western civilization are the discovery and the autonomous individual and the model of freedom and liberal democracy with which they are

associated. In contrast, expressive modes are associated with the affirmation of cultural and civilized values through ritual, ceremony and other presentations. Once established, these same values of individualism, freedom and democracy have taken ritual and ceremonial forms from Fourth of July celebrations.

As part of the overall social surplus, the sum total of the values of a civilization (it's "social capital", so to speak) may include a great many artifacts which are neither purely privately held nor universally accessible. In all societies, some such preservation of values is also deliberate and intentional part of life-plans. It is that portion of a civilization which we can call its endowment. In a larger sense, a civilization itself represents a common endowment as it is passed down from one generation to the next.

Dynamics of Change in Endowments

The endowment of any civilization is not a static thing. The acts of creation, preservation, presentation, and restoration can be very costly in numerous ways. Tremendous investments of time and energy are necessary in many on-going cultures simply to transform the heritage of the past into meaningful contemporary terms and to continue it as a legacy to the future. A good deal of the social action of sustaining cultural continuity occurs within the commons. Much of that action consists of three fundamental processes of learning, or socialization, technique, performing learned skills and demonstrating repertories thereby revitalizing them in the present, and search procedures, conciously seeking to solve established problems or identify new ways of doing things. The learning and presentation of repertories, which often take routine disciplines or ritual forms, can constitute an important study in itself.

Van der Veer (1989) examines how members of the Ramanandi order in northern India create and utilize abilities and potentialities to totally transform basic attitudes and emotions in a discipline of detachment

As a result, socialization, technique and search are fundamentally important processes in any commons, market or state. Socialization (or learning or education) is a social and psychological process related to

voluntary participation. (Renshon, 1975) The role of socialization in the formation of commons and in the admission of new participants has not been widely explored, however.

Technique is one of two ways of bringing value back into a common situation. An accumulated set of learned techniques possessed by a person or a group is a special set of meanings or values which can be termed a repertory. Thus, founding a musical or theater group, for example often hinges upon identifying seasoned performers with an established repertory able to act upon and to teach their techniques. The same can also be said for a monastic order, an athletic team or a research laboratory. The particular techniques may involve problem-solving, such as how best to carry out aspects of scientific research, social work, or artistic creation. Or they may be techniques of presentation, as in concerts, rites and performances. In both cases, however, the techniques in question are clearly subordinate to the larger common goods with which they are associated. The value of the cantor is established and maintained within the repertory of the synagogue and the choreographer within the repertory of the dance company. Techniques are, themselves, units of larger meaning complexes, and their value in the commons is intimately connected with the meanings associated with the common goods which they render.

The other major way to bring value into the commons involves search, which is the primary way in which information is brought in. Philosophical contemplation, scientific research and artistic creation are important forms of search, as are most forms of religious activity, such as vision quests and other quests for more profound religious experience, and some types of athletic activity. Some of these search techniques involve searching the immediate environment, while others seek to invoke and revitalize a common heritage. Value brought into the commons through search is value closely associated with innovation, novelty and change, as compared to the close association between technical values and tradition, stability and order.

Treasury

Treasuries are generally the best-known and most clearly understood sets of common resources held by benefactories. They consist of closely measured funds of identifiable assets --resources which can be measured in monetary terms--as measured by accounting systems and reported in financial statements of an association or corporation. Although such funds are not as frequently labeled explicitly as treasuries today than they once were, it is still conventional to refer to the principal officer of an association or private nonprofit corporation responsible for asset management as the treasurer.

In a money economy, most benefactories appear to have at least minimal need for a treasury. In much of the contemporary commons in American communities, treasuries are used to purchase many types of resources from the market --technical and professional labor, supplies and equipment, space and other rents, and other sources. Evidence suggests that treasuries were an important aspect of “nonprofit” institutions long before the modern age, however. In addition to the ark of the covenant, the original temple at Jerusalem contained a temple treasury. (de Vaux, 139, 248, 322, 325, 377) The treasury is also a standard feature in the architecture of Greek temples. (Scully, 1991)

The most conventional mistake in identifying the resources of a benefactory is to look only at the monetary resources of its treasury, because these are the most easily identified and more closely measured than other types of resources which the organization may control and direct. To do so, however, is to overlook or understate the resource position of most commons. To avoid this error we need some way to systematically denote, categorize and signify other facets of the resource endowments of benefactories. The theory of the commons incorporates two additional terms already in widespread use: collections and repertories.

Collection

Beyond their treasuries, many benefactories also maintain extensive collections that are essential in rendering their shared purposes or common goods. The collection of any benefactory consists of the

physical objects held or controlled by it as part of its endowment. Collections are many and varied. (Pomian, 1991) Many types of historical and contemporary benefactories maintain such collections as part of their on-going programs: Churches and religious organizations of all types commonly retain collections of sacred icons and other worlds of art, musical instruments, sacramental vessels, and other objects utilized in religious rites and ceremonies. Museums and archives exist for the explicit purpose of being repositories of collections of artifacts, manuscripts and other objects of archaeological, historical or literary value.

Many different types of benefactories maintain collections. Every library has its book collection and every medieval cathedral and monastery its reliquary and collection of statues. Theater companies have collections of make-up, costumes, scripts and sets created for previous productions. Athletic associations, unions and clubs typically have collections of sports equipment and paraphernalia associated with their particular interests. The overwhelming majority of opportunities to participate in sports in Canada, Finland, Norway are organized and carried out by voluntary associations (Beamish, 1985; Seppanen, 1982; Sisjord, 1986)

Such groups offer interesting case studies of the divisions between personal property and commons. Members of a softball club may own their own gloves, for example, while the team collectively owns a set of bats and bases. Libraries *are* collections of books, and modern libraries also have highly diverse sets of additional, information-bearing objects--from professional journals and archaic manuscripts to films, microfilms and microfiche, audio and video tapes, compact disks and other media of information and knowledge.

Libraries hold one of the most common forms of collections in the modern commons. The very idea of a library --which presumes commons of writers and readers knowledgeable of the same languages --is one key to understanding the role of collections in the commons. To view a library collection solely from the vantage point of the treasury, and to attempt to maintain an inventory, in the sense of a current running estimate of the combined economic value of the

collection in money terms, illustrates the problems involved in the economics of the commons. While a great many fascinating and highly technical economic and accounting issues are raised in such a case, it is also the case that large numbers of librarians and readers and writers of books harbor deep suspicions that such an approach misses the fundamental point of making money available to library collections.

Collections are not simple analogues of inventories of raw materials and unfinished goods that occur in productive firms. While superficially resembling the inventories, plant and equipment of productive firms, the collections of benefactories are really quite different --both in purpose and in scope --from inventories of productive resources in a firm. Most importantly, items in collections are seldom acquired with the intention of processing and resale. Thus, questions of their enduring market value are almost never of any continuing interest once acquired. What is important about items in collection is usually only information of their existence, whereabouts, conditions and uses. Ordinarily, it should be sufficient in the case of a benefactory to maintain such simple records, and to avoid extensive and misleading inclusions of collections among the monetary “assets” of its treasury.

Sometimes the connection between a particular collection and civilization is especially clearcut.

Haeinsa Temple is a Buddhist complex of shrines and temples in the mountains near Taegu, Korea. It possesses a set of 80,000 wood blocks for printing the entire Buddhist canon. These printing blocks were carved during the Mongol invasion of the 1230's. In the evolution of the west, the Library of Alexandria, with its collection of Greek philosophy, literature and science, played a comparable role in preserving knowledge of the ancient world. (Forster, 1961; PrŽaux, 1967)

A troubling application of the collection concept arose in the context of a major crime wave directed at plundering art and artifacts from the museums, churches and archeological sites of Italy, estimated to be the largest national collection of art works in the world, totaling in excess

of one million items. (Rowland, 1991) Police there have been troubled in recent years by an unprecedented outbreak of burglaries and thefts of art and artifacts that averaged more than 55 a day in 1990. Because of the absence of institutional collection lists, dockets of stolen items reported to police constitute virtually the only records of collections in many instances. Italian police have estimated that Italy has 3,400 museums and archeological sites (700 of which are state-run) 100,000 churches and 40,000 castles and fortifications, as well as 900 important town centers. Because Italian churches, archeological sites, and even museums have not traditionally kept detailed inventories, the problems of even tracking stolen works has been extraordinarily complex. Rome alone has 333 churches, more than 80 convents and monasteries and 83 museums, not counting the 18 in the Vatican. The absence of collection lists is a rather extreme example of the way in which preoccupation with treasuries and financial accountability leads commons to ignore or neglect the more elementary question of logs or lists of collections of precious objects.

Most difficult of all to deal with have been the intangible resource endowments of the commons --the symbolic gestures, rituals and ceremonies of religious bodies; the skillful, nuanced performances of actors, singers, musicians, and other performers, the occult bodies of specialized knowledge and practical wisdom --whether scientific, magical, religious, artistic, political, or otherwise --which communities have built up over years, decades and in some instances, centuries.

No one can expect to price such knowledge and add it to the treasury - -the astronomical knowledge of the Druids or the Mayas, for example, poses a continuing enigma. In more contemporary terms, much the same can be said of the subtle reasoning of a philosopher, the skillful intervention of a caseworker. Yet, efforts to assess the resources endowments of many types of commons are incomplete unless we take such resources into account.

The term repertory --already in use by actors and musicians to describe the range of accomplished performances of an ensemble or

company --may be applied to the intangible endowments of many other commons as well. A repertory is, in this sense, any set of acts that an individual or group is prepared to perform. It may be the set of discrete-but-related skilled behaviors necessary to rescue a community of disaster victims, or the set of unique patterned motions and utterances that compose a performance of Hamlet or Handel.

Repertories are often built up of sequences of related problem solving strategies. Some such repertories involve straightforward applications of "if-then" reasoning: If the victim is choking, perform the Heimlich maneuver. This maneuver, together with numerous others constitute the repertory of emergency medical technicians.

Repertories may involve ordinary, conventional behavior or extremely high levels of skill, judgment, and timing that only members of the repertory company are able to master, and then only through the dedication of a lifetime. Yet the point remains--the stock of indigeneous solutions in the repertory of problem-solving actions constitutes one of the principle forms of resources available to a benefactory. Although we may be unaccustomed to thinking of them as resources, performance repertories are also among the key resources of the commons. They often constitute the uniqueness and relative advantage "that money can't buy". This is as true of charitable and religious organizations as it is of artistic performances and athletic competitions. The 12-step method of Alcoholics Anonymous describes a repertory distinctive and unmistakable in its own way.

The term is perhaps most widely used and understood in the arts, where theaters, orchestras, athletes and other performance ensembles routinely refer to the set of scripts, scores or routines over which they possess active mastery as being in their repertory (sometimes preferring the French spelling and pronunciation of *repertoire*.) Even in this context, however, the underlying problem-solving connotation should be apparent: Each new production and each performance represents a new problem to be solved. It is in the problem-solving of the performance where the excitement of live performance is to be found in an age of television, compact disks and videotape.

What sets professional benefactories apart from amateurs are

differences in repertoires. This is as true of social services programs as it is of musicians, painters and actors. A brilliant actor, musical performer, dancer or surgeon can perform movements and introduce nuances of performance that others are simply unable to duplicate. When a new type of service for intervening with alcoholics, or aged persons with Alzheimers' disease, is developed, the greatest interest is always in the repertoire of new skills and techniques that may be involved.

Resources specifically associated with capturing power and demonstrating authority also clearly involve repertoires. The endowment whose repertoires encompass skills of political intelligence-gathering and the exercise of influence, as well as ample amounts of legitimacy and authority is likely to realize significant improvements in its position in terms of additions to its treasury, new items for its collection, and further expansion of its repertoires.

While collections arouse intense and misplaced interest, economists, accountants and managers have shown virtually no interest in repertoires as key resources of nonprofit corporate benefactories. Contemporary financial statements and annual reports not only fail to list estimates of the value of repertoires, they usually even fail to note their existence. Such are the exigencies of contemporary concern with nonprofit "accountability"! Estimating the full or true value of any endowment should require at least a simple listing and description of its repertoire of skills and techniques found in a benefactory.

Regimes

As noted above, the nonprofit and voluntary action community has been preoccupied in recent years with the question of suitable delineations of the nonprofit sector in relation to government, business, and even "the informal sector". This preoccupation has produced a theoretical and conceptual impasse that consists of equal measures straw man, *deus ex machina* and genuine puzzlement. The literature on this topic leads to the paradoxical conclusion that making distinctions between market, state and commons serves only to point up the interrelations and connections between these sectors.

What is needed, according to Ostrander, Langton and Van Til (1987) are new ways of thinking about the interdependence and interaction of the state, for-profit and nonprofit organizations. It may be possible, however, to use existing concepts in new ways to produce what represent, in effect, such new ways of thinking. One approach, for example, is to utilize the interdisciplinary model of urbanism, with its distinction between core and periphery, as a matrix for spelling out the links between sectors.

The concepts of core and periphery as they have evolved in urban and regional theory can serve to distinguish the defining, or central characteristics of the sectors, from other peripheral functions that they may serve. Thus in the traditional terms of the theory of civil society, the recognized core of the state involves those coercive powers usually identified as the police powers. It is a conventional axiom of political theory that legitimate governments may justly deprive others of their liberty, property through the exercise of these powers. Yet, modern government also clearly involves a variety of public (that is, tax-supported) functions in which coercion is replaced by compassion, community, or some other public virtue.

This distinction is well illustrated by the child welfare field, where the core coercive powers associated with child custody and adoption and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, coexist with peripheral compassionate purposes of other child welfare services. The public utilities of local government (sewer and water, for example), and national park camp grounds and just a few of the many peripheral commercial services sold or leased by governments.

Likewise, while the core of the market-oriented, business and commercial sector may indeed be profit-oriented, one can hardly overlook the conclusion that some activities at the periphery of business assume commons-like and state-like qualities. Thus, the traditional company town and the modern corporation frequently assume important measures of coercive influence over the private lives of employees, controlling many aspects of "private life". Likewise, the country store, the proverbial soda fountain, the neighborhood Mom and Pop grocery and neighborhood bars (like the one portrayed on the

television series “Cheers”) are among the many examples of commercial establishments that have blended a profit orientation with other, more communal functions.

Part of the current enigma of the nonprofit organization in part may involve a core transformation --the historical evolution of what were or are thought to be commons (like nonprofit hospitals, nursing homes and child care centers) into quasis-commercial enterprises which are clearly “business-like” in orientation and operation. In other cases, both modern and medieval, commons have evolved essentially coercive powers. Such powers may be exercised in cooperation with the state as in the case of nonprofit child welfare or aging services charged with “advocacy”, “ombudsman” and other quasis-regulatory responsibilities. Or, they may be exercised in direct opposition, as in the case of terrorist groups and organized crime “families”.

Finally, at their core, families/households serve as essential primary groups, but at the periphery, they may assume coercive powers (as in patriarchal, tribal and other ascriptive societies), commercial functions (as in family businesses) or associational characteristics (as in large modern “family reunion” associations). Consistent application of this model yields 12 possible core-periphery complexes in addition to the four “pure” ideal types (for example, common core with common periphery)

PERIPHERY

CORE	Commons	Market	State	Family
Commons				
Market				
State				
Family				

The hybrid types that emerge from distinguishing core and periphery of state, market, household and commons represent a step beyond the straight forward consideration of isolated ideal types. Such hybrids still speak only to the internal organization of each sector. An additional distinction is necessary to encompass relations across sectors.

The political concept of *regime* can be broadened and usefully applied for this purpose. A regime may be said to be a network of related formal and communal organizations across sectors. In some cases, we already have names for some such combinations. Democracy is the name we ordinarily apply to a regime in the control of elected officials. Oligarchy, fascism and monarchy are other types of regimes. In one of the more rigorous and elegant modern schemes, Dahl and Lindblom identified a four-fold scheme of leader-follower types. (1957)

The conventional use of regimes in political studies primarily emphasizes those in which the state figures prominently as a core. Thus, for example, Lowi has characterized “interest group liberalism” and the Frankfurt School has addressed authoritarianism. (Lowi, 1969; Adorno, 1950) Capitalism is a label applied to any regime with market-oriented enterprises in its core, as opposed to state-socialism that brings state-controlled enterprise into the core, or barter economies that typically incorporate strong common elements. “Welfare state” and “mixed economy” have frequently been used to denote regimes in which the core is shared by market and state and, perhaps, commons.

Applying a regimes model to the problem of the relation of commons to other sectors resolves the problem into several distinct sub-problems: On the one hand, there is the problem of identifying the cores of diverse regimes and the peripheries with which they are combined.

The phrase welfare state conjures up one type of state-core regime (regulated mixed economy) to its adherents and quite another (state-

socialism) to its critics. The literatures on participatory democracy, coproduction and collaboration each also conjure up quite distinct state-core regimes. At the heart of the Reagan Revolution was the vision of a market-centered/family-centered regime with a restricted state and a vibrant commons on its periphery.

In sum, a regime may be said to consist of a specific set of relations between commons, markets, states and households, and a civilization a set of relations between regimes. Medieval western civilization, for example, was built upon the primacy of a particular set of religious commons, and modern western civilization is to a high degree built upon the “civil society” model of the supremacy of the constitutionally limited nation state. (Kennedy, 1988) We will examine a case study of the regimes model in Chapter 10 below.

Patronage

The core of the commons, as noted above, consists of social relations between patrons, agents and clients. A patronage relationship can be defined as one between a **patron** (defined as one with some type of good) and a **client** (who is seeking that same good). Such relations are often cast in explicitly hierarchical terms of superiority and subordination. The relation of the teacher and student (one with more knowledge and one with less); of the master craftsman and his apprentice (one with more skill and one with less); or of the political boss and a benefice (office, grant, land, whatever) -seeker.

Patronage in the commons is a general term that suggests stable relations between a group or class of patrons and groups or classes of intermediaries and/or clients. Patronage may at various times embrace the support, sponsorship, legitimation, financing or protection of common goods. Patrons are known variously as givers, donors, patrons, supporters, benefactors, helpers, philanthropists, and by a range of additional terms. In western civilization, patronage can be found in ancient, medieval and modern times. Patronage is also evident in many other civilizations as well.

The key to understanding the enduring role of patronage in the commons is the concept of hierarchies. The most fundamental way to view these is as unequal or asymmetric social relations --as in the unequal relations between patrons and their clients made famous by the definition of patronage as “ .” in Samuel Johnson’s famous dictionary.

The central focus of patronage theory in the commons is on the voluntary (uncoerced) hierarchies --of power, influence, wealth, status, information and knowledge or other resources --and the circumstances leading to the emergence and continuation of inequalities in this sense. This is one reason for the strong emphasis on negation in terminology of the commons: The absence of kinship as a requirement of association membership, for example, points up the “non-familial” nature of the commons as a pure type.

Apparent exchange asymmetries (or, the absence of fair and equal exchanges by buyers and sellers in a competitive environment) for grants of all types points up the “non-market” nature of the commons. The absence of legitimate control or domination by a single actor (the so-called “monopoly of force”) points up the “non-state” nature of the commons.

Depending upon particular predilections, the reader is likely to leap immediately to all of the most controversial and difficult cases: tyrants, dictators, political bosses and others who abuse power; capitalists, thieves, embezzlers and others who are the reason behind the phrase “caveat emptor” (buyer beware). Such exceptions are, no doubt, interesting and important. (Explaining them as departures from the particular hierarchical principles of the commons is an essential task of the theory, undertaken in Chapter 6.)

Patronage, in this sense may be asymmetric in the perceptions of the relationship by various parties: Relations can be seen by either party as coercive, remunerative or “normative”. Thus, for example, Samuel Johnson’s loud literary protestations about what he perceived as his exploitation tell us nothing about the attitudes or intentions of his patron, Lord Chesterfield.

Note that many patronage relationships are asymmetric in another sense: they do not involve equitable “exchange” in its traditional sense: The teacher who gives knowledge, information or skill to a student does not receive the student’s ignorance in exchange. The patron who gives to a charity, or directly to the poor is a much more complex case: while the patron may not expect an equitable return, some reciprocation in terms of recognition, status, gratitude may be involved. The current view that all common relations involve “exchanges” is thus one requiring a good deal of additional close examination.

Conclusion

The vocabulary of ordinary English contains a robust vocabulary for speaking of nonprofit and voluntary action. Terms like common, benefit, benefactory, endowment, heritage, legacy, treasury, collection, repertory, regime and patronage provide a conceptual matrix for denoting and explaining nonprofit and voluntary action. Moreover, they provide a vocabulary that places emphasis where many have argued it belongs--on the uncoerced cooperation of peers. For the most part, we may talk of issues and matters of common concern by utilizing long standing English terms like commons, beneficiary and endowment. In other cases, there are no existing terms for important ideas and we need to apply well-understood principles of language construction to coin terms like benefactory. In both cases, the robustness of language serves us well.

If people living in democratic countries had no right and no inclination to associate for political purposes, their independence might be in jeopardy, but they might long preserve their wealth and their cultivation: whereas if they never acquired the habit of forming associations in ordinary life, civilization itself would be endangered.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

4. Civilization: Our Common Heritage

Two points made in the previous chapter that require additional comment: One is the suggestion that the concept of commons is

broader than and encompasses the concepts of nonprofit organization and voluntary association. The other is that commons that may be related to varying degrees to the American nonprofit organization are basic to western civilization, and found in many other civilizations and cultures as well. The group portrait of commons that begins to emerge in this chapter is based upon cursory review of a broad range of historical sources. It suggests a view quite different from the Tocqueville-inspired vision of American exceptionalism found in much of the current nonprofit and voluntary action literature.

The need for a more complete and detailed historical understanding of the commons has long been recognized. The 1972 interdisciplinary voluntary action task force planning conference identified “The nature and development of voluntary action from early times to modern society (history of voluntary action)” as one of a number of major analytical topics of voluntary action theory and research. (Smith, 1972A) Since that time, historical and cross-cultural understanding of facets of the heritage of nonprofit and voluntary action has expanded substantially. (Bauer, 1990; Bremner, 1980, 1988; Brown, 1973; Hall, 1987; Peterson and Peterson, 1973; Ross, 1974A; Ross, 1974B; Seibel, 1990 and others) At the same time, the conceptual impact of expanding historical insight upon the main body of nonprofit and voluntary studies has been limited, as witnessed by the apparent belief among many nonprofit and voluntary action scholars that the American voluntary association and nonprofit organization are unique American inventions. The priority placed on the concept of heritage, collection and repertory in the preceding chapter make it clear that in the theory of the commons, the beliefs, rituals and ceremonies and other practices of a civilization built up over time represent a major set of resources of action in the contemporary commons.

Some parts of this picture have been known far longer. Chalmers (1827) wrote an early monograph on the problem of endowments from which the usage of the term in this work is derived. The article on philanthropy in the 1917 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, for example, included sections on Chinese, Indian, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Early Christian and Modern Philanthropy. (Hastings, 1917) An article by Chambers (1911) is still one of the most encyclopedic sources available on the long history of charity and almsgiving. There are ten sections, each written by an authority for that period: Primitive, Biblical, Buddhist, Christian (early, mediaeval, and modern periods), Greek, Hebrew, Hindu, Jewish, Islamic (reference is to “Law, Muhammadan”), and Roman. References to classical sources are woven into the text, and a selection of additional references follows each section. Bruno (1944) cites and discusses selected references covering Oriental, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek and Roman concepts of charity.

In this chapter, we will examine selected aspects of the evolution of the American commons within the framework of the heritage of western civilization. In large part, the core of this history is the heritage of beliefs and practices that evolved from the ancient world of the Mediterranean through medieval Europe and was transported to the Americas where it took new and distinctive shape. This main theme has an incredible number of counterpoints that also need to be developed, but that limits of space and the author's limited vision preclude considering here.

In broad outline, the gist of the argument is that a civilization and its main features --cultures, languages, technologies, arts, religions, games and sports, as well as the organizations that tend bodies of knowledge including philosophies, religions and sciences, conform in important respects to the characteristics of commons. Successful civilizations, in contrast with empires and totalitarian regimes, evoke in very fundamental ways a level of voluntary compliance from those who inhabit them. One can be ordered to write music or watch the stars, but the highest levels of human achievement associated with the triumphs of any civilization cannot be coerced.

Moreover, the resources of language and culture, as well as fundamental senses of purpose, a sense of mutuality and 'fellow-feeling' and basic standards of justice and fairness are all implicit in what we mean by a civilization. The distinct forms these commons take in modern liberal democracies are variants on larger, older and broader themes.

Civilization is as much a product of human effort as any other aspect of economic, social and political development. The total social product of a society is not simply measured by its GNP. The development of any of the components of civilization beyond its present state is dependent upon the uses that are made of the social product of society. This is as true of the cultural achievements of a civilization as of outputs of material products.

Civilization And Development

Focussing on civilization in this way allows us to point up the critical role of social surpluses and the leisure classes who control them as important aspects of the relation between the economy and the commons. For example, connections can be shown between the leisure time cultural and associational activities of workers in Europe between 1590 and 1914. (Yeo and Yeo, 1981) The real product of any society is formed in its leisure as well as its labor, and includes its sciences, arts, literatures, music, philosophies and religions as well as the techniques and practices of daily living that make up its "way of life", and the many other artifacts that together compose its culture.

To be sure, a portion of the social product of all societies must be devoted to assuring the survival of members of the society and the continuation of its basic infrastructure of social institutions. Action to assure survival and social reproduction is the real meaning of labor in an economic tradition running from Aristotle to Adam Smith and Karl Marx. (Arendt, 1958) Another portion of the social product, together with the natural resources controlled by the society, provides the basis for organizing future production. In an affluent society, several broad alternatives emerge for use of the remaining social product after the basic survival needs of the society are assured: Surpluses that might be directed back into increased production can also be employed to support personal leisure or dedicated to the pursuit of public goods, as diverse as the building of empires, public welfare, defense of civil rights and liberties, or construction and maintenance of highways. A third option, even in relatively poor economies at levels of development barely above subsistence is support for the unproductive labor of distinct leisure classes --priests, scholars, poets, scientists, artists, musicians and others.

Prehistory

Preliterate cultures don't leave documents and "lost" civilizations don't leave audio or video recordings. As a result, we typically know a good deal more about the material aspects of prehistoric cultures than we do about their intangible, symbolic practices, beliefs and social structures. Nonetheless, within the limits of the existing evidence, it is

quite plausible to suggest that many ancient civilizations knew and practiced the uncoerced participation, sharing of purpose and resources, experiences of mutuality and mutual regard and fairness we associate with the commons. (Lieberman, 1991) The anthropologist Adolph Bandelier's 1890 novel, *The Delight Makers* offers a convincing picture of clan associations and kiva societies within the complex community life of early communities of the American southwest. In all likelihood, such practices reach deep into the past of many pre-literate cultures and suggest that caring, concern and community are anything but signs of modern progress. Indeed, the primitive selfishness and greed found by Colin Turnbull are more likely the products of social disorganization than the "brutish nature" projected upon the past by social theorists in the tradition of Hobbes.

Evidence of primitive commons is at least as ancient as that of markets and states, and may, in fact, predate both. Artifacts suggesting unproductive labor, for example, are evident in the remains of a great many neolithic and earlier archaeological sites. The earliest hunter-gatherers making the transition to agriculture did not just fashion available materials into productive tools like axes and digging sticks. They used the same knowledge and skill to develop tools used for cave painting, carving images, prayer sticks, totems and other religious objects.

Moreover, primitive life is seldom the unrelieved struggle for survival projected by modernists. Sahlins (1972) has argued that primitive man may have had relatively large amounts of leisure time punctuated by occasional periods of hunting and gathering to assure survival. This fits the portrait painted by Herman Melville in his early novels *Typee*, *Omoo* and *Mardi* based on first hand observations of Polynesian life.

Even minimal levels of affluence are capable of producing leisure. It is quite plausible that most primitive humans knew leisure from a very early date, and also plausible that portions of their leisure went into the unproductive labors of religion, games, decorative arts, myths and storytelling and other common goods. Preliterate peoples must have spent substantial amounts of leisure time developing, learning and performing myths, rituals and ceremonies, in order to produce the

artifacts that have already been discovered and to sustain the legends and traditions that have come down to us.

Commons, characterized by uncoerced participation, common purposes, shared resources, mutuality and fairness, can arise under conditions of even relatively modest affluence. None of the required elements assumes high levels of social and economic development. An indicator of the extent of prehistoric leisure is the presence of one or more classes free of the necessity of producing their own food. (Lenski and Lenski, 244) To the extent that such unproductive classes are found, the potential exists for the emergence of characteristic prehistoric commons: temple cults, priestly and shaman clans. When a distinct leisure class emerges to devote itself to unproductive endeavors, a commons of some type is almost certainly present. The resulting leisure classes are defined or characterized by their degree of release from the burdens of labor, and are an intrinsic part of the division of labor. Right up to the present day, leisure classes are possessed of varying degrees of leisure from the complete idleness of the courtier and industrial age plutocrat to the sabbath (“day of rest”) of agricultural peasants and laboring classes.

Among prehistoric societies, evidence of such emergences is clearest through studies of ritual. Initiation rituals are a nearly universal form of commons among prehistoric peoples. For example, Shaw (1991) reports a study of the Samo people of the East Strickland plain of Papua New Guinea focused on the enactment of Samo cultural values during *kandila*, an elaborate three day initiation ceremony preparation for which takes two years. Any people on the brink of subsistence, would be unable to tolerate the kind of sustained “wealth” of leisure time and surplus resources to organize and carry out rituals over such extended periods of time.

Some portion of primitive commons may have evolved out of the projection of family life into the community. Marriage feasts and bridal dowries are consistent evidence of levels of affluence. The same can be said for funerals and elaborate grave sites. Existing knowledge of these aspects of primitive cultures offer detailed and elaborate testimony of their role in creating and sustaining the social solidarity

of communities. We recognize the similar potentials of nonprofit institutions such as charities, arts and religion for creating and sustaining community solidarity. (Van Til,) Yet, we have largely ignored the obvious functional parallels between primitive and modern commons.

Ritual feasting is another common activity widely evident in primitive societies. Sherman and Sherman (1990) investigate the ritual significance and political economy of feasting among the Samosir Batak of Sumatra. Feasts are, by definition the creations of affluent peoples and show many of the signs of mutuality, pooling, and the “voluntarism” of the commons. Typically, participation in ritual feasting would be “voluntary” (at least, any coercive pressures to participate are likely to be subtle and not overt); mutual, with shared purposes and resources; and implicit or explicit rules of fairness (order for receiving food, choice of pieces, etc.)

In some instances conspicuous display of wealth was central to the purpose of the feast. It may also have been an element in evolving distinctions between “public” and “private”. For example, Wilson (1989) examines how the development of permanent settlements during the Mesolithic period and the division of space into public and private areas encouraged tendencies to both conceal and display. Display in this sense approximates the concept of presentation in the theory of the commons. As such, the emergence of patronage in the commons discussed below signifies a series of major historic shifts in such displays --of wealth, of virtue and much more. Patronage of temples, public spectacles and other commons constitute historically significant, shift away from conspicuous displays of wealth in the grandiose private consumption of ritual feasting and the substitution of common goods.

The significance of ritual and its connections to common goods is not limited to prehistoric and primitive cultures. The distinctive patterns of ritualized friendship among ancient Greeks may be directly related to the patterns of patronage and philanthropy that developed there. (Hand, 1968; Morris, 1986) Herman (1987) describes a network of such ritualized friendships among the elite of ancient Greek cities.

Among contemporary societies, Japan is noteworthy for the continuing importance of similar ritual, ceremonial and symbolic behavior. Jeremy and Robinson (1989) concluded that ceremony and symbol are much more important in all aspects of Japanese society than they are in the contemporary west. One should expect, as a result, to locate the Japanese commons in its tea ceremonies, serene gardens and road side Shintu shrines as well as more familiar forms.

Two of the most universal categories of material artifacts of the ancient worlds are those various monumental structures we know as stela and temples. Even simple stela and surviving ritual objects suggest the existence at one time of skilled stone or wood carvers and builders not exclusively engaged in tool-making. Temples suggest not only architects and builders but also classes of acolytes and priests.

Understanding of American nonprofit and voluntary action might also be considerably advanced by closer examination of its ritual aspects. Mary Jo Deegan (1989) uses dramaturgical theory to examine American ritual behavior in settings such as football games and singles bars. Lincoln (1989) explores ways in which myth, ritual and classification hold societies together, and how in times of crisis they can also be used for social reconstruction. These and other perspectives on ritual should readily be applicable to a broad range of nonprofit and voluntary action in commons.

In addition to artifacts and rituals, another major category of interest with regard to the commons of prehistoric societies are the various stela, megaliths and monuments that survive and continue to fascinate us. The gigantic stone statues of Easter Island, for example, must have had some type of religious or ceremonial significance. Likewise, the rock temples of Petra, (including the one that was made famous as a backdrop in the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*). Collins (1988) recently identified the iconography and ritual associated with relief sculptures inside the cave temple of the Hindu god Siva on Elephanta, a small island in the Bombay (India) harbor. Meanings and rituals this elaborate and detailed imply leisure to develop, sustain and to understand. They also imply common project of large numbers of people acting jointly. And thousands of such examples survive from

prehistory.

Various of the identified megaliths of prehistoric Northern Europe, including Stonehenge, are thought to have been the monuments of stone age craftsmen. Likewise, Egyptian rulers constructed a series of vast desert pyramids whose purposes are not entirely clear and in the Americas, various ancient Mesoamerican peoples constructed elaborate “urban” temple complexes whose functions and uses are still not well understood. (Childe, 1950; Encyclopedia of Social Sciences; Hardoy, 1968) We are inclined to view such monuments as the constructions of enslaved peoples laboring under tyrannical rulers. It may be more consistent with the precision and spirituality we see in such megaliths that they were the products of voluntary labor, possibly inspired by religious ecstasy. We already know that similar enthusiasms played a role in the human sacrifices of Aztec and Maya temple cults that utilized these particular megaliths.

Meanwhile, in eastern North America, various woodland Amerindian populations developed their own unique forms of mounds, some of which are sculpted into fantastic animal shapes. Even the debates over the functions of these mysteries tends to point toward the existence of ancient commons of one type or another. Whether these various monuments served primarily religious purposes, as some would have it, or scientific (astronomical, mathematical and calendrical) purposes as others have suggested is not especially important when we realize that both religious and scientific purposes are subsumed by the concept of the commons: These were the projects of civilized and affluent leisure classes, and by their very existence, we can infer the existence of distinct types of commons in the prehistoric world.

Further studies of prehistoric ritual and monument under the rubric of the commons may shed some interesting light upon current interest among nonprofit and voluntary action scholars in the institutional relationships between the market, the state and the commons. Archaeological and anthropological studies of the village peoples (“pueblo indians”) of the American southwest, for example, point toward a civilization of settled communities lacking a political state until very recent times. Evidence also points toward the existence of

elaborate and extensive networks of “voluntary associations” (for example, kiva societies and clans) in these communities, and a monumental architecture of great subtlety and aesthetic originality, linking kivas and pueblos into an organic whole with nature. (Sculley, 1975) We find among these same village peoples extensive and elaborate mythologies (for example, The Hopi Way), rituals (for example, corn dances) and ritual objects (for example, kachinas). The assertion that some measure of affluence and leisure are essential, but that great wealth is not essential is well illustrated by the rich commons of these village peoples, that arose out of the meagre social surpluses of communities forced to scratch a living out of the “dry farming” of the southwestern desert region.

Civilization and Urbanization

However pervasive commons may have been prior to the dawn of civilization, the urban revolution and the development of cities was certainly a hallmark in the evolution of commons. Arnold Toynbee argued that the presence of a leisure class is consistent evidence of a civilization. (Toynbee, 1967, 13) The agricultural and urban revolutions at the dawn of civilization must have had profound implications for commons, especially in dramatically increasing the possibilities for the range of activities of urban leisure classes freed from the necessity of their own subsistence. Not only do we see dramatic increases in the size and scale of urban monuments in the cities of Mesopotamia, the Middle East, China and elsewhere, but also the proliferation of entirely new unproductive urban occupations and professions: priests, artists, scholars, and performers (athletes and actors). In pre-agricultural and pre-urban cultures, performers of ritual and builders of monuments were most likely part-time amateurs devoting their leisure to such pursuits, as we say, “after work”. In cities, we see the emergence of leisure class occupations.

Spates and Macionis (1986) believe that the key to understanding cities as a major social phenomenon is to examine them in historical, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary context using major theories for

analysis. The basic approach taken in the remainder of this chapter is to examine the growth of civilization and urban development through the theoretical lens of the theory of the commons.

Temples also suggest surpluses of food, spices and other substances to be used in sacrifices and ritual observances. Finally, inferring from historical knowledge, we can say also that monuments and temples probably also imply a patron, or group of patrons. Such patrons are generally necessary for financing, legitimacy, protection, labor supply and numerous other purposes. Sometimes, as in the case of Kings Solomon, Asoka, and Agamemnon (sp), Queen Cleopatra, Pericles, Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies and others, specific patrons are known to us. In other cases, we can only infer such patronage.

Thus, we can surmise that there may have been patronage by the rulers and at least an elemental commons associated with the Ziggurat in the city-state of Ur in ancient Mesopotamia, for example, even though we know almost nothing about the cult practiced there. We know somewhat more about the role of royal patronage in the construction of the Egyptian pyramids, although we still know little about their use. The First and Second Temples at Jerusalem are particularly important in this respect. Not only are they important in the development of both Judaism and Christianity. We also know a good deal about the construction, financing, organization and cult practiced there, as well as their relationships to other subordinate Hebrew temples. (deVaux, 1965)

The patterns of urban commons of the ancient middle east are also repeated elsewhere. When the imperial Chinese capital of Changan grew into the largest city in Asia during the 8-9th centuries, it had an estimated population of a million people, and more than 100 Buddhist, Taoist, Zoroastrian and Nestorian Christian temples were among its institutions. (Wright, 1967)

One of the contested points in the theory of civilization involves the role of writing: Is writing the central indicator of the rise of civilization? And did writing emerge for largely utilitarian, business purposes or for some other reason? In Asia, perhaps more so than

elsewhere in the world, the development of writing very early attained not only a utilitarian, but also a common importance. Scribes, scriptoria (or handcrafted “copy centers”) have also been part of the division of labor of even minimally affluent literate societies from very ancient times. Thus, near Taegu, Korea, for example, a Buddhist monastery has maintained the entire Buddhist canon on a set of more than 80,000 wooden blocks important in the development of printing for the past 800 years. (Woo-Keun, 148) Similar examples can also be found in the west: During the so-called “Dark Ages” of western civilization, virtually the entire canon of ancient Greek and Roman texts was maintained --and recopied from one generation to the next -- at a handful of isolated Irish monasteries. (DePaor, 1958)

It should be clear from the above that commons can be traced into early human prehistory, and tied directly to the emergence of leisure classes and the development of some type of norms emphasizing common display (“for the good of us all”) over purely private ostentation. Moreover, the evidences of prehistoric commons in the diverse forms of rituals, monuments and ritual objects, are sufficiently widespread to justify the speculation of multiple origins of common practices as well as their virtual universality as a human form.

Athens

Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations both incorporated distinctive philanthropic practices and institutions. (Finlay, 1974; Hand, 1968; Gold, 1982; Gold, 1987; Wiseman, 1982) In fact, classical Greek commons were so extensive that it would require an entire monograph to cover the subject completely. In this discussion, we can only hope to point up some of the highlights and link them to our principal concern with the theory of the commons.

The evolution of the Ancient Greek commons is a record of the emergence of distinctive patterns of philanthropy and associations within the Homeric leisure class of prehistoric Greece; the transformation and diffusion of aristocratic practices in the democratic context of the Athenian *polis*; and the rediscovery of these practices in the classicism of the West in the 18th century. The exact origins of the

earliest Greek philanthropic practices are lost in the mists of history. They probably parallel to a considerable extent the prehistory of primitive common practice noted above. According to Parker, “(G)ift giving was perhaps the most important mechanism of social relationships to Homeric society.” (1986, 265) Homeric and classical Greek giving was an expression of peer-oriented “reciprocal friendship” and mutual aid among aristocrats quite unlike modern notions of philanthropy and charity. Homeric gift giving may well have been the survival of ancient village mutual aid in the new circumstances of an emergent urban elite with vastly increased wealth and power. In this respect, it resembles the emergence of an American philanthropic elite in the “Gilded Age” plutocracy of 19th and early 20th Century America.

Gradually, reciprocal norms of Greek village gift giving may have evolved into the ritualized aristocratic patronage obligations known as *liturgia*. (Finlay, 1974; Hornblower, 1986) Pericles is credited as the founder of classical Athens, by virtue of his role as patron of the Athenian Parthenon and other structures of the Acropolis. (Bowra, 1967) Pericles’ patronage was accomplished by redistributing League funds contributed by other Greek city states for war against Persia. (Boardman, 1986, 298) Although the method and the size of funds was somewhat unique, Pericles’ act of patronage was not. Hornblower (1986) concludes that “aristocrats such as Cimon and Pericles, by their political and military leadership, brought in the public wealth that subsidized the buildings and sculptures of Phidias, Ictinus, and Mnesicles on the Acropolis; and by making available their private wealth for public purposes, they financed the festivals and dramatic productions that gave classical Athens its attractive power. (This was the liturgy system, a tax on the rich that conferred prestige when taken beyond what was obligatory.) Pericles’ first known act was to pay for Aeschylus’ great historical opera, the *Persae*. We know this...from a list carved on stone.” (127) The archaic Greek ethical model of philanthropy as obligatory at a minimal level and status-conferring at higher levels appears to have important ramifications that have not yet been discussed in the context of the commons.

The Peloponnesian War of 431 BC, destroyed the power and influence of the original aristocratic class of Athens and undermined its

philanthropic activity. However, the citizens of the emergent democratic city state followed the example of the aristocratic obligations of patronage and reciprocity, with notable result. Hornblower credits Athenian democracy and aristocratic patronage of culture (*paideia*) as important in the emergence of Athens as the premier Greek city state. (131) Classical Greek patronage extended very broadly to include construction and operation of vast numbers of temples, comic, tragic and choral theatres (Levi, 156-7); public hospitals (Levi, 163); oracles at Delphi and elsewhere; sporting events and games at Olympia (Finlay and Pleket, 1976); and a broad range of other community affairs. These were not public (in the modern sense of tax-supported) events or facilities, but were instead supported, as in the past, through the liturgical system of patronage.

Liturgical patronage, however, was not the only feature of the Greek pursuit of common goods. Many modern forms of association also have counterparts in Greek life. The democratic political organization of the polis was essentially an association of adult males. (Murray, 207) As such, it was one of several major forms of association prominent in Athenian life. The *symposium* was a kind of private drinking club. Every male Athenian citizen belonged to a *phratry* (from which the modern term fraternity derives). Originally aristocratic warrior bands, such phratries were involved in all the main stages of a man's life and the focus of his social and religious activity (Murray, 208). There are, in fact, certain intriguing similarities between the Athenian *phratries* the kiva societies of the American pueblo indians and other similar urban male associations. The probable emergence of such "brotherhoods" from essentially military origins might take many other forms as well. For example, the *syssitia*, or mess groups of Sparta were the basis of the entire social and military organization of that city-state.

In ancient Greece the civil society of the commons was largely male-dominant. Greek dieties of both genders were abundant, but social participation by women in commons figures in only tangentially and occasionally (as with the Vestal Virgins).

Other types of association were common in other Greek cities as well. In Athens, there were also aristocratic religious groups called

gennetai, whose members claimed descent from common ancestors and monopolized the priesthoods of important city cults. *Gymnasia* were not merely physical facilities, as today, but also the sporting clubs who used them. “There were benefit clubs and burial clubs and clubs associated with individual trades and activities. There were religious and mystical sects and intellectual organizations such as the philosophical schools of Plato and Aristotle.” (Murray, 209)

The philosophical schools of Ancient Athens also belong within the profile of what we are calling commons. Plato's Academy existed for centuries as an educational common. Like so many other commons prior to the modern democratic era in philanthropy, the Athenian schools probably had rich aristocratic or royal patrons. Plato was, quite probably, a wealthy man who began the Academy within his own household a few miles outside of Athens. As such, he may either have been his own patron, or he might have had help from others.

Aristotle, however, was not independently wealthy, and required philanthropic patronage to launch his own philosophical school. He was trained at the Academy and later set up his own philosophical school, the Gymnasium, with the help of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, whom Aristotle had tutored. Some authorities speculate that Aristotle may have left Plato's Academy after being passed over as Plato's successor. In any case, other philosophers followed similar paths, and philosophical schools become numerous enough in classic Athens that it is reasonable to suggest a regional concentration of schools, akin perhaps to well known American service clusters such as the insurance industry concentration in Hartford, the movie industry in "Hollywood", or the computer industry concentrations in Silicon Valley and Route 128 in Boston or the Research Triangle in North Carolina.

It is important to remember that Greek philosophical schools were not all merely centers for contemplation and Socratic dialogue. Aristotelian science, in particular, was more akin to a modern scientific field work, and the Lyceum may have had something of the air of a modern nonprofit research laboratory or institute. One authority estimates that at one time Aristotle may have had over a

thousand researchers in the field throughout the Mediterranean region. The logistics of support for such an army of investigators would challenge the resources of any modern nonprofit.

Another important off-shoot of the Athenian philosophical movement of great importance to the rise of modern science centuries later was diffusion of the concepts of science and philosophy: Ancient libraries and scriptoria at Alexandria, Toledo, and other sites collected and duplicated an astounding wealth of knowledge and information and kept it alive for hundreds of years. Under the Ptolemies, Greek rulers installed by Alexander, the Greek city of Alexandria in Egypt became headquarters of what we might today call a private university --a scientific and philosophical complex centered on the famous Library of Alexandria. (Forster, 1961) In this setting, important ancient discoveries regarding Euclidean geometry, solar and astronomic calculations, and detailed knowledge of animal and plant taxonomies were preserved and passed on. Later, monastic libraries and scriptoria in Cordoba, Celtic Christian Ireland and elsewhere forged the essential links between the knowledge of the ancient and modern worlds. The modern world would know nothing of Greek philosophy, science, medicine, drama or poetry without these links. Each was, in all probability, an endowed institutions with one or more wealthy patrons and a class of attendants and functionaries devoted to its operations in a manner not inconsistent with modern nonprofit research libraries and laboratories.

In each of these cases, public recognition and affirmation of patrons must have been an important consideration of some importance. The previously discussed ethics of *liturgy* would suggest as much, as would the frequency with which patrons were memorialized on stella. Meritt, Wade-Gery, and McGregor (1939) collected a four-volume catalog of English translations of the inscriptions on all of the various Athenian tribute stellae that had been located to that point.

In sum, we find in ancient Greece a complex variety of commons: festivals, temples, *liturgia* and *paideia*, amphi theatres, spectacles, hospitals, oracles, games, *stadia*, the *polis* association itself, *symposia*, *phratries*, *syssitia*, *gennetai*, *gymnasia*, academies, lyceums and

libraries. In addition, the legacy of Greek commons also includes the bi-level ethic of obligation and recognition already mentioned and the original legal principle of autonomy upon which the assumption in chapter 3 is based: ‘If a deme or *phrateres* or worshippers of heroes or *gennetai* or drinking groups or funerary clubs or religious guilds or pirates or traders make rules amongst themselves, these shall be valid unless they are in conflict with public law.’ (Murray, 209)

The Hellenistic Age

The Hellenistic Age generally refers to the period after the classic age of Athenian Greece, and to the process of Greek culture disseminating throughout the Mediterranean region. An important element in this diffusion was the continuing norm of aristocratic responsibility for patronage of at least some Greek commons. Most Hellenistic cities, for example, had temples and amphitheaters that housed subsidized productions of Greek drama. Further, the Hellenistic period was “the golden age of Greek science...” (Barnes, 381) Among the sciences, astronomy and medicine were particularly strong. (Barnes, 383) It seems reasonable to assume that as Greek arts and sciences were disseminated, the practices of support for them (*liturgia* and *paideia*) were disseminated with them.

“We know most about (Hellenistic) patronage in Alexandria, where the Ptolemies’ record was important but limited: the literature they patronized did not produce major talents in history and philosophy. They had an alphabetical list of pensions, a museum and two libraries. They had a serious need for a royal tutor to teach the little princes and a royal librarian to preside over the growing arsenals of books. Long-term patronage was for useful industry: tutoring, science, the library and textual scholarship.” (Price, 349)

In the following, Price summarizes the character of Ptolemaic patronage: “All the (Hellenistic) courts had libraries, even on the Black Sea, but Alexandria’s are the most famous. Followers of Aristotle had settled in that city with memories of their master’s

learned society and great collection of books. Probably they suggested the idea of a royal museum and library to the first Ptolemy. The royal library was probably attached to the colonnades and common room of the museum and served more as a vast arsenal of books than as a separate set of reading rooms. Nearly half a million book-rolls are alleged to have been stored inside, while another 42,000 are said to have lived in a second library attached to the temple of Serapis. Texts became hot royal property. When ships landed in Alexandria they were searched for books. Any found on board had to be surrendered for royal copying in scrolls stamped with the words 'from the ships'. The 'borrowing' of the master-scrolls of the great tragedians from the Athenians was one of the sharpest coups of Ptolemaic diplomacy. Pirating, in our modern sense, was a Hellenistic invention. As demand was insatiable, supply rose to meet it, aided by plausible forgery. ...

“Why did the kings bother? As the Aristotelians had no doubt explained to a willing Ptolemy I, libraries and scholarly studies kept a king abreast of man's understanding of the world. The Ptolemies had had good tutors and they did not lose interest in learning...Royal extravagance inflated these tastes, and when others entered the race, book collecting became a mad competition...” (Price, 341)

Hellenistic cities also developed a distinctive variation on the *gymnasion* in which sports training was combined with libraries and lectures. (Price, 343) Another form of Hellenistic association that were a variant on the *symposia* were societies in which members would dine and patronize recitals (perhaps a kind of early dinner theatre). It is possible that other Hellenistic cities may also have developed additional common innovations in this period.

Ancient Greek culture and the Hellenistic period in particular also saw development and refinement of another form of association familiar to modern readers: Military federations or leagues of cities were a common feature known to the Greeks and used for common defense. It was from such a league, for example, that Pericles purloined the funds used for the Athenian Acropolis. Another multicity association known as the *Delphic amphictyony* long served as an international panel that controlled the affairs of the shrine of Apollo, home of the famous oracle of Delphi, with its power to declare 'sacred wars'.

(Hornblower, 129) Such leagues took on renewed importance with the decline of Athens as the single most powerful center of Greek culture.

The ancient Greeks appear to have had a broad and subtle grasp of the potentials and possibilities of commons and common goods and applied their knowledge to a broad variety of situations. Ancient Greece also represents an important historic point of evolution from the prehistoric commons to the modern association. An important, but largely unanswered question, is whether the Homeric Greeks developed the basis of Greek commons on their own or learned them from other earlier cultures.

Rome

While cities from Ur to Athens incorporated common elements from the very earliest times, perhaps no city in human history is more reflective of the range and diversity of the commons than Rome. From the days when it was the center of the Roman empire, through its medieval role as the center of Christianity down to the present day, Rome was a city built on grants. (Boulding, Pfaff and Hovarth, 1972) It was also a city in which leisure figured importantly. (Balsdon, 1969)

Rome constitutes a unique exception to generalizations about the economic basis of city life. Rome was never at any point in its history an important manufacturing or trading center. (Girouard, 118) The economic foundations of the city have, from the earliest times, been built on tribute and devotion, on donations and pilgrimages, and on the “unrelated business income” of the farms, factories of imperial and papal holdings. “Its dual role as the capital of western Christendom and the successor of Imperial Rome made (the medieval and modern city) a center for politics, finance, education, science, art, archaeology, tourism, entertainment and pleasure, as well as religion.” (Girouard, 132) In Rome, perhaps more than other world city, the commons holds the dominant position over market, state and (due to celebrity) the family.

Rome is as important as Greece for modern philanthropic, charitable and other common innovations derived from Roman practice. Between 1895 and 1900, Waltzing produced a four-volume study in German of

Roman associations and corporations. Medieval and modern western fundraising practice built upon a Christian religious and ethical basis is attributable to Roman origin. In 321 AD, Constantine permitted donations and bequests to the church and from then on substantial ecclesiastical endowments began to grow in the city and throughout Christian Europe.

In classical Rome, we see the evolution of a system of patronage quite different from the Greek pattern, a difference with implications for all of medieval Europe. In both aristocratic and democratic variations, Greek patronage stressed the “horizontal” obligations of the giver to peers. By contrast, the Roman emphasis, particularly during the Middle Era was upon the “vertical” obligations of *clientela*, that stressed the obligations of the recipient to the giver. On this basis, *clientela* were to become traditional, often inherited relationships of dependence of one person on another and the principal integrating factor in Roman society of the middle Republic. (Crawford, 407)

According to Gold, “ancient and modern notions of patronage are quite different. There was indeed no one word in Greek or Latin for ‘patron’; the Latin *patronus* means quite specifically an advocate or the former master of a freedman. A supporter of another man in any situation was often called simply...*amicus*.” (or “friend”) (5) Gold, whose principal interest is the analysis of literary and poetic patronage, notes also that an understanding of Roman politics is not possible without understanding the Roman concept of clientage. Reciprocity is an important concept in both Greek and Roman patronage. However, Greek patronage of all types was much more equitable among peers, whereas Roman patronage seems to be tied into social hierarchies of status and power through which the *cliens* were dependent on their patrons for support and social position.

Other important Roman innovations were the *annona civica* (civic foundations) and *fideocommissa* (trusts) that figure importantly in Roman law. (Johnson, 1989) Roman trust law is an important, if not well understood, topic for contemporary nonprofit and voluntary action research for a number of reasons. German, French and other European commons have grown up within the tradition of Roman law,

while American and British commons have grown up within the tradition of English common law. Roman law is most important, however, as the base out of which the religious commons of medieval Christianity evolved.

Ancient World: Summary

What can be said, by way of summary, about the role of commons in the ancient world? Purcell summarizes the matter thus:

“The reciprocal relations of benefaction, competition and prestige among those who controlled the resources of the ancient world are found throughout antiquity, from the aristocracies of the archaic Greek cities to the Roman Emperors. In these relations were included the whole range of ancient cultural activities, from architecture and utilitarian building to the patronage of literature, music, and painting -- also to the entertainments of the circus and the ampitheatre and the religious festivals that were the setting of almost all of these forms of display. This characteristic aspect of ancient society produced a type of bond between the Žlite and the peoples of the cities that was unique --a major source of the stability and continuity that we associate with the Greek and Roman world.

“Unfortunately, ancient culture had never rid itself of its uneasy companion, warfare. In the end this aspect came to be dominant... At that point the end of the ancient world was in sight.” (Purcell, 590)

Arab Civilization

It is conventional in American treatments of the development of western civilization for a discussion of medieval civilization to follow directly after a discussion of ancient Greece and Rome. Most of us are only dimly aware of the Arabic urban cultures that also arose out of the mixture of classical and Islamic influences in the Arabic world

during the so-called “Dark Ages” of Western Europe, and made important contributions to logic, mathematics, science and other fields. (See, for example, Netton, 1991)

This civilization evolved distinctive forms of Arab urbanism in an archipelago of cities stretching from Casablanca in the west, to Baghdad in the east and as far north as Cordoba in the west, Istanbul in the East and south to Khartoum. (Arberry, 1967; Hourani, 1991) This was a world of affluence and high culture, and a world in which commons figure in important ways.

In general, however, the subject of the Arabic commons is too little understood and documented outside specialized scholarly circles to explore thoroughly here. (Bishai, 1973; Bianchi, 1989) What is clear, however, is the impact of Islam on the Arabic commons. Indeed, two of the five “pillars of Islam” speak directly to common goods: One of these is the common institution of the pilgrimage, or sacrificial journey to a sacred or holy place for a purpose such as purification or enlightenment. For the faithful affluent enough to afford it, at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in a lifetime is an expectation. An Islamic (or other religious) pilgrimage meets all of the criteria of the commons, and is, in the context of world history an important and distinctive form of common good.

In the development of Islam, the city of Mecca (the home town and base of operations of the prophet Mohammed) rapidly emerged as the premier sacred site, and has remained the focus of Islamic pilgrimages. Even today, Mecca remains closed to non-Muslims. Religious pilgrimages by people of other religions are important and distinctive forms of common action. Yet, there are no studies of the economics, social organization, history, or other aspects of the pilgrimage as a form of common action.

The second Islamic commons to be noted here is another of the pillars of Islam --the distinctive set of charitable practices associated with *zakat*, or Islamic charity. Closely related to this is the distinctive Islamic foundation, or *waqf*. (Hourani, 1991; Coulson, 1964, 264; McChesney, 1991; Simsar, 1940) While the history of Islamic

commons may be well known to Islamic scholars, (the majority of whom are not English-speaking,) an English language scholarly study of this topic would represent a significant contribution to further understanding of the commons in its full multicultural and historical context. Incidental evidence on this is suggestive that more is to be found. Simsar (1940) discusses a *waqf* in Turkey that survived from the 16th into the 20th century.

Moreover, the *waqf* is not the only indication of common activity in moslem countries. Khairi (1984) found evidences of gift exchanges among family and friends in modern day Amman, Jordan. Daniel (1970) reviews modern American philanthropic efforts in the region since 1820.

Medieval Europe

Several important types of commons are also to be found in the history of medieval Europe: the role of monasteries, cathedrals and universities as medieval commons within the dominant Christian civilization; the medieval system of charity; the emergence of synagogues and Jewish communities as alternative commons in the same civilization; and the common aspects of two distinctive medieval institutions: guilds and fairs.

Synods/Conferences

In contemporary religion, the term synod is used by some protestant denominations (Lutherans, for example) to describe a commons that is, at the same time a league, or association of associations (or congregations) and an annual conference held by members of the association for purposes of dialogue and debate. Other protestant denominations have other terms for the same phenomenon. Methodists, for example, use the term “annual conference” to refer both to the annual convocation and the association of all those who convene. Within the Roman Catholic church, such convocations are much less frequent, but serve similar purposes. The last Vatican Council was convened in 1960’s, and is still famous (infamous, in

some circles) for its doctrinal and ritual revisions.

Regardless of title, the Christian precedent for such events was the remarkable series of convocations -synods or conferences --held in Rome, Corinth, Nicea, Caesarea and other Mediterranean cities in the earliest Middle Ages. (Marty, 1959; Chadwick, 1990) It was at such convocations where the fundamental structures of the Christian Biblical canon and the distinctive doctrines of Christianity were accepted. It is a matter of faith for most Christians that these convocations were guided by divine inspiration. It is a matter of historical fact that these assemblies, sometimes embracing hundreds of participants, resemble modern religious, scientific and professional conferences in many ways.

Christianity took shape as a coherent religious organization within the dialogues of these convocations. Even more remarkable to the modern analyst accustomed to thinking of early Christian congregations as small, beleaguered bands of the faithful, is the fact that attendance at many of these synods numbered 500 or more “bishops” or local leaders. These convocations conform in all respects as commons.

Monasteries, Cathedrals and Universities

Although the synod may be the most characteristic commons of early Christianity, three other common institutions are much more characteristic of western Christian civilization as it evolved. One of these, monasticism, is an important exception to the correlation between commons and urbanism, while the other two were closely associated with medieval cities.

Cathedrals

By the eleventh century, the combined forces of urbanization and trade created sufficient concentrations of common wealth and architectural insight to enable construct, maintenance and operation of the Gothic cathedrals. These imposing edifices were not, for the most part, the product of states, like castles and palaces, nor utilitarian structures, like the marketplaces of Ghent and Flanders. They were essentially

private religious associations--the archdioceses of such cities as Canterbury, Rheims, and Paris. Indeed, the Gothic Cathedrals of Europe may represent the most dramatic and concrete examples ever constructed of the expressive and presentational principles of the medieval commons.

A major cathedral is a much more complex organization than the simple assembly or membership association of a local parish. Medieval and modern cathedrals (which must incorporate associations devoted to preservation and/or restoration as well as other traditional modes of cathedral organization) constitute a bewilderingly complex pattern of overlapping, competing, cooperating and functionally specialized associations and groups: societies devoted to the care and maintenance of many different altars, chapels and chantries, choirs, fundraisers, and guilds associated with the numerous crafts uniquely associated with cathedral construction (for example, stone masons and stained glass window makers) are just a few of the many associations in the cathedral. Separate associations and guilds may also be responsible for staging particular festival or holiday observations, bells and musical instruments, banners and flags, oversight of cripts and cemeteries.

Contemporary auxiliaries are devoted to conducting tours and illustrated lectures on topics of cathedral history, and there is no reason to doubt that similar groups existed in the middle ages, particularly given the importance of cathedrals as destinations in medieval pilgrimages.

Medieval guilds, societies and confraternities are voluntary associations to one degree or another and conform to the other criteria of the commons. Complexity and division of volunteer labor are as much characteristic features of cathedral organization as they are of modern local governments. Because of this diversity, it is inaccurate to think of cathedrals as single organizations. The many associations affiliated with a cathedral resemble the nonprofit sector of an entire modern community more closely than they do an organization in the modern sense.

Furthermore, there is an important intergenerational aspect to

cathedrals as commons. Many (perhaps most) took 50-100 years or longer to finance and construct. In the case of the last medieval gothic cathedral, the Washington DC Cathedral completed in 1990, construction was frequently halted until additional funds were raised. Murray (1986) traces campaigns for the construction of the French Troyes cathedral from the 13th to the mid-16th century.

Also, because this span of time exceeds the working life (and frequently the entire life) of single individuals, enduring, intergenerational organizations for training, and apprenticeship are an essential characteristic of cathedral organization.

Monasteries

Another type of medieval commons figures importantly in the growing wealth and influence of the medieval Christian Church. The original Christian monastic movement among coebic and aramite monks in the Egyptian desert and the solitary Celtic monks of fourth century Ireland was largely individualistic in character. Medieval monasticism gradually took on an increasingly communal organization, and through the eleemosynary practices endorsed first by Constantine the great medieval monastic orders--Benedictine, Clunic, Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuit and others were built. In the process, they amassed wealth unparalleled in private associations until the rise of the modern business corporation. Medieval monasteries may have controlled as much as one third of the wealth of medieval Europe at one time.

Western monasticism did not grow up indiscriminately. Monastic "orders" displayed their own unique and distinctive patterns of organization and authority. Monastic order was premised upon rules, or constitutions laid down by founders, and consisting of manuals of conduct, such as the Rule of Benedict of Mercia or the Rule of St. Augustine, and the *patronus* of leaders (abbots) authorized to enforce the Rule. (Ross, 1974a)

Few monasteries functioned as independent associations, but were instead incorporated in complex leagues or federations of superior, subordinate and equivalent institutions termed "orders". Quite similar patterns are evident in the organization of medieval Buddhist

monasteries in Japan during roughly the same time period. (Lohmann and Bracken, 1991)

Cluny was founded on observation of the Rule of St. Benedict of Nursia. The Clunic reformation began in 910 when Duke William I (the Pious) of Aquitaine endowed the monastery of Cluny in Burgundy. Cluny is significant in part because of its role in the emergence of self-governing monastic communities. Duke William granted the land in perpetuity and said the monks were free to pick their abbot without secular influence (Previte-Orton, *The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History*, 471).

Monasticism as a social movement remains in a much diminished form today, in large part because of active suppression efforts carried out by rising nation states in England, France, Germany and elsewhere. (Gray, 1967; Woodward, 1966)

Universities

A third major component of the medieval commons are the universities that began to emerge into importance in the 12th century. Universities at Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge and elsewhere, were founded in this period, and devoted to learning and science. Medieval universities carried on common traditions in philosophy and science with important connections to the Greek philosophical schools through the urban Moslem schools of Baghdad, Ahman and other Arab cities. (Hourami, 1991;)

One of the medieval donative practices that holds a certain mythic importance among contemporary college faculty is the practice at the University d'Paris in the thirteenth century of students paying faculty directly for lectures. The organization of the University of Paris into faculties of theology, philosophy, law and medicine is also important in the history of modern professions, an important form of modern commons. (Douglas, 1967)

Chantries

A unique form of medieval commons virtually unknown in the

modern world was the chantry, devoted to the constant repetition of prayers, usually on behalf of the founder or patron. In a straightforward ecclesiastical transaction, chantries were financed through the gifts and donations of wealthy patrons, on whose behalf the prayers were said. In this respect, chantries represent an excellent example of an offering transaction, as discussed in chapter eight.

Medieval Systems of Charity

Modern social welfare scholars are only beginning to come to fully understand the common organization of medieval charity. We can locate medieval systems of charity approximately at the convergence of Greco-Roman philanthropic practices and associations with Judeo-Christian ethics in the Middle Ages. (Morris, 1986) Out of this convergence of values, a substantial network of distinctively medieval charities arose. This network included not only monastic hostels for the refuge of travelers, and household almoners in castles and monasteries, but also a broad range of urban charity associations.

Many of these associations were formed in reaction to specific plagues and epidemics or religious movements and survived for long periods of time by acquiring permanent endowments or combining their charity work with a range of other social and recreational activities.

In Venice, a network of charitable confraternities, or *schuole* grew up in the thirteenth century as an offshoot of the flagellant movement. Through bequests, many acquired large amounts of property and by the fifteenth century some were extremely rich. Each was affiliated with a church or religious house, but eventually acquired their own buildings. Although they spent the majority of their income on charity, most had resources left over for feasting and pageantry. (Girouard,)

Such developments were by no means restricted to Venice or the Italian peninsula. The number and range of studies of medieval charity is growing steadily, and with it comes an increasingly complex picture of activity over longer and longer periods of time. Flynn's Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400-1700 is a study of medieval and early modern charitable activities and lay

religious culture among Spanish Catholics in the city of Zamora. Norberg (1985) examines relations between rich and poor residents of the French City of Grenoble over two centuries, with particular attention to the charitable activities of residents. Rubin (1987) examines demographic and economic factors underlying charity in Cambridge England and the forms in which it was offered.

In an age when travel was often difficult and dangerous, hospitality, food and shelter for travelers was afforded much higher status as charitable endeavor than it currently enjoys. Heal (1990) explores changes in the ideal and practice of the social virtue of hospitality from 1400-1700. Medieval monasteries, in particular, frequently extended hospitality to travelers.

Another of the components of charity in the medieval period were organized responses to the social consequences of urban plagues and epidemics. After 1350, for example, the Black Death cut the population of Florence roughly in half. (Girouard, 33) Other estimates suggest that the Black Death in particular may have reduced the entire population of Europe by 25% in a single year.

One of the more unusual forms of commons in medieval Europe were the “tower societies” that grew up in Italian cities in the 12th century. These associations consisted of networks of families living together in neighborhood complexes of buildings and bound together by articles of association that specified how the complex was to be shared. The affinity to urban street gangs is unmistakable.

The first such articles of clan association date from 1177. Many clan associations constructed private towers (essentially urban castles) for defensive purposes. As such, they constituted “protective associations” as that term is used in Chapter 9, and are at least distantly related to modern street gangs. At one time, the phenomenon was widespread in the Italian peninsula. In Bologna, for example, there is evidence of the existence of nearly 200 such towers built between the 12th and 15th centuries. (Girouard, 38-39, 51)

The articles of Italian tower societies may represent a much broader phenomenon of explicit social contracts for protection and mutual aid

drawn up by local communities. One would expect to find similar artifacts for the Hanseatic League and other autonomous city-states, for example. Within the American experience, the line from the Mayflower Compact to the modern, suburban neighborhood association is clear and direct. Such local associations are by no means limited to the west. In the sixteenth century, Confucianist scholars in Korea advanced the science and art of public administration by codifying traditional understandings of village and clan association into “village codes” that included explicit provision for social welfare. (Hahm, 1991)

Medieval associations were also organized for purposes other than religion and charity. Archery companies composing civil militia used common grounds near city walls to practice with longbows (often under the patronage of St. Sebastian) or crossbows (under the patronage of St. George). (Girouard, 70) Not all medieval associations were religious or for defense purposes, however. The Society of the White Bear (*Société noble et chevaleresque de l’Ours Blanc*) originated in Bruges in 1320 as a jousting society. Jousting was the most expensive and prestigious sport of the Middle Ages. Another Bruges society, the *Poortersloge* was, “in modern terms, the Polo Club as well as the Conservative Club of Bruges.” (Girouard, 98) It was also not unusual for medieval bridges to be built with donated funds, and they sometimes contained chapels, complete with a staff of priests, and were maintained either by endowments or collections of user-fees. (Girouard, 56-57)

Inevitably, the patterns of donations and the duration of foundations in Roman law meant that the Church eventually became the biggest property owner in every medieval European city. (Girouard, 42) And by the late Middle Ages, endowed ecclesiastical buildings were the finest and most impressive in most cities. (Girouard, 41) It was this pattern of economic hegemony that was a principle target of emerging nation states beginning in the 16th century. Henry VIII’s seizure of English monastic properties in 1538 was only the best known of several major conflicts between the state and medieval commons that signaled the end of medieval commons, per se. Henry also seized monastic properties in Ireland. (Bradshaw, 1974) Similar

developments occurred in France, Germany, China, and elsewhere at various points. In fact, the Japanese government takeover of Buddhist monastic properties in the Meiji Restoration of 1868 may well have been the latest example of a worldwide trend toward supremacy of the nation-state over the medieval commons. (Lohmann and Bracken, 1991)

However, the pattern of the medieval Christian commons was more complex than simply official church ownership of properties. One of the more fascinating and variegated commons were the various Christian lay organizations, formed for diverse charitable purposes. In some cases, as in medieval Bruges this took the form of communes: “the distinctive settlements of the Beguines and the Bogards, communities of poor spinsters or bachelors working together at spinning or weaving under a religious rule...(T)he outer areas were, on the whole, the poor ones, and as a result the hospitals, almshouses and pawnshops were to be found there.” (Girouard, 92) In a somewhat similar vein, Bilinkoff (1989) discusses the economic and social history of sixteenth century Avila in Castile as a center for many influential religious mystics and reformers. Like modern social movements, medieval communes frequently combined the major features of a commons with shared residential living. More typically medieval than such communes were religious confraternities of middle and upper class members of the laity:

Commoners were equally active, if on a smaller scale, in making new foundations, rebuilding old ones, or enlarging them with chapels dedicated to the use of guilds, fellowships and other organizations, or to the saying of masses for individuals who were usually buried in them. Their bequests went to endow a variety of functions, for it was accepted that education, health and everything else that today would be lumped under the heading of social services were the province of the Church.” (Girouard, 42)

Some hospitals (The label itself is a generic medieval term for charitable institutions of all types) were run by lay confraternities such as the Order of the Holy Spirit, founded by Guy de Montpellier, in the late twelfth century and endorsed shortly thereafter by Pope Innocent III, who gave it a headquarters in the hospital of Sto Spirio in Sassia in

Rome. (Girouard, 45)

Russell-Wood divides medieval associations into two categories: Artisan groups (*juržs*, *scuole* or *Zŷnsste*) served primarily as professional or craft associations and confraternities. The first are the famous medieval guilds. Members were obliged to attend mass in the corporation's church, he says, and the annual celebrations in honour of the patron saint. Mutual aid to members might include dowries or alms, with some groups maintaining their own hospitals. Confraternities, by contrast, were for members of all classes who wished to perform acts of charity. Confraternities were governed by boards of elected directors who served one year terms, and benefits to the needy might include dowries, alms, prison aid, hospital treatment or burial. Some confraternities specialized in a single function, such as the Confraternity of St. Leonard at Viterbo, that operated a famous Portugese hospital, or the Confraternity of S. Giovanni Decollato of Florence, that specialized in accompanying condemned to the scaffold and subsequent burial of their bodies. Such medieval confraternities operating under the generic name of *Misericordia* were imported to Brazil and other Portugese colonies in Central and South America in the 15th and early 16th centuries. (Russell-Wood, 1968)

Synagogues and Jewish Communities

Any picture of medieval commons would be incomplete without considering the role of medieval European Jews. The original temple at Jerusalem was a distinctive commons, and the chamber of whisperm symbolizing the importance of anonymity in Hebrew charity (*zedakah*). (deVaux, 1965; Goldberg and Rayner, 1989; Ross, 1974) Throughout the history of Western Civilization, independent Jewish congregations existed as independent commons in Europe and the middle east with none of the official stature or broad cultural support of Christian churches or Moslem mosques, and often in the face of official opposition and hostility and active anti-semitism. (Goldberg and Rayner, 1989) The synagogues of both Christian and Moslem medieval cities were clearly private, nonprofit endeavors. Further, the

Jewish communities supporting these synagogues are major examples of the concept of the commons as it is utilized here.

Jewish schools and institutes were found in many cities and were supported by patrons in a manner similar to Greek philosophical schools and early Christian and Moslem ones. In one of these, a 12th century Jewish scholar in Cordoba, Maimonides, was responsible for codification of an eight-level, heirarchical classification of “degrees of charity.” (O’Connell, 1989). Comparative study of the eleemosynary schools of Greece and Rome, the Moslem, Christian and Jewish schools of the middle ages (and similar schools found in the Jain, Confucianist, Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions) should yield important insights into the universal and historical qualities of commons.

Fairs and Holidays

One of the seeming anomalies of the contemporary classification of nonprofit corporations in most state law and tax policy in the United States is the organization of fairs, carnivals and festivals as nonprofit activities. Even more curious to the modern eye may be the suggestion that holidays and the organized activities associated with them, such as Carnivale in Rio and Miami, or Mardi Gras in New Orleans also constitute commons. (Orloff, 1980) Neither suggestion would have appeared at all unusual to the medieval eye, accustomed to all manner of fairs, festivals, pageants and celebrations.

Fairs and carnival and festival commons were often associated with market days in medieval Europe. The right to hold a market or fair was one of the most valuable privileges acquired by religious institutions in medieval cities. (Girouard, 43) Several of the religious houses of medieval Paris were granted the right to hold fairs by French kings. One of the most famous and longest lasting of French fairs was the six-week Foire de St. Germain, held by the Abby of St. Germain-des-Pres. It acquired its own permanent buildings, and like most fairs, had its own court and jurisdiction during its six-week run. (Girouard, 50)

The economic importance of medieval fairs is well known. Braudel argues that the entire system of long-term trade in the medieval economy of Europe at one time hinged upon a circuit of annual fairs held in the Champagne valley. (1986, 82-94) In the 13th century, the twice-annual arrival of the Genoese and Venetian fleets into the ports of Bruges and Flanders brought the decline of the Champagne fairs into insignificance. (Girouard, 87)

Medieval fairs were usually associated with markets, and thus had significant place in the medieval European economy. (Braudel, 1986, 82) They were also typically associated with feast days and were thus occasions for miracle plays, football matches, horse races, tournaments, animal baitings, fireworks, clowns, jugglers, processions and banquets. (Girouard, 77)

Examination of modern holidays should not be limited just to the standard set of “days off” from work. Uncommercialized religious holidays (such as Good Friday, Passover, Ramadan, or Kwanzaa), national holidays observed by ethnic groups (for example, Latvian Independence Day, Simon Bolivar’s birthday) and other similar common group observances probably reflect more clearly and less ambiguously the significance of holidays as defining events in the constitution of commons.

Byzantium

Prior to the the division of Christianity into the Eastern or Byzantine and Western or Roman realms, the Byzantine empire had already created some major Eastern commons. Possibly the single most impressive and inspiring Christian monument (now a mosque) was Santa Sophia in Constantinople, constructed in the early fourth century.

Also important in the transition from ancient to medieval worlds was the empire of Byzantium controlled by Rome’s challenger to the East, Constantinople. Usually noted in the social science literature only as a symbol of bureaucracy, the Byzantine empire created an incredible range of philanthropic and charitable operations including “nursing homes”, (*gerocomeia*); xenones (*hospices*); orphanages, *ptocheia*

(alms houses) *xenotapheia* (cemeteries), homes for the blind and houses of correction for reforming prostitutes. (Constantelos, 1968; Geanakoplos, 1985; Morris, 198; Lewis, 1988) Some of the earliest evidences of specialized charitable institutions occurred within the Byzantine Empire. A renowned asylum was founded by St. Basil in Cappadocia in 369 C.E. It was said to be a miniature city with special housing for each kind of need including the blind. (French, 1932, 44)

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Byzantine empire was reduced to a city state of less than 100,000 in Constantinople and its immediate surroundings. When the city was taken over by the Turks in 1453, there was a major transformation of its common institutions from Christian to Moslem by the Ottoman Turkish state. The name of the city was changed to Istanbul and large numbers of Greek residents were expelled, and replaced by Turks from Anatolia. Markets were transformed into bazaars, and Christian religious buildings were converted to Moslem use.

Interestingly, strategic use of one of the central elements of the commons --the endowment (a.k.a., the foundation or trust fund) was a major element in the radical transformation of the city. Much of the property in Istanbul was converted to religious endowments (*waqf* in Arabic; or in Turkish, *vakif*) to support the Islamic mosques, schools and other institutions. (Brunn and others, 1983. 307; Runciman, 1967) The Waqfızah of 'Ahmed Pasa is a Turkish endowment of the sixteenth century that is said to have continued at least into the 1940's (and could conceivably still be in existence today). (Simsar, 1940)

Other Arabic cities, and particularly Baghdad and Damascas, are also of major importance to a complete understanding of the commons. Whether it is the charitable institutions of *zakat*, the religious observances like *Ramadan*, pilgrimages to Mecca that originated there and in the endowments of *waqf*, or other characteristics yet to be identified, it should be clear to the reader that the Islamic world is, like those of the other world's religions, characterized by distinctive and indigeneous common institutions. Such indigeneous Islamic practices lend further support to the claim of the universal occurrence of the commons.

Renaissance

The Italian Renaissance of the 15th century was brought about in no small measure by a dramatic upsurge in wealth due to the increased trade activities of the Italian city states, and eleemosynary transformations of considerable portions of that wealth into commons. While the economic growth of Florence was less dramatic than that of Venice and Genoa, the Florentine renaissance stands high, in considerable degree to three generations of a single family of patrons (the Medicis) and their incredible list of clients. (Action, 1967)

Nor were the Medicis exclusively patrons of the arts. One of the architectural masterpieces of renaissance Florence subsidized by Cosimo de' Medici is a children's home or orphanage known as *Ospedale degli Innocenti*. In Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence, Pavitt (1990) argues that this facility came about partly because a shift in Renaissance public opinion led rich Florentines to begin to give less to religious orders and more to institutions addressing specific social needs like this institution for homeless children. Such "private" charity was already well known in Florence before the Renaissance. For several centuries prior to the Renaissance, the cities of northern and central Italy, had been hotbeds for organizing lay confraternities. Venice, Milan and Florence are said to have had hundreds of such confraternities, or *misericordia*. (Hale, 1967; Russell-Wood, 1968, 3)

Patronage of individual artists and charity were not the only forms of common activity of Renaissance Italy. Palisca (1989) discusses The Florentine Camerate, an informal interdisciplinary group that prefigures some of the royal societies and academies discussed below. The Camerate met at the palace of the scholar and music patron Count Giovanni Bardi in Florence during the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Medieval and Modern Commons

The transition from medieval to modern in the commons is not nearly as distinct and abrupt as similar transitions in states or markets. There

is nothing in the history of the commons to correspond with the rise of the modern nation-state or the rise of capitalism and the industrial revolution. Nevertheless, transformations of the state and market left their mark upon the evolving commons, as did the protestant reformation, the counter-reformation, rationalism, science, humanitarianism, and European conquest of the Americas. Common traditions of participation, shared purposes and resources, mutuality and fairness reaching deep in ancient and medieval worlds have been modified, but not fundamentally transformed in the modern world.

Reformation Europe

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century is often regarded more in terms of changed beliefs and religious values and changes in markets and states than in terms of its impact upon commons. Commons figure prominently in both the protestant reformation and catholic counter reformation. While the emerging Lutheran, Calvinist and Episcopal churches largely substituted one form of ecclesiastical authority for another, later movements, including the Puritans, Quakers, Anabaptists and Methodists contributed very directly to the evolution of group-centered, common authority of religious authority whose implications for nonprofit and voluntary action are widely suggested by nowhere clearly explicated. (Weber, pp? Brinton, 5481 although somewhat dated is still a good read.)

Something of the emerging differences in commons can be seen in the contrast of Amsterdam and Rome in this period. Sixteenth century Amsterdam was a protestant city devoted primarily to commercial activity. The city had no monasteries, cathedral, great castle, university or college of any great importance and the public squares were devoted primarily to commercial activity. Similarly, there were no joustings, masques or giant processions on feast days. Yet, Amsterdam exhibited a great deal of common activity, some of that illustrate the historical relationship of municipal institutions and the commons. (Girouard, 161-163)

Among the associations of Amsterdam was the civic guard, a civilian militia that had grown out of medieval guilds of long bowmen and cross bowmen, and took on a significance as much social as military by the sixteenth century. The guard had clubhouses and practice fields. (Girouard, 163) When the city became officially protestant in the 17th century hospitals, orphanages, almshouses, prisons, schools, inns and a lending bank that had been operated by religious orders came under control of the city council. The city council also handled food and fuel distribution to the deserving poor and operated the house of correction. There were few beggars and little serious poverty in 16th century Amsterdam. Solid sewage and garbage were collected by the city and sold for fertilizer with revenues supporting the city orphanage. (Girouard, 163-165)

Counter-reformation Rome offers a marked contrast with Amsterdam. Household revels, including operas, plays and other entertainments were frequent in lavish dinner parties at colleges and palaces. Since there were no permanent opera houses or theatres, public performances were staged on carts or platforms in the streets during feasts and festivals. Bullfights and tournaments took place in public squares. The Vatican library, one of the greatest libraries in the world, was freely available to all. There were no museums; but the collections that filled the galleries and courtyards of the villas were almost all open to visitors, along with their gardens. Donations of classical antiquities to the Palazzo dei Conservatori formed an open collection, housed after 1645 in the building on the third side of Michelangelo's courtyard, that became the world's first public museum. (Girouard, 129)

Rome has long been an important center for pilgrimages, and the city created a number of new counter revolutionary commons, hospitals and hospices for visiting pilgrims, and at least seventeen confraternities were devoted to pilgrims in the 16th century. The pilgrimage figures rose to new heights in the last decades of the century. In 1575 the number of pilgrims was probably about 400,000. By 1600 there were probably more than 500,000 visitors. (Girouard, 117)

Classicism and The Age of Reason

Many traditional medieval festivals continued in most European cities into the eighteenth century. Indeed, some like the Pallio in Siena have continued to the present. Fairs, like St. Bartholemew's in London, gradually became more important as recreation and leisure activities as their commercial significance declined. Eventually, "puppet shows, plays, rope-walkers, waxworks, menageries, fire-eaters, jugglers and Punch and Judies took over" giving the term fair its current meaning. (Girouard, 184)

Another important line of development in European commons was a social movement for founding academies and institutes that provided much of the organizational basis for the Renaissance as well as the spread of science in the seventeenth century and the Age of Reason in the eighteenth century.

Academies of Art, Science and Literature

In the fifteenth century in Italian cities and villas in the countryside, groups with an interest in classical literature and art began to meet. Many called themselves academies in self-conscious emulation of Plato's philosophical school. Members met to compose, write and read their own poetry, to read and discuss the classical authors, to read addresses on ethics or other subjects, to act plays or to perform music. Initially, these academies had no organization and no special buildings of their own. By the sixteenth century, they began to organize formally and develop rules. Membership grew and, for some, buildings were acquired. Academies began to specialize in law, sculpture, painting, language, archaeology, natural history, chemistry and even "leisure arts" like fencing, riding, dancing, playing cards and shooting. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, such academies spread throughout Europe, and sometimes acquired powerful patrons. Kings and rulers began to take an interest in the academy movement and patronize what thus became "royal academies".

Academies or societies for the cultivation and development of German and French were set up in 1617 and 1635, respectively. Louis XIV of France became a major founder of academies: the Académie de Danse in 1661; the Académie de Musique, that was in effect a royal opera company, in 1666, the Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in 1663, the Académie Royale de Peinture, on the basis of an earlier group in 1667, the Académie Royale des Sciences in 1666 and the Académie de l' Architecture in 1671.

Anyone familiar with the development of modern science is aware of the role of academies and scientific societies in early scientific research in physics, chemistry and biology. In the seventeenth century, Rome, Paris and London became major centres of academies of scientific research and discovery. An informal scientific *Accademia dei Lincei* was founded in Rome in 1603, but collapsed after Galileo's prosecution by the Inquisition in 1632.

The associational character of such societies in many different societies and cultures is unmistakable. (Ellsworth, 1991) The French Académie des Sciences gave royal patronage to a group of scientists including Descartes and Pascal first organized in the 1640's. Similarly, the Royal Society ('for improving Natural Knowledge') was founded in London in 1660 and given a charter by Charles II in 1662, on the basis of an informal group that was first organized in London in 1645. (Girouard, 206-8) Lux (1989) traces the brief history of the Académie de Physique de Caen, a scientific institution founded in 1662 in the northwestern French city but forced to close in 1672.

European academies and royal societies of architecture also exercised important influences urban design in the eighteenth century. L'Enfant's original plan for the Washington Mall, for example, called for it to be "a place of general resort....all along side of which may be placed play houses, room of assembly, academies and all such sort of places as may be attractive to the learned and afford diversion to the idle." (Girouard, 253) Baron Hauptman's plan for rebuilding Paris and the Ringstrasse in Vienna are other examples of the same trend.

Rationalism and Humanitarianism

Traditional medieval charitable practices began to show the influences of rising humanism and humanitarianism in the eighteenth century. Sherwood (1989) offers a study of *Inclusa*, an eighteenth century foundling hospital that was originally set up to protect families from the shame of illegitimate birth. Ransel (1988) describes the origins and operation of two foundling homes established by Catherine the Great in Moscow and Petersburg in midcentury. Risse (1985) examines the care of poor patients at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh during the Enlightenment and its program of clinical instruction for apprentice surgeons and medical students.

Socialism and The Labor Movement

Voluntary mutual insurance funds were widespread in Europe by the end of the 19th century, but disappeared rapidly with the advent of social insurance. (deSwaan, 1986; Kropotkin, Chapter VI, undated)

Commons in the Americas

The European exploration of the Americas that began in the late 15th century was followed by a period of intense colonization. Too little is currently known of the commons of the indigenous populations resident in the Americas when the Europeans and their involuntary African slaves began arriving. What we do know is intriguing: Aztec and Maya societies may have incorporated a variety of leisure class groups and occupations. Among the Maya, in particular, these groups appear to have achieved subtle and sophisticated knowledge in astronomy, mathematics, and other fields. Town (pueblo) life in the North American southwest incorporated sodalities as well as clans based on kinship. (Hill, 1970, 42-45) Among plains and woodlands peoples bands were organized into confederations and both were treated as voluntary membership organizations, with immigration open to all. (Brandon, 1961, 148)

No one single avenue of dissemination serves to single-handedly explain the remarkable growth of the American commons in the centuries following the European advent. The Portuguese imported confraternities (*misericordia*) to Brazil in the late sixteenth century. (Russell-Wood, 1968) Scottish immigrants to Boston formed the first ethnic mutual aid society in 1657, initiating a trend that continues today for virtually every ethnic, racial or nationality group. (Bremner, 1988; Trattner, 1989, 33) A French religious order founded the first American orphanage in New Orleans in 1718. (Trattner, 1989, 108) Residents of Williamsburg and Philadelphia founded early mental hospitals. (Trattner, 1989) One of Cotton Mather's most lasting contributions to American literature was his consideration of the nature of benevolence. (Mather, 1966)

Indeed, what Tocqueville observed in the 1840's was at least partly the result of the transplanting of traditional European commons in the new world. This process occurred in two distinct ways: On the one hand, immigrants of all types brought with them traditional patterns of ecclesiastical organization and mutual aid. Thus, puritans, quakers, anabaptists, catholics and the myriad other religious groups coming to America followed established organizational principles and practices. Indeed, the ability to do so was one of the much-remarked upon (and sometimes overstated) qualities of life in the new world.

Throughout the colonial period and well into the nineteenth century, a number of important commons in the Americas were shaped by conscious emulation of European models. From the earliest beginnings, Spanish and Portuguese colonists in Central and South America sought to found cities on European models. (Picon-Salas, 1971) New England puritans, Virginia planters and Dutch colonists in New York and New Jersey all adopted church-based relief committee systems as the basis of colonial welfare systems. Only gradually did the New England puritan towns move to more civil welfare administration. Although religious voluntary associations date from the earliest settlement of New England, the emergence of more secular associations of charitable and mutual aid societies, fire brigades, lodges and professional societies emerged later, centered mainly in Boston. (Brown, 1973)

Boston Brahmins, Virginia planters and later the newly rich plutocrats of industrial New York and Chicago often also consciously emulated European aristocratic commons. One place where this is very evident is in the emulation of European *beau monde* “society” still evident today in charity balls and other fundraising practices.

The Great Awakening

The aspect of American commons that Tocqueville found most fascinating was not part of the immigrant experience or conscious emulation. Before the American revolution, American commons took the radical departure noted by Tocqueville and others in the democratization of the commons that accompanied the nineteenth century Age of the Common Man. In one generation, private action for the common good or philanthropy was extended from its position as a traditional prerogative of the wealthy and powerful to the discretion of every man. (Minimizing or neutralizing the gender beyond white men was, regrettably, left to a later time.)

Consistent with the themes stated previously, we can speculate that the scarcity of labor in the colonial era was translated into an increasingly favorable economic position of the common man in late colonial America. By the time of the Great Awakening of the 1760's, increasing wealth and leisure of the lower classes were already evident. Through this important religious movement, the American revolution and Jacksonian populism in the early 1800's, one can discern the growing importance of middle and lower class commons in American life. Closely related to this is the rapid growth during the revolutionary era of anti-Calvinist religious sects emphasizing democratic equality rather than the election of the few. (Brown, 1971, 38)

We will discuss several aspects of this trend in the chapter on charities below. Another of the places where this record is clearest and most tracible is in the phenomenon of voluntary cemetary associations. The New Haven Burying Ground in Connecticut, created in 1796, was the

first voluntary, nonprofit cemetery company. Mount Auburn Cemetery, founded on a 72-acre site 10 miles out of Boston in 1831 incorporated a planned landscape of lakes, winding roads, and vistas into a setting that appealed to American sense of the picturesque nature. (Biemiller, 1991; Sloane, 1991). The issue of ownership of Amerindian grave goods offers a very real and difficult policy problem that might be approached in a new way using the distinction between public and common goods offered in this work. (Price, 1991)

“Polite Society”

A status revolution in seventeenth century European cities that has had important implications for the development of the modern commons was the emergence of the distinctive socioeconomic leisure class known as “polite society”, *beau monde*, “the elite”, the upper class and sometimes, simply “society”. Consisting essentially of loose associations (“communities”) of the idle rich, “society” in this sense assumed important roles in defining standards of “taste” and trends in fashion in the emerging urban marketplace. Courtiers, land-owning families residing in the city and “the urban establishment” --wealthy businessmen, lawyers, judges and others --made up the core of society in most European cities. The resulting informal association was tremendously important for the shops, clubs, race courses, coffee houses, theatres, restaurants and other commercial establishments its members frequented.

Members of European society gradually took on roles reminiscent of the Greek aristocrats discussed above in their sponsorship and patronage of philanthropic and charitable projects for the entire community. Newly emerging economic and commercial elites in American cities since the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries self-consciously modeled themselves on the European *beau monde* and in this way set down patterns of behavior and expectations that continue to exercise major influences on fundraising, the composition of boards of directors and special events.

Modern fundraising theory is, to a considerable extent, built upon the model of *beau monde* society. A successful campaign is expected, for

example, to identify a chair who is a member of elite society and willing to solicit from other members. (Seymour, 1966) One of the most distinctive common institution of society in many contemporary communities is the charity ball. Indeed, the “debutante ball” or cotillion at which young women are “presented” to society is still conducted in several American communities. Debutante balls are, at least nominally, charitable events. Town and Country magazine features a regular monthly listing of such events in American cities.

In much of 19th and early 20th century America, fraternal organizations were an important means of social integration, particularly in predominantly rural areas. (McWilliams, 1973) They has since diminished considerably in importance. (Schmidt and Babchuk, 1972, 51)

Conclusion

From Homeric Greece to contemporary America, the history of western civilization offers a continuous parade of many different types of commons, a portion of which are discussed in this chapter. Two things should be evident to the reader from this cursory historical overview: Common institutions, like *liturgia* and associations as diverse as *symposia*, *gymnasia* and the philosophical academies were as characteristic of ancient Greece as of modern Los Angeles. Even earlier, it may be as accurate to hypothesize common behavior (religious enthusiasm, perhaps) in the ancient world of Babel, Ur and Egypt as it is to attribute the construction of ziggurats and pyramids to oppressive totalitarian rulers. In Roman law, in Byzantine and Arabic cities, in medieval Europe and in the practices of diverse ethnic groups immigrating to the Americas, one finds many manifestations of what is a continuous and unbroken aspect of western civilization.

Further, in almost all of its divergent European and American branches, western civilization is characterized as much by donation, association, foundation, and other manifestations of commons as it is by the institutions of market, state or family. Moreover, whether through diffusion or indigenous development, other civilizations with which have come into contact with the west (most notably the Arabic

and Islamic) also show clear evidences of their own common institutions.

Much work remains to extract a more complete historical portrait of the type called for by the 1972 voluntary action task force. Fortunately, much of the necessary evidence for at least a schematic view is already scattered throughout the existing body of historical writing, and the initial challenge is to extract it.

We make associations to give entertainments, to found seminaries, to build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send missionaries to the antipodes; in this manner, we found hospitals, prisons and schools.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

5. Structures of Common Action

Numerous commentators have observed the relative absence of social theories of nonprofit and voluntary action beyond the level of simple description. For example, in their 1970 review of voluntary association literature, Smith and Freedman concluded that “the term theory has to be applied to the study of voluntary associations with care, since very little theory, in any strict sense of the word, has yet been developed in the field. There is no grand, all encompassing, and generally accepted theory of voluntarism, or even a respectable middle range theory.” (1) Regrettably, this assessment is still largely true today, although a number of additional provocative hypotheses, definitions and propositions have been advanced as “theories” in the interim.

Unfortunately, too many of these hypotheses continue to be guided by an over-simplified metaphor of profitable exchange, characterized by utilitarian exchange, dualistic transactions between benefactors and beneficiaries, very narrow and short-term notions of self-interest, and

simplistic cost-benefit calculations. In the remaining chapters of this work, we will attempt to build up an alternative conception of social exchange as it relates to the central issues of social organization, the state, the economics of common goods and charity.

Benefactories and Social Exchange

To date, we have suggested benefactories as the characteristic form of organized endeavors in the commons, and identified three principal roles (donor/patron, beneficiary/client and intermediary/agent). Moreover, we have suggested repeatedly that the positive consequences (“benefits” or common goods) arising out of beneficiary action draw upon the resources of the society or community (in the quite distinct forms of surplus wealth and leisure and the cultural heritages of accumulated civilization).

It remains now to ask on what basis do organized benefactories arise out of the spontaneous behavior of any of the individuals involved? More specifically:

- 1) Why do people organize commons?
- 2) Why create a formal organization?
- 3) Why incorporate?

Why Organize?

Why would reasonable persons who were members of families, able to buy and sell in the marketplace, and assured of at least minimal affluence, protection and civil order by the state be interested in engaging in the social action of the commons? For the simplest answer to this question we resort to the definition of a commons offered in Chapter 3: An aggregate or plurality of persons, aware of shared interests or purposes might wish to associate with one another to discuss the depth and range of their common interest; to pool their resources (whether to utilize directly in furthering their common purposes or to seek additional resources); to reinforce or sustain their feelings of mutuality or to establish procedures assuring fair treatment of one another.

To Associate

Overall, the most satisfactory single answer to the question of why people would organize a commons is simply that they wish to associate with one another for some particular reason. Thus, the terms associate and association are probably the best general descriptors of the process of common organization. If people join together informally and without benefit of any affiliation agreements or formal rules, we would ordinarily characterize their association as a group. Such characterizations cover not only peer groups, friendship groups, support groups and other elementary associations, but also many other types of “informal organization” occurring within work settings and bureaucratic organizations. They also cover mutual aid groups and support groups.

We might further inquire as to why people would wish to associate. One range of answers that pops up with some regularity involves benefits derived from association itself. In this sense, the ends of voluntary action and the means of nonprofit organization are identical. A second set of answers involves the options of problem-solving and presentation discussed in chapter 3. (See also MacAloon, 1984)

Why create a formal organization?

What circumstances would bring these same associates to a sufficient level of dissatisfaction with the present level of organization of their group to formalize it into a more formal association or organization? For these purposes, a formal organization may be said to be an association with one or more of the following traits: formal affiliation procedures, whether in the form of memberships, dues, or any other form of distinction between participants and participants; a formal division of labor and accompanying status differentiation; and written, stated or agreed upon rules for common action.

Participants might choose to associate formally for a number of reasons: They might seek to advance or publicly affirm their common interest or purpose, whether to proclaim their identification with it, to seek to attract others to join with them or for some other mutually

agreed upon purpose. They might also do so because some aspect of less formal interaction may prove problematic (such as the relation between the group leader and the other participant to act as leader in her temporary absence). They might also do so to prevent or deal with false claims of membership or participation by nonmembers, that are detrimental to the group's interests or purposes. Further, they might do so to prevent or minimize misunderstandings: about the interpretation of shared purposes (for example, the doctrinal and theological controversies of religious groups); about the handling of shared resources (who will manage dues, and control the scheduled access to shared facilities?) Finally, they may formalize rules and roles to create or enhance a patina of authority or justice where none otherwise may exist. When associates bring with them clear shared models of status and authority, no formal structure may be needed to resolve such practical questions as speaking order, veto powers, etc. The eldest, best educated, most powerful, best hunter, etc. may be mutual consent carry the greatest authority. However, when (as in new groups) such norms may not yet have been fashioned, or (as in pluralist groups) two or more equally plausible, but conflicting norms exist, formal ratification of agreed upon rules may be the wisest course.

Leadership, Boards And the Problem of Oligarchy

When the decision is made to formally organize, some arrangements must also be made for formalizing the informal (charismatic?) leadership of an association. The most common term for the formalized leadership group of any type of commons today is the board of directors, derived from the corporate model. Inherent in formalizing the division of labor is the problem of oligarchy that might be thought of as creation of a preferred, more selective or narrowly defined commons within an existing commons. To some analysts, the problem of oligarchy is inevitable. (Michels, 1949)

Why create a legal corporation?

Why would any group that already had formal affiliation, a formal division of labor and stated rules seek the additional step (where it is available) of legal incorporation (or, other, similar legal protections or state sanctions such as the Islamic *waqf*)? There are two general answers to this issue: The social bonds of mutuality or affiliation may not be sufficiently strong or satisfactory in all cases. Thus, less trusting affiliates of an association, unconvinced of the protections of the association's own operating rules, may demand the additional protection of the non-distribution constraint. On the other hand, members of the group or association may desire a relationship or status (tax exemption, a grant or contract) with some external entity that is conditional upon legal incorporation. Thus, for a large number of existing nonprofit social service agencies, for example, incorporation was a necessary precondition to qualifying for various grant programs from which they seek funds. Finally, some external authority (like the IRS) may demand or expect incorporation as a condition of some privilege or benefit (like tax exemption) in which the group has an interest.

The same characteristics of a commons --uncoerced participation, shared purposes and resources, mutuality and fairness --can be manifested at any level of organization, informal groups, formal associations or incorporation. Thus one can expect to find related commons at any of these levels of organization.

A Partial Typology of Benefactories

Association

By far, the most widespread form of organized commons is the association. An association might be any group of persons not related by kinship ties, not engaged in profitable exchange (buying and selling from one another) and not engaged in the exercise of coercive control who affiliate, join together or regularly interact with one another in some organized or predictable manner. Thus, in the broadest sense, a business firm or "company" is also a type of association. In the firm, however, the priority of the shared objective of profit seeking may place constraints on non-owner participation, limit sharing of purposes

and resources, substitute a labor-management hierarchy for mutuality or discount fairness as an element of social relations. Therefore, we are only concerned in what follows with common associations demonstrating all five characteristics.

Common associations are known variously as groups, clubs, groups, societies and by myriad other labels. Even in the case of the most extreme and problematic forms of solo trusteeship, it takes a temporary association of three to seven “incorporators” to bring a nonprofit corporation into existence. According to Finlay, “Obviously, no single word will render the spectrum of *koinoniai*. At the higher levels, ‘community’ is usually suitable, at the lower perhaps ‘association’, provided the elements of fairness, mutuality and common purpose are kept in mind.” (1974, 32) The “krewes” (clubs) of costume-and float-makers who constitute the traditional backbone of Mardi Gras in New Orleans and Carnival in Rio are clearly associations, as are the Pueblo kiva societies; the pan (pronounced “pon”) bands of Trinidad; inner city and suburban “pickup bands” of musicians and street gangs. (Grady, 1991)

Agency

For purposes of the theory of the commons, an agency is an association in which volunteer or employed agents, who are usually not members themselves of the patron class, are designated by patrons or their representatives (for example, a board of “trustees” or designated “staff”) to act for the benefit of clients, who are also generally not members of the patron class. (Kramer, 1966; Kramer, 1982) Such acts occur without fees, user charges or other revenues from clients metering the level of such activity.

Legally, agency is action on behalf of another. (Fama and Jensen, 1983) In this sense, most state nonprofit laws enable boards of directors to employ paid agents to conduct their affairs. (Oleck, 1986, pp?) In the case of the “social agency” the legal notion has been generalized and institutionalized into a commons of patrons, agents and clients. The organized social agency as commons encompasses a structured set of relations between patrons, clients and paid staff

intermediaries that emphasizes the dual roles of intermediaries as agents of patrons and trustees for clients. The agency as a social organization is defined by the unique nature of authoritative communication and dialogue between these classes of participants that results from such dual responsibilities. As a communications network, the typical social agency can be construed as a “node” linking two distinct “information streams”. It is in social agencies where the networks of conversations and information regarding client needs, wants and desires intersect with various networks of information regarding available and esoteric resources for solving problems and improving the life chances of clients. (Lohmann, 1990)

Formally, the board of directors is ordinarily entrusted with primary responsibility for managing the agency, including establishing its mission and programs, and hiring and evaluating employees. This classic form can be termed the “group trusteeship” model. In a number of cases, group trusteeship is undermined or completely overturned by a single strong, dominating patron or staff member (or even, conceivably a client). While such “solo trusteeship” is frequently presented in the nonprofit management literature as a serious deviation from sound practice, it may simply be a variant form of common behavior.

Group Agency

The conventional, indeed archetypal, form of social agency is group trusteeship in which the agency operates for a stated common good under the control of a group of trustees. This is the normative model of agency assumed by most nonprofit corporation statutes, the “stewardship” assumption of nonprofit accounting, and in the IRS tax exemption process. () Recent research evidence, however, suggests that this model may be honored more in the breach than in the observance. (Middleton, 1987;)

The model of group trusteeship requires a board of directors, entrusted with the management of the affairs of the organization, and implies a constituency or “community” of interested others to whom the board is, in some manner, accountable. The role of “the principal

paid agent”, principal operating official or staff director receives minimal attention in the traditional model. This is in glaring contradiction with the realities of the managerial revolution that has occurred in the nonprofit world in recent decades.

Solo Agency

One of the more challenging issues of conventional organizational analysis in nonprofit and voluntary studies involves the proper treatment of nonprofit corporations that depart from the norm of group trusteeship. The problem of organizational oligarchy made famous by Robert Michels, example, is one significant departure. The commons controlled by a single key decision-maker is another (whether control is exercised by a board member or officer, executive director or principal patron). Such key figures place themselves in a position that might be termed “solo trusteeship.” Achieving such a dominant position in a common organization is not always simply a matter of the exercise of power. Board members, staff members, clients and others involved may simply acquiesce to such a “locus of control” rather than resisting or contesting it. In other instances, a high degree of interest and involvement on the part of a single individual, coupled with disinterest or apathy by others can produce the same result. For whatever reasons, recent research has documented that such solo trusteeship has become extremely pervasive, perhaps even characteristic of common agencies. ()

The growing body of evidence makes it increasingly more difficult to simply dismiss solo trusteeship as deviant and undesirable. In fact, the history of modern social welfare reform is also punctuated by such solo practitioners.

Jane Addams did not begin Hull House by forming a board of directors, and even after one was formed the board had almost no role in Hull House programming. In fact, Hull House was not incorporated and a board formed until the settlement had been in operation for more than five years, and Ms. Addams served as President of the board and principal agent (head resident) from incorporation in 1895 to her death in 1935. (Lohmann, 1990)

Ms. Addams certainly is not unique in the annals of common action. In fact, one is sorely tempted to conclude that in virtually all cases of charismatic leadership,

A major challenge facing the theory of the commons is to explain how, and under what circumstances, such examples of solo proprietorship might be acceptable. The best answer is derived from the first characteristic of the commons: uncoerced participation: So long as

Campaign

A campaign is another particular form of association characteristic of commons. Campaigns can be defined as time-limited, goal-oriented single-purpose commons in which a relatively smaller “core” of organized participants seek to reach out to and enlist the appropriate participation of a broader “mass” of potential participants. (Van Vugt, 1991) Campaigns may be carried out for a bewildering variety of purposes. Medieval crusades were campaigns. (Riley-Smith, 1991) So also are certain other types of military action. Although military campaigns generally lack the degrees of voluntarism usually associated with the commons, there are two important exceptions: militia and “all-volunteer” armies and guerilla and insurgency movements possess many, but not all of the characteristics of common campaigns. Crusades and military actions are not generally the main concern here, however, since they represent rather extreme examples of the common tendencies of the campaign. Three other types are of much more central interest in examining the general social organization of commons. They are political and fund-raising campaigns and community organizing episodes.

General understanding of campaign organization is not well developed. Etzioni’s (1968) analysis of the “active society” was a step in that direction: Campaigns typically involve the common pursuit of “projects”, or shared programs of action. Thus, civic improvement projects, reforms and other similar ventures almost always take the structure of a campaign.

Campaigns are probably best known in contemporary terms as political and fund-raising organizations. In politics, campaign organizations are often maintained separately from party organizations, per se. In fund-raising, the same tends to be true of “capital campaigns” and various other major fundraising ventures including telethons, United Way campaigns, etc. (Van Doren, 1956)

While it may be customary to think of campaigns as organized sub-units of formal organizations, there are other instances in which the formal organization (bureau, committee, association) is itself a subunit of a campaign. In major social change episodes, specific identifiable campaigns often provide the structure of more amorphous “movements.” Thus, in the operation of the Civil War era Sanitary Commission, the west coast campaigns and in particular the San Francisco campaign stand out as particularly successful fund-raising episodes. (Bremner, 1980) In the American Civil Rights movement, each of the major organizations conducted its own campaigns, each with their own organization, strategy, tactics, funding, objectives. Thus, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, for example, carried out major campaigns in Albany Georgia, Birmingham and Selma Alabama, Chicago and Memphis. The 1963 March on Washington was a campaign organized and carried out by a coalition of major civil rights organizations. (Fairclough, 1987)

Common Places

One of many interesting aspects of the commons is the existence of specific places dedicated or set aside for common action. In general, there is presently no satisfactory English language term to characterize such places generically, although there are a large number of specific terms: fraternity houses, lodge or grange halls, club houses, temples, churches, kivas, and many more. One of the practices is to refer to some of these places (museums, for example) as “institutions” leading to unending confusion.

The largest and most clearly defined class of common places is

temples, each with its association of priests and ritual specialists. The term temple is unsuitable for this entire class of common places, however, because of its explicitly religious connotations. Each of the world's major (and many minor) religions involves the use of dedicated buildings and natural spaces. Even the quasi-mythical Celtic druids about which relatively little hard factual information exists, are associated with their "sacred groves." (Chadwick, 1971; Herm, 1975, 55-57)

Terminology for common religious places is highly variable. In Jewish tradition, a temple is denoted as the site of sacrifices, while synagogue is the term for a gathering of the people. (de Vaux, 1965) In the Islamic world, a mosque is a space for common prayers. Christians have a bewildering variety of terms for their common places: churches, chapels, cathedrals, houses of prayer, meeting houses, camp grounds, revival centers and more. Another large class of common places are the monuments, shrines, altars, stella and various pilgrimage sites.

Because of the enduring legacy of classicism in civil society, a great many American common places have been given Greek or Latin names: academy, coliseum, gymnasium or forum, auditorium and lyceum are all examples of such common place names. A unique form of common place that has been important in India is the ashram, or religious retreat. The ashram is associated with Mohandas Ghandi and the Indian democratic revolution is important because it was so clearly the "staging area" from which the revolution was discussed, legitimated, organized and led. (Mehta, 1976)

A controversial public policy doctrine of common places as sanctuaries has generally received insufficient attention. Churches have frequently sought special status as sanctuaries from the 10th century Peace of God movement through the martyrdom of Thomas Becket to contemporary Latin American liberation theology and the domestic sanctuary movement sheltering illegal aliens. (Lorentzen, 1991)

For purposes of a formal model of the commons, it is useful to

distinguish discursive common places (literally, places of discussion) from presentational places devoted to ritual and other forms of presentation. A forum for public debate, is functionally distinguishable from a theatre or concert hall used for presentations in certain cases, common places like Carnegie Hall can serve multiple purposes.

Carnegie Hall

In addition to being one of the great cultural establishments in American life, Carnegie Hall in New York City represents an interesting historical case study of a major American common place. Carnegie Hall, like Hull House, the Russell Sage Foundation, like certain other charitable and cultural establishments, is an interesting transitional link between earlier patterns of philanthropy and contemporary ones.

The place of Carnegie Hall in American cultural life, and its status as a commons are beyond question: Peter

I. Tchaikovsky conducted at the opening festival. Paderewski, Sarah Bernhardt, Lillian Russell, Frederick Douglas, Antonin Dvorak, Artur Rubenstein, Theodore Roosevelt, Booker T. Washington, Victor Herbert, Albert Einstein, Frank Sinatra and the Beatles are among the thousands of important figures in music, literature, philosophy, politics, religion and science who have appeared there in concerts, speeches and other presentations in the past century.

Carnegie Hall is not simply a performance venue. The building (and the institution) also embrace a maze of practice rooms, studios, and hallways that choreographer Agnes de Mille characterized in a television special on the hall as alive with "the intensity of the student/worker". The American Academy of Dramatic Arts was housed at Carnegie Hall for 60 years.

Prior to 1960, Carnegie Hall existed as a privately held, tax-paying company, whose annual operating deficits were absorbed personally by a series of owner-patrons. In this sense, Carnegie Hall is an important link with the past and the personal patronage that enabled it bears more than a little resemblance to the Greek pattern of *liturgia*, the religious, literary and artistic patronage of the medieval and

renaissance European nobility and the festival-sponsorship of Latin American *majordomia*. In such cases, the absence of legal organizational forms such as nonprofit corporations entitled to own property, and exempt from some or all taxes, ownership and liability are vested in an individual or group of individuals who function as patrons of the commons in a particularly personal way.

The initial patron of Carnegie Hall was its namesake, Andrew Carnegie. In 1889, Carnegie contributed \$1.1 million toward the construction of a music hall in New York City. However, as was his custom, Carnegie's contribution only covered a portion of the total cost of creating Carnegie Hall. He refused to endow the hall, believing this to be the responsibility of the beneficiaries of his gift. (73) The remainder of the cost was therefore borne by a newly created Music Hall Company of New York, a joint-stock corporation, largely through mortgages on the land and building.

The architect and suppliers of the new building were paid in stock in the corporation. The budget for construction and equipment was set at \$763,531, (\$550,000 of which was mortgaged). The budget included \$20,000 for decoration and \$18,000 for 2,500 seats. Purchase of the land (8.5 lots) was financed with an additional mortgage of \$300,000 from the Bowery Savings Bank, but records of the price of the land have been lost.

Carnegie continued in his role of patron throughout his life, making up annual operating deficits of \$25,000, so that by his death, he had contributed nearly \$2 million to the hall. After his death, the role of principal patron for Carnegie Hall was assumed by Robert E. Simon, a Manhattan realtor, who purchased the Hall from the Carnegie estate in 1925, reportedly for \$2.5 million. His son, Robert Jr. inherited the Hall ten years later and held it until it was sold to the city of New York in 1960. The Simons, father and son, were of course not the only patrons of Carnegie Hall. Many others gave substantial sums in donations over the years, principally to support the many programs undertaken there.

Only after nearly 70 years of existence under this classic form of patronage, did Carnegie Hall take on a more conventional "nonprofit" form. Apparently, the beneficence of this form of private patronage

was eventually exhausted, and in 1960, the Carnegie Hall site was to be sold to a private developer for the construction of what was described as a “red brick skyscraper.” The violinist Isaac Stern assumed a distinctly modern, middle class role of patronage and spearheaded a Committee to Save Carnegie Hall. The City of New York eventually purchased the Hall for \$5 million, and leased it to the newly created nonprofit Carnegie Hall Corporation for \$183,600 a year. The city purchase required explicit enabling legislation by the New York state legislature.

In 1990, roughly 60 percent of the operating costs of the hall were recovered in rents, that ranged from \$6,300 on weekdays to \$7,200 on week ends. (Ushers, rehearsal time and ticket printing were extra.) The remainder of the operating budget was made up with a variety of grant income from foundations, state and federal governments and private donations.

Repeated efforts to have the facilitate designated as a tax-exempt educational institution failed. New York State nonprofit law was apparently quite unclear at the time and creating a modern tax-exempt establishment of this type (particularly one generating substantial sums in ticket revenues) was a complex task. When the Russell Sage Foundation was created in 1907, the founders elected to seek a special act of the New York legislature to cut through the vagaries of New York State law, and the founders of several other important national foundations chose the same path.

The issue of local taxation of commons has long been particularly acute in New York City, with the headquarters of a large number of national charitable and philanthropic establishments located there, all of them seeking exemption from local taxes. Carnegie Hall operated for roughly 70 years, in essence, as a private business. faced with significant tax liabilities: \$10,000 in the first year alone. By 1925, the facility was valued at \$1.85 million and the tax bill was \$49,765.

In choosing to function as personal patrons of Carnegie Hall over a 35 year period, the Simons provide important modern exemplars of the operation of a critical portion of the theory of the commons: Under a

condition of sufficient personal affluence (how much exactly is a matter of no importance), they were able to ignore or resist what must have been abundant inducements to maximize their profits.

Committee

One of the most universal, and at the same time, one of the most difficult forms of common social organization is the committee. We saw above that the public bureau could in fact be constituted as a commons --thereby assuring the penetration of the commons into the precincts of the state. (See Harris, 1989) Much the same is true of that ubiquitous temporary social organization, the committee. Not only does one find committees in community life (that is to say, in the commons and the public sector. One also finds business and corporate committees as common infiltrations of the commercial world of the marketplace. In some cases, as with extended families engaged in “production” of family reunions or other family rituals, one can even find committees in family life. In another case, many family foundations that do not have paid staff may carry out more mundane aspects of their business that do not require official trustee action through informal committees.

At some level, participation in a committee is inevitably voluntary. One can be coerced to be a committee member, “baited” with various inducements and threats, and still retain a large measure of discretion over one’s conduct in committees.

Conference

Another highly important form of the social organization of the commons is the conference. Other terms for approximately the same phenomenon are convocation, convention, synod. Indeed, many professional groups that take a nominal association form are, in fact, fundamentally conferences. A conference can be defined as a periodic commons in which the members or participants “confer” on a regularly scheduled basis for purposes of discussion, debate, resolution of common problems, and adoption of common positions.

Following the conference, members typically expect to go their

separate ways and guide their actions in the interim until the next conference on the basis of positions adopted at the conference. Whether it is political candidates guided by a platform adopted at the party convention, scientists designing new research on the basis of findings presented at a scientific conference, or religious delegates at a synodical conference, guidance in the post-conference interim is the normal expectation of conference participation.

There are few forms of organized commons that display the dialogical basis of all commons more clearly and distinctly than the conference. The purpose of a conference --scientific, religious, professional, community or other conference --is talk in all forms: speeches, discussion, debate, negotiation. One attends a conference to speak, and to listen; to be heard and understood and to understand.

No other type of commons displays more clearly also the underlying relationships between such dialogue and the involvement and commitment of participants.

It is because one understands, speaks and is understood by one's peers; because one's questions can be assigned proper importance, and one's doubts be seen as well founded that one truly is a physicist or a social worker, a Methodist or a folklorist, a Republican or a feminist. It is in conference that theologies are hammered out, and scientific paradigms shaped and molded. Conferences signal the existence and the resolution (or abandonment) of social problems, and preferred policies.

Unfortunately, most work on conferences in nonprofit and voluntary studies to date has addressed only the pedestrian and mundane aspects of conference organization. From this base, much more work needs to be done on the role of this distinctively important form of commons. One area that is particularly promising is the examination of the conference-like aspects of democratic parliaments, congresses, councils and other legislative bodies. The manner in which the authoritative actions of the democratic state are "produced" out of the dialogical environment of legislative "conferences" is one of the most amazing and profound examples of the commons as a general form of social organization

Cooperatives

Both general and specific social processes of cooperation has been important in understanding nonprofit and voluntary action (Argyle, 1991; Elkin and McLean, 1976) Producer and consumer cooperatives are another fundamental and distinctive form of benefactor in which economic functions are mixed with social cooperation. (Ben-Ner, 1987; Wertheim, 1976) In general terms, the theory of the commons seeks to downplay the ideological aspects of the long-standing economic and political debates over “individualism” and “collectivism.” (Attwood and Baviskar, 1989; Blanche, 1989; Clayre, 1980; Furlough, 1991; James and Neuberger, 1981; Jones and Moskoff, 1991; Pauly and Redisch, 1973)

Coops have long been a feature of certain American campuses, where student cooperative book stores continue in operation after decades, and American agriculture, with its coop grain elevators, feed and supply stores, electrical suppliers and milk and other commodity-producing cooperatives. (Attwood and Baviskar, 1989) More recently, consumer groups, proponents of “organic” foods, holistic health and a broad range of “new age” and environmental causes have also found the cooperative an advantageous form of economic and social organization. (Furlough, 1991) Some have even suggested that university departments and hospitals might be regarded as cooperatives. (Hunter, 1981; James and Neuberger, 1981; Pauly and Redisch, 1973)

The similarities between nonprofit corporations and cooperatives are highly suggestive, but largely unexplored. (Jones and Moskoff, 1991; Oleck, 1991, 131) Those analyses that have been done have not been incorporated into the corpus of nonprofit and voluntary action studies (for example, Clayre, 1980). Yet, contemporary non profit and voluntary action theory would be hard pressed to deal adequately with cooperatives or the enduring cooperative movement.

Discipline

In general terms, “disciplines” may be defined as a genus of commons,

composed of several distinctly identifiable species. The term itself is applied most commonly to academic disciplines, or fields of study that may have in common their intellectual history, shared theory, common problems, common methods, and other features. It applies equally well to religious orders, that by tradition share the discipline of common rules, and professions, unions and guilds that seek to extend the discipline of self-governance of an association to the members of an entire occupational group. (Northrup, 1965; Snow, 1959; Van der Veer, 1989)

In general, terms like order and discipline point to underlying problems of social control and normative compliance that every viable commons must resolve.

Academic Discipline

In many respects, academic disciplines (as opposed to the formal associations representing those disciplines) conform to the form of social organization we are characterizing as a commons. Scientific disciplines like physics and biology, humanistic disciplines like literature, art history, and “interdisciplines” and “multidisciplinary fields like gerontology, peace studies and nonprofit and voluntary action studies conform to most of the characteristics of a commons.

Wilson, 1990 is a study of the evolution of American philosophy as an academic discipline, with particular attention to John Dewey, C.S. Pierce and Josiah Royce. American philanthropic foundations have played an important role in the development of several disciplines. Stanfield (1985) discusses the Tuskegee program, the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial, the Rosenwald Fund and the Carnegie Corporation and their support of the sociologist Robert Park. Sontz (1989) identifies a similarly important role in the growth of gerontology.

At the level of formal organizations, universities may be organized into departments by discipline, but most modern universities also feature a variety of “centers”, “institutes” and “programs” whose participants, in effect, form commons that does not conform to the

existing formal organizational structure of the university. Indeed, nonprofit and voluntary studies is such a topic --drawing scholars from dozens of different academic disciplines.

Since commons are voluntary, they are much easier to form, sustain and change than any type of formal organizational entity, and therein lies what may be the most profound, enduring and chronic problem of organization in the modern university. New commons are continually being formed out of the interests and enthusiasms of faculty, and such commons constitute an on-going challenge and headache for those responsible for the formal organization of the university. It is no easy task deciding when gerontology, or women's studies or peace studies should be given formal recognition, budget authority, and other accoutrements of formal organizational status.

In general, it is communication and dialogue within the framework of the "discipline" imposed by adhering to agreed upon methods and procedures (of search, problem-solving and presentation) that characterize disciplines. Another way of saying this is that shared intellectual or theoretical problems or shared problem-solving methods are at the heart of most scientific disciplines, while shared aesthetic or other criteria for the assessment of performances of various types are at the core of many humanistic disciplines, while professional disciplines, like law, medicine, engineering and social work tend to place emphasis on both common problems and performances.

The past century has been a period of particular activity with respect to the formation of new disciplines. Silva and Slaughter (1984) discuss the formation of the American Economic Association (1895), the American Political Science Association (1903) and the American Sociological Society (1905) and their displacement of the American Social Science Association. Numerous other studies of disciplinary formation also are found in the disciplinary social science literature.

Order

The term order can have several meanings. It is frequently used to describe the principals, characteristics or social behavior that give

predictability and coherence to social processes (for example, social order) or to describe the objectives or results of social control. Modern attention to the Hobbesian social order problem arising from unconstrained self-interest has been a major preoccupation of contemporary sociology.

Orders as religious, fraternal, chivalric or other commons have received relatively little attention in the nonprofit and voluntary action literature. Yet, for more than 1,000 years in the history of Western civilization, various form of Christian monastic and lay orders were principal forms of commons, and many continue in existence today. Much the same can be said for the Islamic world, where various orders were long the principal basis for the civic organization of Islamic cities and the political organization of Islamic states. (Hourani, 1991) An understanding of Islamic orders may be one key to understanding the organizational dynamics of resurgent “Islamic fundamentalism” in Iran and elsewhere. (Ayubi, 1991)

In both of these cases, the order is a form of social organization closely associated with normative compliance structures and traditional authority. Whether such orders are an archaic form of social organization, or new and contemporary forms of order will arise remains to be seen.

Profession

In modern society, professions (including the newer, or what are sometimes called the “semiprofessions”) are a much more pervasive form of occupational commons than orders. It is worth noting that many (if not most) aspirants to the status of profession are actually clusters of many related formal and common organizations: incorporated national associations incorporated in some state as nonprofit corporations, an elected board of directors, a variety of unincorporated committees with appointed members responsible for annual conferences, publications, budget, credentialing, and a host of other matters.

Most modern professions also have an educational “wing” of one or

more academic disciplines, and

Guild/Union

Guilds and labor unions ordinarily seek to impose a different type of discipline upon their members. The modern labor movement refers to this as “solidarity” and it typically involves the discovery and embrace of the collective economic self-interest of a group or class of workers. Such solidarity represents a kind of coercive economic power that comes to the members collectively when they take an “all of us or none of us” approach. One of the interesting aspects of trade unionism is the use of family terms and imagery to symbolize the common bonds of members. Thus, many unions are “brotherhoods” whose members refer to one another as “brothers” and “sisters.”

Within the social sciences, differing political ideologies and organizations agendas may account for the divergence of “labor studies” (that frequently have a pro-labor slant) from other organizational studies (that frequently have a pro-management slant).

Fiesta

A major class of common social organizations with both historical and contemporary significance are the numerous fairs, festivals, fiestas, parades, fire works displays and other similar events that have marked the Euro-American landscape at least since the Middle Ages. (MacAloon, 1984; Orloff, 1980; Steinberg, 1989) The number of such events occurring annually in the United States (and the organizations sponsoring them) probably numbers between 5,000-10,000.

Almost all modern American fiestas or festivals will be found to have a nonprofit corporation at or near their core. Outside the United States, rotating systems of individual patrons similar to the Athenian model (known in central America as *majordomos*) may be of greater importance. (Smith, 1977) Further, there are frequently healthy doses of entrepreneurial profit-seeking, civic boosterism and diverse other manifestations of self-interest, promotion and aggrandisement associated with many such events. Undoubtedly, fiestas are “good for

business.” Yet the Fair Boards, Chamber of Commerce committees, Veterans’ organizations and other civic groups and quasis-governmental bodies that act as official sponsors of such events seldom account for the full range and scope of the these events.

Virtually every large city, and most of the smaller ones have their Mardi Gras, Winter Carnivals, Strawberry Festivals or Rose Parades. And, seldom is this exclusively an activity solely restricted to the association or corporation sponsoring the event. The millions of people filling the streets of New Orleans at Mardi Gras, as well as Miami and Rio for *Carnivale* and Ciena and other Italian cities for *Pallio* are not simply crowds. Whether we look at the traditional African-American “indian tribes” of Mardi Gras, the motorcyclists of a local Shriners’ organization performing in a street parade, the neighborhood and block clubs that sponsor competing horses and jockeys in the pallios, or the pan (pronounced pon) bands of Trinidad, we see the same thing. Most genuine festivals are, at one level, composed of clusters or networks of groups, clubs and associations whose primary exclusive reason for organizing is to see and be seen in the fiesta.

Presentation --to see and be seen --is as fundamental an object of the fiesta as talking and listening is of the conference. At an agricultural county fair, children take their 4-H projects to be seen by all, and critically evaluated by judges who award prizes to the best entrants. There are over 3,000 counties in the U.S., and in a considerable portion of them the annual fair or festival is formally titled an “exposition”, highlighting the presentational (expository) quality of the event.

Seeing and being seen is not a characteristic limited to the associations and organized segments of a fiesta, however. In a manner reminiscent of emerging *beau monde* society discussed in Chapter 5, promenading, or strolling the grounds for the primary purpose of seeing or being seen, is an important characteristic for everyone who attends such an event.

Many anthropological studies of feast days and festivals are available. For example, Sherman and Sherman (1990) discuss the ritual

significance and political economy of feasting among the Samosir Batak of Sumatra.

Foundation

Both the term and the concept of the foundation date back at least to the Romans, and probably to the Greeks. (Johnson, 1989) The modern foundation is a financial instrument, sanctioned by the state, with a governing organization (usually a committee or board of trustees) and with or without an accompanying staff organization. In certain important respects, the modern American philanthropic foundation is an intellectual product of Andrew Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" . The modern American foundation is also a product of John D. Rockefeller's employment of the Rev. Frederick T. Gates as his philanthropic advisor, and the Russell Sage Foundation...

An important distinction among foundations would be between those that are large enough to employ paid staff members and those that rely instead solely upon their trustees. Robert Payton's characterization of philanthropy as private action for the public (or, in our terms, common) good offers a particularly apt characterization of the modern foundation. Because they are essentially private financial instruments, foundations have been a target of social critics at least since

Journal

In a number of important cases, periodical publications ordinarily called journals (or professional journals or trade journals) are associated with sciences, disciplines, professions, or other commons or independently develop into a type of commons on their own. One of the clearest cases of this, for demonstration purposes, is Survey Associates, that was for more than 40 years a membership association and publisher of *Survey* and *Survey Graphic*, the leading magazines in the field of social reform for over four decades until their demise in the early 1950's. (Chambers, 1971)

In a few cases, however, the social organization of those who produce and control the journals themselves can be transformed into an

important and independent commons. This is particularly the case with various reform caucuses and change oriented endeavors. Thus, for example, the writers and editors of the *Partisan Review* gave voice to a political, intellectual and artistic movement in post-war New York, just as the *Village Voice* did in the 1960's, and the "little magazines" of the 1920's. In their own ways, *The Masses* and *The New Republic* both served in this way as centers of political commons associated with the movement of social liberalism. It is not entirely unheard of for commercial magazines to attempt to create a journal commons. *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy* are mass circulation publications that have endeavored to cast themselves into a reformist mode, vis a vis rock music as a platform for social change, and hedonism as a life style (for example, the notorious "Playboy Philosophy" series by Publisher Hugh Hefner).

In eighteenth century England, the journalism of Addison and Steele gave political voice to public opinion formed in the English coffee houses. In nineteenth century America and Europe, newspapers were frequently the organs of particular political parties, factions or splinter groups.

In the American context, ethnic groups seeking to discover or retain a sense of common identity have frequently done so through the medium of journals. Jewish, Black and Spanish-speaking communities retain important journalist outlets in many major metropolitan areas, for example. Most American ethnic groups have, at one time or another had newspapers or magazines directed specifically for them, and many such publications continue to exist today.

Party

Political parties of all types (including, to some degree, parties like the totalitarian Communist parties of Eastern Europe that until recently held monopoly control of the state and defined it as *the* dominant institution in society) conform to a considerable degree to any definition of commons. (Garcia, 1991; Gluck, 1975; Goldman, 1990; Kayden and Mahe 1986; Schlesinger, 1975; Schwartz, 1990; Valelly, 1989; Van Doren, 1956)

In terms of the theory of the commons, the defining characteristic of the political party may be that it is -quite literally --an embryo state. That is, the distinctive purpose of the political party is to capture control of the state and shape the latter to its view. To become, in the terms introduced below, the dominant political association. As such, the commons must be seen as an important political staging area for state formation in democratic society. In colonial India, for example, parties like the Madras Native Association were an important ingredient in the emergence from colonialism. (Suntharalingam, 1967)

In democratic polities, the process of capturing control of government is through the electoral process, in which parties offer candidates for election. Thus, the recruitment, screening and support of party candidates becomes a major component of party activity. In Parliamentary democracies, these electoral processes are particularly straightforward. In much of Latin America, the peculiar histories and political traditions of the region often mean that virtually all forms of civil association are politicized, with the result that most Latin American countries operate within multiparty systems in which there are very few nonpolitical civic associations.

Pilgrimage

Religious and other pilgrimages, or sacred journeys, are one of the most fascinating and enduring forms of commons, despite their relative absence in modern American life. (Neville, 1986; Nolan and Nolan, 1989) We have already made reference above to the cities of Mecca and Rome as the foremost pilgrimage destinations in Islam and Christianity. The pilgrimage was also an important part of medieval Christianity, as for example, in the group of sojourners portrayed by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*. Pilgrimages have also played an important role in Hindu religion, where the river Ganges is one of many pilgrimage sites. Also worthy of note here is the frequency with which American Jews travel to Israel and American ethnic groups of many types place a high premium on travel to Europe, Africa and Asia. Senior citizen travel tours may be the closest approximation in

American society to a genuine pilgrimage.

As a commons, the pilgrimage may be most similar to the campaign and the committee in its time-limited, goal-oriented and single-purpose nature. Neville (1987) argues that the Catholic custom of pilgrimages to sacred shrines has been replaced by protestant culture by camp meetings, church homecomings, family reunions and grave decoration.

Research Institute

A research institute is a commons devoted to scientific investigations. The National Geographic Society, publisher of a highly successful periodical, any sponsor of a variety of research endeavors is an example of such an institute. In the economic vernacular, many research institutes might be characterized as “researcher’s cooperatives.”

The term institute has many different shades of meaning, yet almost all of them share connotations of common association for research, scientific or knowledge building or dissemination purposes.

Perhaps the most distinctive form of institute is the free-standing institute, not part of any other larger host institution. Two other distinctive examples of this are Consumer’s Union, a nonprofit consumer group that also produces a monthly periodical reporting its findings in the area of product research and The Brookings Institution, that has been publishing independent policy-research for more than 50 years. (Peschek, 1987) The Urban Institute is another more recent policy research institute with an admirable track record.

Secret Society

One of the more intriguing forms of commons is the secret society, in which membership, resources (perhaps including patrons, rituals, common goods and objectives) or other details are intentionally held in confidence among members, for reasons of protection or group solidarity. Simmel (1906) and Wedgewood (1930) both concluded that

membership in secret societies added to social prestige because of the belief that members were in possession of special knowledge not available to nonmembers.

Another major category of secret societies are those whose membership and activities remain secret in order to avoid publicity or detection by the state. Some of these secret societies, like the Mafia or Cosa Nostra and other “crime families” remain secret in order to engage in criminal misconduct. Yet other secret societies are secret in order to carry out an organized program of political opposition of some sort. One of the more enduring and infamous examples of this in American history are the Ku Klux Klan and the American Communist Party.

Other quite different examples of secret societies opposed to state action are the contemporary Sanctuary Movement, dedicated to sheltering illegal aliens from central America, and the abolitionist Underground Railroad, devoted to aiding escaping slaves prior to the civil war upon which it is based. Fitzgerald (1989) focuses on Alabama and Mississippi in a study of the Union League, a 19th century secret society led by a coalition of blacks and whites, whose goal was the promotion of political participation among black freedmen.

Wars and war-like conditions inevitably encourage various secret and semisecret resistance movements. Virtually every European country occupied by the Nazi’s during WWII had an organized resistance movement, and a more recent example of similar efforts was the Kuwaiti resistance that operated throughout the Iraqi occupation of 1990-91. In such cases, maintaining secrecy may be the key, not only to effective operations, but also to survival.

By their very nature, some types of secret societies are associated with myth and mystery. Collegiate fraternities and sororities are organized as rather harmless secret societies, with all manner of secret rituals, oaths, paraphernalia, code words and the like. The linguist and novelist Umberto Eco has recently revived one such myth in his Foucault’s Pendulum, which is a tale of the alleged secret society of

the Knights Templar, supposedly reaching back to the time of the Crusades. Secrecy surrounding the Masonic Order has long been an object of suspicion in some circles. (Rosenzweig, 1977) Demott (1986) examines the history of the masons, their place in the formation and preservation of America, the philosophy of the fraternity and their place in contemporary life. Chrisman (1974) reports on the structure and ritual system of a fraternal secret society he calls the Badgers. By their very inaccessibility, secret societies generate continuing interest. Secret societies are often at the center of conspiracy theories of various sorts. Secret cabals of Jewish bankers, for example, have been a common feature of anti-semitic propaganda for hundreds of years, and conspiracy theories of capitalist domination are standard fare on the political left. At least one American social scientist, William Gamson, has attempted to identify a conspiratorial secret society which, he argues, is at the apex of the American power elite.

Science

Another category of commons at the opposite pole from secret societies are sciences, used here in the sense of a group of interacting investigators or researchers engaged in the investigation of research issues or questions that they share in common, ordinarily through the use of shared or agreed upon methods of inquiry. (Barnes, 1986; Fisher, 1980; Olesko, 1991;)

Recent work in the philosophy and sociology of science has placed important emphasis on the social processes of cooperation and competition in the evolution of scientific knowledge. (Bernstein, 1983; Hull, 1988; Latour, 1986; Lederman, 1984; Lux, 1989; Wilson, 1990) Uncoerced participation is a central characteristic of any commons claiming to be a science. There is a traditional meaning of the term that might be interpreted as the interests of a group gathered around a common set of interests. Thus, there are those that hold that philosophy, philology and rhetoric are sciences in this sense. The defining characteristic of science in the modern sense is the public criterion of “intersubjective testability.” To qualify as a science in this

sense, the methods used to investigate a question as well as the findings must be subjected to the common scrutiny of peers and colleagues.

In our business civilization, the predominant category of support for "science" is actually support for applied research and development--discovery of new techniques and applications of basic knowledge to product development. Particularly important are the categories of military, bio-medical and engineering "r & d". Research and development articulates well with the market model of microeconomics. However, the other basic category of scientific work--often called "basic" or "fundamental" science--involves alleged cultural or "amenity" benefits that are--like the other community services--considerably more difficult or impossible to measure exactly.

While the benefits of "practical" scientific ventures such as constructing a newer, safer automobile, or curing a particular disease can be measured fairly exactly, basic scientific work often has an impracticality and lack of precise outcomes that is very similar to other common goods. It is as hard to place a utilitarian gloss on such fundamental science issues as astronomical research toward locating the edges of the universe or the search for prime numbers as it is to determine the economic value of art or religion.

Writing in *Scientific American*, Lederman (1984) estimates that perhaps 95 percent of all public support for "scientific" research is directed toward applied research and development work with what he calls "fundamental science" attracting only about five percent. Such figures, however, are seriously skewed by the economic importance of defense related R and D, and can easily lead us to undervalue the fundamental importance of basic science to Western culture and society over the past three centuries.

Lederman does set forth a familiar "cultural" argument for fundamental science irrespective of its payoff: "Society must care about science in the same way as it must care about its other creative intellectual activities, such as art, music and literature. Science, like

art, manifests its deep cultural influence when its basic principles or its way of viewing the world is appropriated and applied to a larger social context.”

(41)

There are, he says, two important cultural effects of fundamental science: The cultural appeal of science, that has attracted some of the best minds in society and the role of fundamental science in maintaining the esprit of the scientific community.(42) Even these, however, articulate closely with an economic view of the world. The first criterion offers a "human capital" argument and the second corresponds closely with the human relations approach to management, and its argument that good morale improves productivity. In basic science, as in most of the contemporary human services, we have grown accustomed to a kind of duplicity: We value these activities as ends in themselves, while at the same time justifying them in largely economic terms.

Conclusion

Researchers interested in nonprofit and voluntary action studies have shown great interest in some types of common social organizations, such as the association, and the nonprofit social service agency. They have, on the whole, shown remarkable little interest in many other types of common organization such as those discussed in this chapter, and other additional forms of organization discussed in the chapters that follow. Not only has this resulted in a somewhat constricted view of the true range of the commons, it has also meant that many valuable opportunities have been neglected for increased understanding of the mechanisms of social bonding, participation, commitment, compliance and the host of other questions that have interested these researchers. One can only hope that future research efforts are addressed more broadly in an effort to capture the full range of common social organization.

A people among whom individuals lost the power of achieving great things single-handed, without acquiring the means of producing them by united exertions, would soon lapse into barbarism.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

6. Voluntary Action, Volunteer Labor and Common Goods

This chapter explores several implications of the theory of the commons for the emerging field of nonprofit economics. In particular, three basic issues are addressed: 1) The commons as unanalyzed economic phenomenon; 2) An expanded concept of volunteer labor; and 3) Common goods as an alternative to public goods and marketable goods and services as output measures of nonprofit and voluntary action. All of this is circumscribed within the perspective identified as endowment theory.

Modern economics, according to a widely accepted definition by Lionel Robbins, is the study of the allocation of scarce means among alternative ends. (Robbins, 1962) Economics is both an empirical and a normative science dealing with decision and practical action. Recently, a number of economists and scholars in related fields such as law, management and accounting have begun to address nonprofit economic issues. (Anthony, 1978; Wagner, 1991; Steinberg; Weisbrod, 1977; 1988; Hansmann, 1981; Weinstein, 1980)

Their principal project has been to explain the existence and relative advantages of the nonprofit sector within conventional utilitarian rational choice models and microeconomic assumptions like production, maximization and optimality. The doctrine of relative advantage figures importantly in nonprofit theoretical approaches. A recent debate in the economic literature, for example, focusses on whether “not-for-profit” hospitals return more benefit to society than for-profit hospitals. (Arrington and Haddock, 1990; Bays, 1983; Cleverley, 1982; Herzlinger and Krasker, 1987; Pauly and Redisch, 1973) Another similar debate has been raging for years in the field of aging over the effects of ownership of nursing homes. (Ulmann, ; Krivich, 1990)

Analyses of the economics of the arts have been another major interest in this area. (Baumol and Bowen, 1968; Berleant, 1979; Blaug, 1976; Blaug, 1983; Cornwall, 1979; Crosby, 1982; Cwi, 1979; Das, 1979; Edwards, 1983; Frankel, 1979; Hansmann, 1981; Kratchadourian, 1979; McFate, 1981; Moore, 1968; Nelson, 1983; Russell, 1979; Schwartz, 1981; Van den Haag, 1979)

There are at least two economic theories of the nonprofit sector: market-government failure theory and voluntary failure theory. (Winkle, 1990) The first suggests that the nonprofit sector develops when both market and government fail to provide needed services. Hansmann (1980; 1981; 1987) offers a close analysis of the phenomenon of “contract failure” that emphasizes the residual role of the nonprofit sector in compensating for the deficiencies of market exchange under conditions of information asymmetry. Weisbrod (1978; 1988) characterizes government as providing public goods only at levels demanded by the median voter, so that people with demands higher than the median are underserved by government and must look elsewhere.

Salamon (1987A; 1987B) reverses Weisbrod’s formula, and suggests that it is the nonprofit sector, not government that is likely to respond first, and that government is likely to compensate for the deficiencies of the nonprofit sector, instead. Salamon identifies four general types of philanthropic failures leading to government action, that he labels

insufficiency of resources, particularism, paternalism and amateurism.

Each of these approaches represents a type of failure theory in which relative advantage is the anchor for explaining one set of social institutions in terms of their dissimilarity to another. In a chapter in *The Nonprofit Economy*, Weisbrod (1990) is particularly explicit about the nature of this theoretical project. Elsewhere I have expressed doubts about the value of this style of argument by negation. (Lohmann, 1988)

Nonprofit economics grounded in failure theory treats nonprofit organizations by analogy with (“as if” they were) the profit-oriented firms of microeconomics. (Crew, 1975) Adam Smith’s distinction between productive and unproductive labor discussed above is ignored or overturned in the contemporary concept of “volunteer labor”. (Weisbrod, pp.) Such an approach is defensible in the analysis of revenue-generating nonprofit firms, like hospitals, nursing homes, and ticketed museums, theaters and concert halls where clearcut prices are charged for recognizable products. However, the rationale for treating “unproductive” (non-revenue) membership clubs, donative charities, and a broad range of other religious, scientific or artistic commons “as if” they were commercial firms is highly questionable. Yet, because of the widespread commitment of nonprofit economics to the market firm analogy, no other economic models of the commons have received seriously consideration. A major project confronting nonprofit and voluntary action researchers, therefore, is to begin the construction of a genuine economics of common goods premised on more plausible and relevant assumptions.

Some interesting preliminary work along these lines has already been done. (See, for example, Frohlich and Oppenheimer, 1984; Gassler, 1990; Krishnan, 1988; Mingione, 1991; Steinberg, 1987; Sugden, 1984, and others) Wagner (1991) provides an economic analysis of “collective goods” and the “share economy” in terms quite consistent with the analysis of common goods and the commons offered in this work. Clayre (1980) offers an economic analysis of “the political economy of cooperation and participation.”

The Unanalyzed Commons

An adequate economic model for analysis of the commons ought to begin by studying actual common economic institutions like donations and endowments, and by adjusting or suspending three conventional economic assumptions: scarcity, production and maximization. The economics of common goods does not require rejecting scarcity entirely. However, acknowledgement of the moral and rational consequences of affluence or social surplus is important. The most important form of scarcity in terms of its impact upon common action might be termed *existential* (or weak) scarcity; the recognition that all human resources and potentials are finite. This is the basis of the necessity of choice in human affairs generally.

Existential scarcity is morally distinguishable from the *trriage* (or strong) scarcity, or insufficiencies that threaten the existence or well-being of some or all members of the community, that have interested economists since Malthus. Self-interested action to assure survival under *trriage* conditions is justified on both moral and rational grounds. Although we might praise the altruist who sacrifices her life to save others, neither reason nor ethics *demand* such sacrifices of anyone.

It is the voluntary choice of altruism or other common goods that gives them their special character. On the hard ground of *trriage* scarcity economic rationality and policy converge upon self-interest as a morally preferred option. Not only is self-interest the preferred position in this case, *productive* efforts under triage scarcity are morally preferable to other (leisure) pursuits, and *efficient* production is also morally desirable. Thus, the scarcity, production and maximization assumptions are bundled with self-interest to make a morally resilient position, the anchor of which is threats to survival or well-being. (See Arendt's (1958, 85) distinction of labor, work and action.)

Under conditions of affluence when productive surpluses are sufficient and survival is not threatened, the powerful rational and moral arguments linking *trriage* scarcity and self interest lose much of their power. The distinction made between instrumental and expressive (or,

as they are termed here, problem-solving and presentational) actions in the voluntary action tradition does not attempt to shoulder the heavy moral burden that scarcity places upon the self-interest/altruism dichotomy in the rational choice tradition. (Smith, 1981)

Under affluence we must discover new rational and moral grounds for leisure action: Self-interest loses its privileged position as an obligation and is equated with other-interest as equally plausible choices. When survival is not endangered, it is no more rational to pursue one's own (or one's group) advantage or gain than it is to be indifferent or even averse to profit-seeking. Persons are, in other words, fully free under existential scarcity to allocate any additional increments of leisure in their control to self-interested or other-interested endeavors as they see fit.

Growing out of this insight is recognition of the need to suspend the production assumption as well. Production is not a morally preferable form of social action under existential scarcity. Moreover, the recent line of economic thought that equates all types of human behavior with production must be explicitly rejected in the case of the commons. (Alhadef, 1982; Becker, 1976) At the very least, nonprofit economics should attend more closely to the productive "means" arising out of shared purposes and the intangible outputs of information, meaning and understanding that are nearly universal in the commons. Doing so inevitably brings one up against the recognition that production in the commons cannot be easily distinguished from consumption; that the distinctive economic action of the commons is some type of "coproduction". Rudney (1987, 63) discusses the treatment of nonprofits as consumption in macroeconomics. While analyses of volunteer coproduction by Brudney and others have been primarily concerned with policy and practical concerns, extending these concerns to nonprofit economics of the type called for here should be straightforward. (Brudney and England, 1983) "Coproduction" of intangible commodities ("services" in the noneconomic sense) is ordinarily contemporaneous with the "consumption" of those services. The term rendition is used here to denote such simultaneous production and consumption. This is consistent with conventional usages and highlights the significance of

aspects of presentation discussed previously in Chapter 3. In a religious observance, for example, one might note the traditional rendition of ritual prayers, and at a scientific conference, the rendition of research results in the context of prior work.

Finally, if the surrounding theoretical matrix sustained by scarcity and production is removed, maximization (whether in terms of profit, surplus, “goal-attainment” of some other value) loses its privileged position as an economic end of common action. Failure to recognize the legitimate limits of production and applying maximizing to commons can produce amusing and reductionistic conclusions such as the conclusion that rational individuals engaged in religious endeavors are seeking to maximize their salvation. In the language of variable analysis religious salvation, like many other common ends, is not an interval variable and thus not amenable to the kind of degrees or increments of attainment implicit in the concept of maximization.

Raising doubts about the coherence of current economic theory as it applies to the commons is primarily a theoretical concern. The practical economic implications of nonprofit organizations, voluntary associations and commons will continue to represent an interesting topic in themselves. (Ginsberg and Vojta, 1981; James, 1948) It will be interesting to see, however, whether the current preoccupations of nonprofit economics with revenue-oriented “nonprofit production” will eventually spill over into the equally interesting and less analyzed domains of common action.

The fundamental question that forms a plausible starting point for an economics of the commons is how (and why) societies choose to allocate portions of surplus social product to ends *other than* increased production, household consumption and public goods. Robert Paul Wolff suggests that all of classical economics be viewed as an attempt to provide theoretically sound answers to the questions of who gets the surplus of physical production, how the surplus-getters get the surplus and what do they do with the surplus? (Wolff, 1985,14-15) Current economic perspectives tend to view the only practical answers as three: surplus wealth can be reinvested in capital expansion, spent on higher taxes to support the continued further expansion of the state, or

spent on growing mountains of consumer goods. From this perspective, it is mere common sense that nonprofit firms are engaged in a form of production, rather than state action or consumption.

A common goods economics might suggest a fourth option—the application of social surpluses for the rendition of common goods. Investments in civilization sounds terribly pretentious and yet this is precisely the implication that many observers have drawn. A 1985 advertisement for the National Corporate Theatre Fund in Newsweek magazine, for example, was headed “WE’RE LOOKING FOR MORE CORPORATIONS TO INVEST IN LAUGHS...TEARS...MAGIC... Your investment in the National Corporate Theatre Fund will bring an enormous return, not in dollars...but in laughter....tears... magic.”

Calling corporate or any other donations “investments” and suggesting that returns on investment are measurable in nondollar terms is at one level a clever and devious advertising ploy. What rational investor would seriously consider laughter and tears a return on investment? Yet, at another level, the underlying message of this ad is entirely compatible with the thrust of widely shared visions of the commons. The challenge for a genuine economics of common goods is how to take the objectives of the commons --religious, scientific, social, political, athletic and others --seriously on their own terms, and not treat them as rather odd, intangible and inefficient forms of productive enterprise. (Segelman and Bookheimer, 1983)

The leisure classes who studied Greek philosophy, fashioned the Christian bible, engaged in the charities of *zedakah*, *zakat*, *xenedochia*, medieval hospitals associations and societies devoted to art and science, and myriad other common activities of human history both drew upon the “capital” of their heritage, in the art, ethical principles, philosophical and scientific knowledge, and other accoutrements of civilization, and left their own legacy of “surpluses” for others to learn, adapt and utilize. Such endeavors whether in the past, present or future, are as real and consequential as any material production. Yet, they require a distinctly different theoretical language. This is the challenge of a common goods economics.

Inputs: Volunteer Labor

One of the theoretical perspectives exercising considerable influence in contemporary nonprofit economics is the model of nonprofit activity as the private production of public goods through volunteer labor. (Weisbrod, 1988; Weisbrod, 1977) In this model, volunteer labor is a primary input, or factor of production, and public goods are the principal output. Both concepts require some further examination.

An initial distinction of great importance is between “free labor” as that concept has traditionally been dealt with in economics and “volunteer labor”. The freedom of free labor is the very special quality of being able to bargain in labor markets for wage rates. (Indeed, in competing for employees, nonprofit organizations are more clearly enmeshed in markets than in any other single case.) Nonprofit employees are “free laborers” in the important sense that they are not conscripts or slaves.

By contrast, volunteer labor refers to unpaid or donated work. Volunteer labor refers not only to services delivered by unpaid service workers, but also to the donated services of board members, fundraising solicitors and others.

The services (donations of time) of patrons also appear to constitute a form of volunteer labor, as do the acts of prosocial behavior reviewed in Chapter 10. Altruism, empathic responses, disaster and bystander behavior, free riding, political parties, interest groups and other forms of civic action, support and mutual aid groups and all of the various forms of common behavior discussed in this work constitute volunteer labor in so far as they have economic implications for the allocation of resources. Thus, in its fullest context, volunteer labor is nothing short of the individual contributions to the social action creating and sustaining civil society. Voting behavior and other expressions of democratic citizenship are likewise forms of volunteer labor. When we factor out the social action of the marketplace, the state and the private behavior of the household, what remains is volunteer labor.

Outputs: Public Goods and Common Goods

The concept of public goods arose within the subfield of economics known as welfare economics, also known as normative microeconomics. (Sassone, 1982) Pigou's famous "measuring rod of money" is one of the fundamental reasons often cited for the desire to apply economic reasoning to the analysis of nonprofit economic decision-making. The presumption is that money is the one obvious measuring instrument available in social life. The limitations of such a perspective should be obvious for the commons, where 1) monetary data is largely; and 2) the flow of money only "meters" the flow of important resources in cases of fee-based and other revenue-generating activities. The absence of a stable metering relationship has led, among other things, to the necessity of distinguishing between "outputs" and "outcomes" in various nonprofit approaches. (Anthony, 1978)

In considering the application of the "measuring rod of money" to nonprofit economics, one is reminded of the observation by Robert MacIver: "There are things we can measure, like time, but yet our minds do not grasp their meaning. There are things we cannot measure, like happiness and pain, and yet their meaning is perfectly clear to us." (MacIver, 19, 1951) Certainly, one of the most difficult aspects of common goods economics is activities that we cannot measure, but that are nonetheless perfectly clear to those engaged in them. This inevitably raises the issue of the extent to which economic analysis of commons is value-free, or whether economists engaged in analysis of the commons should be construed as reform-caucuses seeking to capture or control commons externally through analysis.

Can Analysis of Commons Be Value-Free?

Amartri Sen, in particular, takes issue with the premise that welfare economics can be value free: "Welfare economics is concerned with policy recommendations...It is obvious that welfare economics cannot be 'value-free', for the recommendations it aims to arrive at are themselves value judgments. In view of this it must be regarded as somewhat of a mystery that so many notable economists have been

involved in debating the prospects of finding a value-free welfare economics.For reasons that are somewhat obscure, being 'value-free' or 'ethics-free' has often been identified as being free from interpersonal conflict. The implicit assumption seems to be that if everyone agrees on a value judgment, then it is not a value judgment at all, but is perfectly 'objective.'" (Sen, 1970, 56-7)

It is preferable, he says, to make a distinction between "objectivity" or being value-free and unanimity of judgment (consensus or agreement). (57) He goes on to partition value judgments into two classes: "A value judgment can be called 'basic' to a person if the judgment is supposed to apply under all conceivable circumstances, and it is 'non-basic' otherwise. (59) He continues: Nonbasicness of a judgment in someone's value system can sometimes be conclusively established, but the opposite is not the case, and to take a given value judgment to be basic, is to give it , at best, the benefit of the doubt. It seems impossible to rule out the possibility of fruitful scientific discussion on value judgments." (64)

Can Voluntary Action Be Optimal?

One of the principal uses of the public goods theory is reliance upon Pareto optimality as an allegedly value-free criterion for the evaluation of common action. A decision alternative is said to be optimal when it 1) does not detract or take away from the welfare of any member of society; and 2) enhances the welfare of at least one member. Pareto optimality is a standard criterion in economic analyses of the non-profit sector.

There is, Sen notes, good reason not to be overly committed to the single criterion of Pareto optimality as an ultimate standard for assessing decisions: "...there is a danger in being exclusively concerned with Pareto-optimality . An economy can be optimal in this sense even when some people are rolling in luxury and others are near starvation as long as the starvers cannot be made better off without cutting into the pleasures of the rich. If preventing the burning of Rome would have made Emperor Nero feel worse off, then letting him burn Rome would have been Paretooptimality. In short, a society or

economy can be Pareto-optimal and still be perfectly disgusting." (p. 22)

Collective Choices and Public Goods

In recent years a growing interdisciplinary group of economists, analytical philosophers, sociologists and others, seeking to resolve some of the problems pointed to above, have collaborated on a project usually known as collective choice theory. Rigorous logical analyses of gifts, charity, cooperation and other common goods have been a central preoccupation. (Ireland and Johnson, 1970; Sen, 1970; Hechter, Opp and Wippler, 1990; Knoke, 1990)

Sen (1970, vii) says that the theory of collective choice belongs to several economic and non-economic disciplines, including the theory of the state and the theory of decision procedures in political science and ethics and the theory of justice in philosophy as well as welfare economics, planning theory, and public economics.

The basic project of collective choice theory is to formulate models of rational collective (as opposed to individual) decision-making. Some highly interesting results have emerged from this project: The concept of public goods that has emerged from this work has proven highly useful in the analysis of public policy, and is often being applied to nonprofit economics as well. (Weisbrod, 1988) Much of the work on the free-rider problem has also emerged from work in this field.

Public, Private and Common Goods

In collective choice theory, no distinction is generally made between productive and unproductive labor, but the dichotomy between public and private goods is treated as fundamental and exhaustive. (Knoke, 1990, 31-35) Others have sought through a variety of means to identify a third category, identified by a number of labels such as

collective goods and shared goods. The label employed here for this third category is common goods.

A private good is one whose benefit can be restricted to those who have paid for it. (Heath, 1976, 30) A private good is “a good whose subject and object is the individual. It could be enjoyed and possessed by an individual. Its primary aim is the satisfaction of the individual’s desire and interest.” (Udoidem, 1988, 100) By contrast, a public good is one that, if it is available at all must be available to everyone regardless of whether they have paid. Thus, a public good possesses two properties: It is indivisible and universal. As a result, it costs no more to provide a public good to all persons than it does to provide it to one; and any one person’s enjoyment of the good in no way infringes upon or interferes with that of others. Conversely, we speak of public goods as indivisible and universal and private goods, as divisible and particular. (Heath, 1976; Knoke, 1990; Olson, 1965)

The Free-Rider Problem

One of the principal theoretical implications to arise from this line of analysis to date is the so-called free-rider problem. The argument for the emergence of free-riding is lengthy and complex, but can be summarized: In the case of public goods, rational consumers will know that they benefit uniformly regardless of their contribution, and therefore be inclined to contribute only when it makes a difference to the overall success of the venture. (That is, when the "stakes" involved are the presence or absence of the public good, since its size is a matter of indifference.)

In the absence of three special conditions, Olson notes, rational, self-interested individuals will, therefore, not act to achieve common or group goals. (Olson, 1965, 2) The special conditions, he notes are, first of all, selective incentives (private goods within the public good that stimulate group action); secondly, a disproportionate distribution of the public good, so that some members benefit more than others, and are thus induced to encourage the participation of others; and thirdly,

if the number needed to provide the public good is small.

Selective incentives must be selective in such a way that group members benefit while non-members do not. When this is not the case, they function instead as disincentives, or "costs". Thus, protection of job security for union members offers one such selective incentive. Likewise, a large landowner may find that the benefits to him for a new highway will be so great that he will mount a campaign for it even though it is a public good from which all will benefit. The third point means, according to Olson, that the larger the number of people needed to participate in a public good the less likely they are to do so.

This leads to the free-rider problem--the inequities resulting from those who benefit from public goods without paying for them. Strictly from the standpoint of individual utility, persons have an equal disincentive against contributing to the cost of the public good unless they can be assured that all others will also contribute, because otherwise those who pay risk subsidizing the non-paying free-riders. While the free-rider problem is very real, complex, and difficult to deal with, it is an important question for theory only to the extent that actors are rationally self-interested. To the extent that sharing of resources and purposes, mutuality and fairness that are the defining characteristics hold sway, one would expect the impact of free-riding to be minimal. Further, to the extent that participants in a commons become rational individuals in this narrow sense and begin calculating their individual utilities, the fundamental, defining condition of social order in the commons would appear to have broken down.

Analysis of individual, rational choice of this type may be an interesting and timely issue, but it hardly represents the final word on the subject.

Grant Economics

Another approach with interesting implications for common goods economics is "grant economics". (Boulding, 1973; Boulding, Pfaff and

Horvath, 1972) Kenneth Boulding is generally credited as the initiator of the grants economics approach. In an engaging work called The Economics of Love and Fear (1973), Boulding suggests that human motives other than profit (and particularly two motives he calls "love" and "fear") deserve consideration by economics. He goes on to associate these motives with two types of unilateral transfers, or grants that he calls "patronage" and "tribute".

In keeping with this theme, grants are defined as "a broad assortment of subventions (subsidies, bounties, favoritism) on the one side, and a broad assortment of tributes (underpayments, extortions, dispossessions) on the other side." (Horvath, 458) Horvath (458) defines a grant as "an unmatched transaction where the net worth of one party--the grantor--diminishes while the net worth of the other party--the grantee -increases." Grants, in this sense, correspond closely with gifts, as that concept has been developed in Chapter 8. However, some of the the expanded possibilities of reciprocity found elsewhere in the literature may be lacking in this dualistic view of exchanges.

An important issue raised by grant economics is whether the twin bonds of love and fear (and resultant grants of patronage and tribute) adequately account for the kinds of exchanges that arise in nonprofit and voluntary action. One's sense is that they do not, and were not intended to. In Boulding's analysis, they are presented as primarily illustrative of the many possible motives that may be associated with grant transfers. They are suggestive, therefore, of two compatible approaches: Further identification of other companion motives, and identification of a general summary concept that ties together all such motives, for example, utility. A related question is whether love and fear may be said to constitute 'utilities' in an economic sense, so that the formal logic of the utility-maximization model can be appropriately applied to them in the manner of grant economics.

Even so, grant economics has blazed some pioneering trails in examining the kinds of rational choice models that may be most appropriate for the study of nonprofit and voluntary action theory. It is also slowly finding its way into the literature of nonprofit and voluntary studies. (Galaskiewicz, 1985) Given the insights rendered

by grant economics, we should ask whether there other parts of modern economics that have similar contributions to make to an understanding of the economics of nonprofit and voluntary action?

Common Goods

One of the most powerful criticisms of the application of the public goods orientation to common (nonprofit or voluntary) actions is that most commons fail to fit the definition of a public good: Church services, lodge meetings, food pantries, scientific meetings, amateur athletic events along with most other commons are available to some (members and participants) without being available to all. Thus, they fail to meet the criterion of indivisibility, that is one of the defining characteristics of public goods.

Yet, many of the goods --desired or preferred ends or objectives --of common action are clearly not private goods either. They cannot be fully alienated and controlled exclusively by particular individuals without ceasing to be what they are. There is an undeniably other-oriented quality to any religious ritual, scientific finding or artistic expression, for example. Yet this "public" quality of many, perhaps most, goods of the commons stops well short of the universality demanded of public goods. The mathematical standing of calculus, for example, is not conditional upon its universal understanding or acceptance. It is sufficient that calculus be understood and accepted by the body of mathematicians, who constitute a disciplinary commons as noted in Chapter

8. Calculus is, in this way, what we are calling a common good.

The concept of the common good has been used frequently in democratic political theory. For example, Jordan entitled his 1989 study of the relationships of the political implications of citizenship, morality, and self-interest

The Common Good.

Sherover (1989) proposes time, freedom and the common good as the

central concepts of a free society. Riley (1986) discusses the transformation of the theological notion of God's 'general will' to save all men into a political concept of the citizens' 'general will' to place the common good above his 'particular will' as an individual. He ascribes a pivotal place in this transition to Rosseau. It's use is also not entirely unknown in political economy. For example, Raskin (1986) and Daly and Cobb (1989) incorporate the concept of "the common good" into their economic and social critiques. Raskin's model makes explicit place for nonprofit institutions in what he terms "zone four" of a reorganized economy.

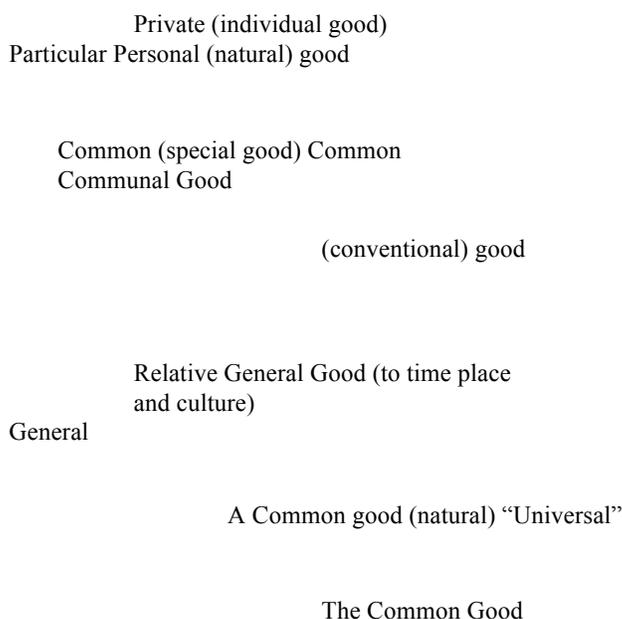
Most of these ideas are ultimately tracable to Aristotle, who said that politics is the science of the provision of good for everyone. (Aristotle, Book I, Nicomachean Ethics) and to Plato, who identified the common good with the political virtue of the entire community. (Udoidem, 1988, 91) St. Augustine insisted that "the bond of a common nature makes all human beings one" and therefore defends peace as the common good. (Udoidem, 1988, 91) Thomas Aquinas declared the common good as the end of law and government. (Udoidem, 1988, 91)

In all of its many connotations, it is central to the idea of democratic community that a plurality of people share, without coercion, their experiences, outlooks, or purposes in some way. The democratic community of all citizens who have voluntarily accepted a dominant protective association is one expression of such mutuality. Internal democracy within organizations in democratic states is ordinarily seen as a microcosm of the larger social condition. (DeVall and Harry, 1975; Peterson, 1976)

Udoidem (1988) provides an excellent introduction to the concept of the common good in social and political philosophy. "A good is common when it is available, accessible and desirable by all." (Udoidem, 1988, 90) He says the notion of a common good combines two sense of the term common: 1) a good that is ordinary, simple and natural, as opposed to a good that is extraordinary and complex; and 2) a good that is available and accessible as opposed to a good that is scarce and difficult to achieve.

This employs much of the same idea, but stops short of the explicit universality and indivisibility of public goods. Also there is an affinity between the state as a dominant protective association and the other associations in a democratic society, whether they are “political” (parties and interest groups) or “civil” . In this context, it seems desirable to distinguish “public” and “common” goods along the familiar lines. Thus, the public goods of the state are those that are universal and indivisible, while the common goods of the state are those particular to identifiable commons. Essential to this distinction is the further distinction between a common good (that may be the province of any association) and the common good (or public good) that is the unique province of the democratic state, as dominant protective association. (Yves Simon, as quoted by Udoidem,) In support of this view, Udoidem (1988, 98) offers the following branching diagram:

Figure 10-1 Typology of Common Goods



A natural common good is said to be “a good with which man is naturally endowed” such as rationality, authority or autonomy. (Udoidem, 1988, 100) In that sense, mutuality of the type that arises in

groups out of the sheer proximity of persons probably constitutes a natural common good.

“A good that is achieved through human effort is said to be a conventional good.... Such goods include language, law, community, state, peace, etc.” (Udoidem, 1988, 101) Conventional goods, thus, come very close to the use employed here of non-state common goods.

Udoidem quotes Jacques Maritain in a manner that highlights the distinction between public goods and common goods: “That which constitutes the common good of political society is not only the collection of public commodities and services--the roads, ports, schools, and so forth, which the organization of common life presupposes; a sound fiscal condition of the state and its military power; a body of just laws; good customs and wise institutions, which provide the nation with structure; the heritage of its great historical remembrances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures. The common good includes all of these and something more besides--something more profound, more concrete, more human....It includes the sum of sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and sense of right and liberty, of all the acuity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, or moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of its members. For these things are, in a certain measure, communicable and so revert to each member, helping him to perfect his life and liberty of person. They all constitute the good human life of the multitude.” (Udoidem, 1988, 104)

The conception that comes closest to our usage of the common good is what Udoidem terms a common good: “A common good that is achieved through human effort (for example language) though universal to its particular community, is relative to time, place and people.” (Udoidem, 1988, 104) By contrast, the usage that comes closest to the economic meaning of public goods is what he terms the common good: “The common good in human society is that which all human beings, whether as individual or as a group, seek.” (Udoidem, 1988, 108)

He also links the concept of common good to authority: “Thus, it is necessary in a society that there be a single unifying principle for the recognition of both the common good and the means necessary to achieve it. This unifying principle of common action is what is called authority. The status of this principle (since it is something that is desired and pursued by all in the community) is that of a common good.” (Udoidem, 1988, 115)

It is possible also to see the linkage of this view to various artistic, scientific and religious presentations. Udoidem does this in commenting upon his own dissertation defense. “The interesting thing about this situation is that both the epistemic authority and the de jure authority that was exercised by the committee was exercised for the sake of the common good. For my own good and for the good of the larger community. Thus, significantly enough, in the exercise of their function they were in fact witnessing to and defending my thesis in practice.” (Udoidem, 1988, 119)

“In conclusion, ... one can argue that if the common good is a thing that is to be desired and pursued by all in the community, whether as a group or as individuals, the means or what it takes to achieve it must be something that is common to all.” (Udoidem, 1988, 119) We might add that this holds true whether “the community” in question is an entire democratic polity in pursuit of the common good, or a particular common in pursuit of its own particular common good.

Conclusion

The emerging discipline of nonprofit economics has convincingly extended microeconomic models of productive enterprise to a considerable portion of the most organized and established forms of nonprofit and voluntary action. In particular, tax-exempt nonprofit corporations that generate revenue through ticket sales or fees charged for services rendered, such as orchestras, opera companies, hospitals, nursing homes, and various types of social service agencies, appear to be particularly amenable to this approach. Although a number of complex issues remain, rather substantial progress has been made in integrating nonprofit establishments into the main body of economics.

By contrast, contemporary economists have largely ignored large portions of the commons. There are no economic analyses, for example, that seek to step outside the familiar (and inappropriate) limitations imposed by the scarcity, production and maximization assumptions and deal with allocative decision-making under conditions that approximate those found in empirical commons. While this has produced some genuinely interesting work, it has also resulted in a growing accumulation of what can best be described as curiosities, such as analyses of professional behavior that suggest that incremental income gains are the only plausible reason for professional publishing. (Morin, 1966; For a different view, see Jeanneret, 1990)

Likewise, analyses of “club theory” can be found scattered in the rational choice literature, but there are no empirical studies of the economics of joining or participating in real membership associations. (Badelt and Weiss, 1990, 78; Buchanan, 1965; Cornes and Sandler, 1986) Similarly, the economic analysis of forums and other common places has received virtually no attention. This latter is particularly curious, in light of the evident materialist biases of economic theory and the extensive record of the discipline in dealing with rents, properties, construction costs and related matters.

Further, large segments of common economic action remain completely unexamined. There are no adequate economic analyses, for example, of professional conferences, academic or professional journals, academic disciplines, sciences or professions,

Fernand Braudel’s three-volume economic history of Europe in the 16th-18th centuries offers many sound beginning points for examination of the economics of fairs and festivals and other commons. (Braudel,) Mark Girouard’s two volumes also offer many concrete examples of historically significant European commons. (Girouard,)

The modern foundation is the subject of increasing attention, albeit within the bounds of the crippling economic maximization paradigm discussed above. In many respects, the foundation (together with the

treasuries of membership associations and non-fee based agencies) represent the core problem of a bone fide economics of the commons: On what rational basis does an individual or group of “stewards” (managers, treasurers, and so forth) in control of an endowment (whether through inheritance or gift) allocate it (including any legacies to future use)? The youthful pursuits of nonprofit economics, still hardly a decade old, have yet to deal directly with this important question.

If each citizen did not learn, in proportion as he individually becomes more feeble and consequently more incapable of preserving his freedom single-handed, to combine with his fellow citizens for the purpose of defending it, it is clear that tyranny would unavoidably increase together with equality.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

7. The Commons, The State and The Democratic Polity

An important focus of recent nonprofit and

voluntary action studies has been attempting to account for the range of relations between commons and states. Scholars have sought to identify a distinctive political view of nonprofit action (Douglas, 1987); to deal with specific policy issues or domains (Simon, 1987); or to deal with a range of general issues involving changes in state-common relations, characterized as privatization (Netting, McMurtry, Kettner and Jones-McClintic, 1990), coproduction (Brudney, 1987) or some other label. A Tocquevillian view is clearly evident in attempts to deal with “mediating” institutions between individual, community and state. (Ben Zadok & Kooperman, 1988; Kerri, 1972) Another recent line of inquiry has been efforts to account for the genesis of the nonprofit sector in the structural weaknesses and deficits of state and/or

market. Pluralism and the mixed economy concept are interpreted as a division of labor between political states and other social institutions. (Johnson, 1988). Weisbrod (1988, 16-42) treats the issue as a competition between proprietary, nonprofit and public sectors over which sector can deliver services most efficiently. Douglas chooses to deal with “nonprofit organizations carrying out a public function.” (1987, 44) Within the voluntary sector view, another widely cited work locates voluntary agencies “in” welfare states. (Kramer, 1981)

Many nonprofit and voluntary scholars have been interested in the state as situational precondition or environmental cause of various nonprofit or voluntary phenomena. Contemporary nonprofit and voluntary action theory fails to capture the equally important role of commons as staging areas for the formation of democratic states, and for organized challenges to existing authority from the mildest of reforms to revolutions. The necessary connection between civil and political associations through which citizens influence the state noted by Tocqueville (II: 123) is the cornerstone of understanding the role of associations, interest groups and all manner of commons in the formation of democratic polity.

Contemporary theory is extremely limited in its ability to anticipate or explain political change and its impact upon nonprofit and voluntary action. Foundations (Stanfield, 1985), associations (Delgado, 1985), parties, interest groups, social movements (Stephenson, 1991) and other commons are often involved in change efforts, as well as in efforts to resist change (for example, the Ku Klux Klan and various nativist associations in American history). Ostrander, Langton and Van Til (1988) argue that the classical liberal dichotomy between public and private sectors is neither accurate nor useful and that new conceptualizations of the reciprocal relations of the state, market and commons are needed.

A balanced view of the reciprocity between commons and states should emphasize the generative role of commons in state-formation and in maintaining continuity and change within the state, as well as

such familiar roles as volunteers in “co-producing” services and states as purchasers of nonprofit services. This is as true for the political competition of opposition parties and reform caucuses within ruling parties, as it is of broader reform movements, reform-oriented interest groups and revolutionary parties. What is needed is a conception of the state that highlights its reciprocal and interdependent relations with the commons. In some cases, for example, evidence suggests a role for commons as alternative or substitute expressions of state powers. (Brown, 1978; Johnson, 1975; Bennett-Sandler, 1978;

This chapter sets forth a refinement of the distinction between public and common goods introduced earlier and presents a conception of politics as a distinctive preoccupation of urban leisure classes. It identifies parties and interest groups as components of the commons along with other types of association, and addresses issues of problem-solving and presentation through their associations to freedom of speech and assembly and political ritual.

In Mapping the Third Sector, Van Til (1987, 96-7) identifies several “spanning and mediating” propositions thought to be especially useful in treating the reciprocity of commons and state. Three of these are particularly useful in understanding of the connections:

- a. Careful attention needs to be paid to the role of the corporation as it relates to voluntary action.
- b. All associations are in part voluntary in aim and principal.
- c. Voluntary associations (those in which the principal of shared commitment predominates) may be either productive or destructive of democratic values and societal stability.

These three propositions are important for understanding the state-common connection. Modern corporations (whether nonprofit, commercial or public) are, in important respects, associations, but they

are also creations of the state. As legally-recognized “artificial persons” , corporations simply could not exist without positive state action. Further, the democratic state based on the principle of popular sovereignty is itself a unique and distinctive kind of commons --an association of citizens pledged to civil participation, shared resources and norms of justice in pursuit of common goods. In many respects, nationalism may supply one of the most powerful of all modern sources of mutuality. The democratic state possesses coercive powers of ordering and forbidding like other states, but it also contains unique constraints upon state action --particularly against its own citizens. The American Bill of Rights, in particular, places important constitutional constraints upon the state in its relation to citizens and the commons. In this chapter, we will address the critically important role of the First Amendment in setting forth a theory of the connection between state and commons in which the elements of dialogue and association figure critically.

Political Theory, Commons and States

The state like the market, the family (or household) and the commons is an ideal type. By the state, we generally refer to the potential and real exercise of coercive authority --collecting taxes, enforcement of laws (for example, *the police powers*), imprisonment and the death penalty and ability to wage wars. In the classic view, the state is characterized by a monopoly of force. (Weber, 1968) In modern nation-states, and federal (or federated) states like the U.S., Canada, Australia, Germany, the European Commonwealth and the fledgling Russian Federation that replaced the U.S.S.R, coercive state powers are shared or distributed among a federation of several related authorities with ultimate sovereignty vested in the people. (Recall the importance here of the supremacy of the elected Boris Yeltsin over the party-designated Mikhail Gorbachev in the Russian revolution of 1991.)

The state as a coercive ideal type is not synonymous with *government* or *the public sector* or the political system or *polity* and we must be

cognizant of these differences. Modern government is not exclusively preoccupied with the exercise of authoritative or coercive powers. Some functions of modern government (for example, funding of science, arts and humanities and some social services) are exercised by government bureaus that are virtually components of commons and not engaged in anything like the coercive exercise of state powers. (Rourke, 1977) Lowi has mounted a powerful argument for the demise of authoritative state action in the rise of what he terms "interest group liberalism." (Lowi, 1969) To some extent, this and other arguments that modern states are unable to act decisively or effectively may be expressions of Karl Marx's vague prediction of the decline of the state.

State As Dominant Protective Association

What is the relation between the state and commons, market and family? "One of the hardest tasks in defining the sector is deciding where to draw the boundaries between voluntary, for-profit (commercial) and government agencies, and between formal and informal activities. (Anheir and Knapp, 8)

Weber located the study of the association (*verein*) "in the gap between the politically organized or recognized powers --state municipality and established church on the one side --and the natural community of the family on the other." (Hughes, 1972, 20). In a similar vein, Robert MacIver treated government and corporations as associations. (Van Til, 1988, 96) Etzioni's distinction between coercive, utilitarian and normative compliance is particularly instructive here. (Etzioni, 1961)

In an evocative phrase, Robert Nozick defined the state as the dominant protective association in a community or society. (1974, 15-17) The state, in this sense consists of elected and appointed public officials engaged in the enforcement of protection (or justice), and the

associated, auxiliaries that assist them in “co-producing” the conditions of civil society.

Nozick’s emphasis on the dominant position of the state among authorities covers the same ground as Max Weber’s “monopoly of force” definition of the state, without being sidetracked by the issue of whether or not the state must have an outright monopoly of force. Nozick (1974, 108-9) argues that Weber’s view can be reconciled with even a profoundly libertarian view of the limited state. Nozick is certainly not the first to draw this connection between associations and states. The Benedictine view of the monastery was that of “a little state” and Neibuhr’s conception of a religious sect emphasized an ethically grounded constitution. (Bestor, 1970, 5)

The model of the state as dominant protective association meets two fundamental criteria of a state: First, a state must be the only generally effective enforcer of prohibitions against the use of unreliable enforcement procedures by others. Thus, members of an association can expect to be protected by the state from efforts by organization officers to extort unreasonable dues from them. Likewise, nonmembers may be protected from coercive efforts to force them to join. Secondly, a state must protect noncitizens in its territory whom it prohibits from using self-help enforcement procedures on its clients. Thus, Latin American drug dealers, Arab terrorists and illegal immigrant street gangs constrained by the state from using their own enforcers to protect themselves in business dealings in this country still are still entitled to “Maranda rights” upon arrest.

This conception of the state as dominant protective association is also a remarkably concise definition of some aspects of the modern welfare state. Many of the social welfare functions assumed by the modern state constitute attempts at the protection of vulnerable, disadvantaged, victimized and helpless persons. Many activities of the modern welfare state, such as protective services, enforcement of child labor laws, wage and hour laws and nursing home regulations, fall clearly within a dominant protective framework requiring the exertion of legitimate force.

However, many others social welfare activities, and in particular most

forms of social service delivery do not involve the exercise of coercive force. Many of these latter activities more likely involve common goods and the kind of government bureaus embedded within commons discussed in the previous chapter. As such, they are part of the welfare *state* only in a very weak and imprecise sense of that term. They are also activities that can easily and readily be contracted out by the state to various nonprofit organizations. Theoretically, attempts to contract out state regulatory and enforcement powers to nonprofit organizations would be unsuccessful. This may account for some of the complexities one encounters in the contemporary social service contracting environment. (Bernstein, 1991a; Bernstein, 1991b)

What mainly is at issue in this definition is the specification of the proper limits of the state. Libertarians are inclined to see only a highly restricted state protecting primarily property rights as legitimate, while various forms of social democrats are inclined toward an expanded state role. On the basis of twentieth century experiences of Stalinism, Nazism, Maoism, and the many lesser “total states”, we can also simply dismiss the option of the total state (“totalitarianism”) as acceptable in any way. Thus, the central issue raised by this definition is over the meaning and extent of the “limits” on the state. Milton Friedmann identified Theodore Lowi identifies distribution, regulation and redistribution as the general functions of government.

Using Nozick’s conception, the state is not said to be the only protective association, as implied by the monopoly view, but simply the dominant one. Legitimate and illegitimate alternative protective associations are of several types: Some are clearly legitimate: Insurance companies, for example, offer various forms of nonstate protection against accident, theft, death, and other risks. However, they are generally subject to state regulation. Likewise, various neighborhood associations, and other mutual aid societies afford various forms of protection to their members.

On the other hand, some types of protective association are clearly illegitimate, in that they attempt to usurp or counter the protective functions of the state: Most prominent in this category are crime families and gangs, posses and vigilante groups and revolutionary and

terrorist groups. Mutual aid and ethnic and neighborhood protective associations can also take forms such as the Jewish Defense League, urban street gangs and the Black Panthers.

Finally, there are categories of protective associations whose legitimacy is unclear or problematic within the state: One such category are protest groups, committed to nonviolent civil disobedience in the tradition reaching from Thoreau to M.L. King through Gandhi. Another category are those “radical” communes and ‘cults’ (For example, “snake handling” religious cults, Jonestown, New Vrindabin) that seek total escape from civil society to voluntarily engage in practices that the state finds intolerable breaches of protections it offers to all citizens. Yet another such category includes private militias, “gun clubs” and private (non-state) paramilitary organizations.

States Emerge From The Commons

From the vantage point of public programs subsidizing the creation and continued operation of various nonprofit corporations, it has proven useful to conclude that the state creates the commons. It is probably sounder, on the whole, to step back and view the state as arising out of the commons than to see the state as engendering the commons. Certainly, this is true in the long-term history of civilizations. Anthropological literature reviewed by Smith and Freedman for example supports the conclusion that commons probably predate the state in human evolution and the rise of civilization. (1970, 16-22) There are many examples in the social science literature of religious and ceremonial groups and other commons, for example, in societies and cultures lacking the rudiments of a political state. It is also true in the immediate sense that the issues that constitute the current agenda of the state are readily influenced by common action. (Thielen and Poole, 1986)

Another more important basis for the logical priority of commons is theoretical: States or governments may enact and fund programs that

result in the creation of nonprofit service deliverers, as in the case of the Community Action program of the War on Poverty, or more generally employ a purchase of services strategy. However, when one inquires into the origins of such state-run programs, the answer will probably trace back through the political parties, interest groups, and legislative campaigns of the commons that preceded and prompted state action.

Examples of this are multiple. The African nation-state of Liberia is a particularly clear example of a political state emerging from a commons. Liberian political, economic and social institutions are largely extensions of the values of the American Colonization Society, that began its campaign for the return of African-American slaves to a newly created African nation in the 1820's. (Beyan, 1991; Franklin, 1980, 176-179) Other political revolutions, whether the American Revolution of 1776, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Chinese Revolution of 1949 also illustrate the process of the creation of entirely new states from the commons of revolutionary political parties. The connection between voluntary associations and state-formation is particularly clear in the emergence of the state of Israel. (Eisenstadt, 1972; Loewenberg, 1991)

The social behavior associated with establishment of a democratic state has a good deal in common with establishment of any paradigm. Implicit, consensual and shared beliefs, assumptions and values, known in the modern democratic political arena as public opinion, are of critical importance. (Campbell) Foundations, interest groups, parties and policy planning organizations. (Peschek, 1987)

Many different possible configurations of state and various interest groups have been identified. Regimes in which the state is relatively weak and interest groups represent of a broad spectrum of policy positions are ordinarily designated by the label of pluralism. Control of the state by a small cluster of powerful interests is usually termed oligarchy. (Michels, 1949) Meier (1983) has labeled "corporatism" a configuration in which the typical pluralist relations between interest groups and the state are reversed.

Moreover, in a democratic system, this process is not only repeated once. Indeed, in a very real sense, it can be argued that democratic elections are the “midwives” through which various party, factional and interest group commons gain legitimate mandates to rule and are transformed into legitimate elected governments (whether city council, county commission, governor and state legislature, or President and Congress). In this very real sense, states are created and empowered to act from actions by candidates and parties, by the platforms and issues in the commons of political campaigns.

Commons can also have important, and sometimes unexpected, roles in implementing and enforcing state action when the state is not strong and commons are. The Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (1562) made the system of apprenticeship mandatory for certain occupations, but the uncertain powers of the Elizabethan nation-state were insufficient to enforce apprenticeship upon employers without the aid of the powerful medieval craft guilds. (Abbott, 1938, 81)

States As Producers of Common and Public Goods

What can be said about protective associations that do not achieve dominance as political states? One overtly political role for such groups is as distinct interests within majority coalitions, where they function as interest groups. (Anderson and Schiller, 1976; Kvavik, 1976; Levitt and Feldbaum, 1975)

The state, as the dominant protective association in a society, is often said to be uniquely concerned with the creation or production of public goods, frequently on a monopoly basis. In this section, we will expand upon that notion and suggest that functioning states are also concerned with creating common goods in response to the demands of interest groups with which they are allied. The argument here is that the concept of “common goods” can be employed to introduce a necessary corrective to this overly generalized notion of public goods.

Public goods, it will be recalled, are goods that are indivisible and uniformly available to all. The list would include such things as

national security, public highways, and clean air and water. Contemporary analysts of the public and nonprofit sector have tended to ignore the restrictive implications of this definition when they prove inconvenient. As a result, the analysis of “public goods” has been over-generalized to apply to virtually all possible relations between government and any nonprofit-voluntary-independent-third sector entity. Such, for example, is the case with the construction of nonprofit corporations in general as “private producers of public goods” and the definition of philanthropy as “private action for the public good”.

The underlying political formula involved is a straightforward one: Partisan advocates of social services, the arts, professions, science (in fact, virtually any common interest) seek various short-term political advantages by claiming that their common interests are, in fact, matters of vital “public interest”. Such claims are ordinarily preludes to appeals for the exercise of public powers or public subsidy of common goods. When successful they often result in the creation or modification of a modified commons in which a public bureau (for example, licensing board, funding agency or regulatory agency) is a participant.

As “public goods” claims, most subsidies of nonprofit sector organizations are easily discounted. The claim that the arts, or social services directly benefit everyone uniformly and indivisibly is demonstrably untrue, simply by virtue of the fact that many people never even attend artistic performances or receive services, and could not possibly benefit directly. The goods of these ventures are both divisible and non-uniformly distributed, failing *both* of the tests of a public good. This does not mean, of course, that such programs, services and benefits are not goods, nor that they may be preferred by a majority of the population and not just those who benefit. It does mean, however, that the large body of analysis and theory of public goods by economists, policy analysts and political scientists and others does not apply to them.

Such illegitimate claims of the “public goods” status of government operated or subsidized goods, therefore, are often propped up with

various claims of “indirect” benefit. Not only does this introduce a major theoretical complexity, it usually also results in claims that are unverifiable. (One suspects after all that may increase their political utility. Unverifiable claims, after all, have certain strategic political advantages. Unverifiable propositions do not, however, make for sound theory.)

Many (perhaps most) of the claims for subsidy forced upon the state by scientific, professional, educational, religious, charitable and other commons tend to be appeals by various leisure classes for public (tax supported) patronage of particular common goods valued by those leisure classes. There is almost never clear-cut majoritarian support for (and seldom even majority understanding of) such endeavors. What there is instead is a kind of mass toleration and indifference merging at times into alienation. There are no theoretical grounds in democratic theory for such systematic satisfactions of minority interests. As a result, common interests centered in the nonprofit and voluntary world will feel compelled to go on appealing to specious “public interests” in their demands for public subsidy until other grounds are found. And legislators and bureaucrats in control of restricted funds of this type will feel compelled to continue honoring such requests, at least for those leisure classes in position to exert their claims most forcefully.

Non-State Protective Associations

What can be said about protective associations that do not achieve dominance as states or participants in ruling coalitions? One role for such associations is as opposition groups (loyal or otherwise). Far more interesting for the theory of the commons, however, is the modern emergence of non-state private protective associations. While it would be easy to focus on private militias of security guards and mall police under this rubric, such “services” are generally organized as commercial ventures and outside our interest here. Other less obvious, but equally interesting examples of non-state protective agencies fall within the domain of the commons.

One of the most interesting subcategories of this class of such protective associations are those that seek to enforce common goods (and even, in some instances, public goods) through strictly voluntary compliance of a group of members or clients. For example, groups such as the American Society for Testing and Materials, Philadelphia, the American National Standards Institute in New York City establish product health, safety and quality standards voluntarily for voluntary acceptance by manufacturers. Such groups may be subsidized by manufacturers. Or, like Consumer's Union, they may be subsidized by donations from consumers and publish test results in the public domain.)

The number of voluntary protective associations is large and the range of their standards broad. They include the American Welding Society's technical standards for welding beads, the American Red Cross standards for the safe handling of blood products, and the familiar American Dental Association seal of acceptance for products that "have been shown to be an effective decay-preventative dentifrice that can be of significant value when used in a consciously applied program of oral hygiene and regular professional care." They also include the full range of ethical standards and practices of professional groups, including the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association, the National Association of Social Workers and the National Society of Professional Engineers.

Among the first categories of such non-state protective associations to emerge, of course, were the various voluntary charitable and philanthropic societies of the voluntary sector. Stereotypes notwithstanding, such charity work is not entirely a matter of benign good deeds. The various societies for the protection against cruelty to animals and children, domestic violence shelters, friendly visitors, societies for the protection and encouragement of the mentally ill, foreign immigrants, and so forth are often engaged in creating private protective associations where state action is inadequate or not forthcoming. The Civil War era Underground Railroad and the more recent sanctuary movement devoted to sheltering illegal aliens from Latin America, as well as covert organizations devoted to parental "kidnapping" in defiance of court orders, or societies devoted to

assisting suicide are all examples. In each case, groups are action in support of a common good ignored, discouraged or opposed by dominant state interests.

This by no means exhausts the possibilities for non-dominant protective associations, however. Also included here would be the full range of secret societies and radical politics devoted to overthrow of the established order. It is at this point that interest in the commons merges with traditional interests of the law of civil liberties.

Civil Liberties and the Commons

It is in the ever-present possibility that those in power will use their control of the state to harass, intimidate or suppress their rivals or enemies that we find the normative basis of support for civil liberties associated with the commons. Several commentators in the nonprofit and voluntary action literature have commented (incorrectly) on the centrality of associations in American political life and the absence of an explicit constitutional basis of a “right of association.” In fact, no less than four such freedoms are found in the first amendment: religion, speech, assembly and redress of grievances. While, it may be argued that there is no separate “right of association” the related “civil liberties” to assemble for peaceful purpose, speak freely and seek change in public policies clearly outlined in a long series of Supreme Court rulings rather clearly outline such a right. Moreover, those rights --together with voting rights--have been consistently interpreted in a manner consistent with the doctrine of popular sovereignty.

In the modern democratic political arena, we get an exceptionally clear portrait of the underlying dialogical basis of the processes that portray the creation of the state through processes of interaction, discussion and debate. The first amendment to the American Constitution says “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

According to Emerson (1964) “freedom of association has traditionally been conceived as ‘an independent right possessing an equal status with the other rights specifically enumerated in the first amendment’.

(quoted in Shiffrin, 1990, 221) Yet, Shiffrin notes, “the associational aspects of the first amendment have never been adequately explored.” (221) Emerson cast the same point more broadly when he remarked “Strangely enough, the fundamental structure of (first amendment) rights has never been fully explicated by the Supreme Court and stands today in a state of great uncertainty.” (1970, 292)

While legal scholars have generally dealt with the first amendment solely in terms of individual rights, Shiffrin advocates treating political dissent in commons rather than as a strictly individual matter: Dissent is often construed in strictly individualistic terms as *self-expression*, *self-realization* or *individual* autonomy. (Shiffrin, 1990, 90) Yet, in seeking to realize their goals, dissenters seek to persuade others, form associations of like-minded individuals and in general promote “engaged association” to advance social change. (Shiffrin, 1990, 91)

According to Shiffrin, dissent is a fundamentally nonprofit idea: “Dissenters do not ‘sell’ ideas in the manner depicted in the marketplace metaphor.” (92) People talk, “exchange” ideas and quote one another. “One could *impose* a market model on this process.” But dissenters do not generally sell their ideas. “They seek something other than the monetary profit of a commercial transaction.” (92)

The theory of the commons provides a lattice for understanding the fundamental interconnections between the seemingly separate freedoms of the first amendment and their associative implications: Religion is a major type of commons particularly in need of protection from the state in the wake of the Reformation and Counter-reformation. Such protections remain current to offset the ever-present impulses of religious zealots that may arise in any open and pluralist society. Free speech (which in the preceding we have termed dialogue) is a fundamental basis for the discovery, organization, and presentation of common goods of all types. People identify what

purposes they share by discussing their dreams and aspirations as well as their hopes and fears and coordinate their actions through sharing of strategy and tactics.

Likewise, association in common places (which the Constitution terms peaceable assembly) is fundamental to the uncoerced discovery of shared purposes, sharing of resources, and group process that is mutual and just. Prior to the development of communications technology, the co-presence of assembly (or, perhaps less archaically, “getting together”) was the single most effective and efficient means of facilitating common dialogue. The importance of assembly is in no way diminished by the development of telephone, television and computer and other communications technologies that have revolutionized and extended the ways in which people can “assemble” and interact.

Indeed, it would appear initially that freedom of the press is the only component in the first amendment not directly and obviously related with all the others and the commons. One might regard this as an historical anomaly and evidence of a former connection to the commons now broken. There was a strong tendency for 18th century newspapers to be partisan vehicles of political groups, parties and movements rather than the “objective” business institutions of today.

Right of Assembly

There is a significant body of First Amendment constitutional law bearing on the commons. Oleck (Chapter 27, pp. 724-738) offers an extensive introduction to the legal issues of the freedom to associate. Despite the patina of individualistic rhetoric in which discussions of first amendment rights are usually cast, associations such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and civil rights organizations of the 1960’s figure prominently in many key first amendment constitutional cases. (Lewis, 1991; Also see Emerson, 1970, beginning on p. 292, for a dated but interesting discussion).

Such constitutional cases should be of greater interest to nonprofit and voluntary action researchers than they have been. In part this is because they involve setting the real normative limits of common

action in American society. In addition, constitutional cases often involve issues that are both controversial and “hard”. Dworkin, (1978, 81-130) presents a rationale for dealing with “hard cases”. Usually, this means that such cases tend to provoke strong responses, conflict and involve issues that are intrinsically complex and difficult to resolve. Many such cases, for example, have arisen in the wake of the labor and civil rights movements. Others come in the context of state efforts to suppress various extremist political organizations including the American Communist and Nazi Parties, the Ku Klux Klan and others.

In 1939, the U.S. Supreme court explicitly examined the issue of the freedom of assembly implied by the constitution, and concluded that such freedom applies not only to meetings in private homes and meeting halls, but also to assemblies in public streets and parks. (*Hague v. C.I.O.*, 1939) While licensing laws can be used to protect public order or public safety, such laws may not be used for purposes of prior censorship.

At the same time, there is an undeniably political rationale underlying this freedom of assembly. In 1958, for example, the court said “It is beyond debate that freedom to engage in association for the advancement of beliefs and ideas is an inseparable aspect of the ‘liberty’ protected by the Constitution.” (*NAACP v. Alabama*, 1958) The court concluded that unless the state could show some compelling public interest, it may not force the NAACP to hand over its membership lists. (*NAACP v. Alabama*, 1958; *Bates v. Little Rock*, 1960)

Whatever their other legal ramifications, such precedents bear directly upon the distinction between public and private much sought after by nonprofit and voluntary action researchers: From this doctrine, one might reasonably conclude that in the absence of compelling public purpose, the affairs of any common are “private” (that is, common only to the participants, who are in turn able to determine collectively who may be a participant).

Freedom of Speech

The standard that the court has applied to freedom of speech cases for more than half a century is the Holmes-Brandeis “clear and present danger” test: “whether the words are used in circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.” This is the constitutional basis of the famous curb on the right of an individual to falsely shout “fire” in a crowded theater. It is also the basis for the suppression of various “radical” political organizations and the protection of others.

A somewhat less stringent criterion for the protection of free speech is the “dangerous or bad tendency” test that stems from English common law and also has been the doctrine of the court at various times (For example, *Gitlow v. New York*, 1925) The “preferred position” was in favor during the 1940’s, when it appeared to come close to an absolute right of free speech. (Burns and Peltason, 137)

Freedom of Religion

Freedom of religion might be subject to two general doctrines. On the one hand, the no-preference doctrine would prevent the state from aiding any particular religion, but allow public religious activities that indicate no preference. A major difficulty with this approach in a society as pluralistic as ours is whether any type of meaningful religious doctrine or practice can be non-preferential. Instead, the Supreme Court has generally preferred the wall-of-separation doctrine that forbids the government to aid, encourage or support any and all churches or religious activities. (Burns and Peltason, 131) It is the wall-of-separation doctrine, for example, that is responsible for bans on Christmas trees on public property and

Redress of Grievances

In many respects, some of the most interesting recent political history of the commons is that involving what are often called “protest

movements”. Whether we examine the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental movement or the recent resurgences of political conservatism and social traditionalism, coalescence around a perceived problem or “grievance” and a plan of action (or “redress”) is one of the most frequently encountered forms of common political action.

Even in highly repressive political regimes, commons may emerge in the form of protest movements, revolts, riots or other more peaceful forms. And, inevitably when such a development occurs, the common rhetoric of mutual purpose, shared resources is likely to be heard.

The many relationships of commons and the state in the U.S. are conditioned in fundamental ways by the constitutional limits on the state imposed by the first amendment rights of religion, speech, assembly and redress of grievances and the implicit right of association. Yet existing constitutional decision-making has evolved largely ad hoc in support of a kind of radical individualism that discounts the role of common action. This situation offers a phenomenal opportunity for nonprofit and voluntary action scholars to join with political theorists and legal scholars in exploring further the implications of commons for first amendment law.

Merit Patronage

One of the consistent historical and contemporary themes of the evolution of the commons in western civilization is the multifaceted role of the state as patron of diverse common goods. In discussing this topic, we come up against the dubious reputation of patronage in American politics. Since the Progressive era, the idea of “political patronage” has been widely condemned even as it continues to be widely practiced in American public life. One of the principal effects of dismissing all forms of patronage as undesirable and objectionable, in the manner of conventional Progressive analysis, is to leave us virtually without the means to discuss major aspects of the relation of state and commons. Terms like aid, assistance, grant, and support all have their proper and specific uses, but patronage remains the most satisfactory generic term.

In the context of the commons, patronage is the giving or either protection or support. (Gifis, 346) Political sinecures, favoritism in the awarding of public contracts, and protection from prosecution are forms of patronage, but so are commissions of works of art and architecture, grants, awards, honors and recognitions. Rather than ignoring or rejecting the idea of patronage outright, it is preferable to distinguish *merit patronage*, distributed on the basis of some defensible principle of merit from mere *favoritism*. Such a distinction might hold, for example, that federal aid to urban areas or the poor is patronage justified on the basis of merit (in this case, need). Indeed, it is just such a distinction that advocates of “positive discrimination” in affirmative action policies claim to be making. From this vantage point, it is not the fact of patronage *per se*, but the justification of the merit case associated with it that is the key issue. A distinction between merit patronage and favoritism along these lines is entirely consistent with the rejection of false public goods arguments already discussed. Thus, there is a legitimate recognized public interest (in the form of an educated citizenry) in universal free public education, as a public good, but no similar public good for higher education. Instead, public support for higher education is in the form of distinct common goods outlined by the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the National Science Foundation and other government agencies closely allied with distinct, identifiable commons.

Ironically, the growth of government since the end of World War II has also meant vast increases in merit patronage programs, largely without corresponding changes in public attitudes toward patronage. The currently operative system of *interest group liberalism* (Lowi, 1969) is notable in part as a way of reconciling the resulting cognitive dissonance: Partisans of any particular and localized interest tacitly agree not to challenge the special privileges enjoyed by others so long as those others do the same.

Conclusion

The most fundamental point to be made about the relationship

between the state and the commons involves the reciprocal roles played by each. While it does, indeed, appear to be the case that states generally impact upon commons in a multitude of ways including tax policies, civil rights and other distributive, redistributive and regulatory policies, it must be noted also that commons are generally the grounds upon which campaigns are organized to gain control of the state as well as change particular policies or practices. Thus, while it can be said that the state shapes and molds the commons, it is likewise true that the commons shapes and molds the state.

The most democratic country on earth is that in which people have, in our time, carried to the highest perfection the art of pursuing in common the object of their common desires and have applied this new science to the greatest number of purposes.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

8. Common Exchanges

This chapter will concentrate on some of the elementary forms of behavior or volunteer labor through which commons are built up within the broad confines of social exchange theory with an eye toward breaking out of some of the rather arbitrary constraints imposed on nonprofit and voluntary action research by the market model of mutually profitable exchange. To explore this point, we will use the concept of the benefactory, previously introduced in Chapter 3.

Social exchange theory has held enormous importance for nonprofit and voluntary action studies. (Homans, 1961; Homans, 1968; Blau, 1967; Blau and Scott, 1963) American social exchange theory has its conceptual origins in attempts by George Homans and his colleagues to discover what Homans termed “the elementary forms of social behavior”. This approach has been subjected to extensive criticism and analysis. (Heath, 1976; Mitchell, 1978) It does, however, impose an interesting and seemingly rigorous model on the study of the commons, and organizational researchers have been attempting to

recoup the research possibilities suggested by this model. (C.f., Seidel, 1991) Unfortunately, attention has been limited to the most market-like common organizations, and those with the closest ties to the state. The resulting body of nonprofit organizational studies has left many organized commons like those discussed in chapter 5 completely out of the picture. Without making any claims about the exhaustive or universal nature of the list, we can identify a number of forms of exchange, organization and interaction that appear to be the building blocks upon which many forms of commons are built.

Common Goods Exchange And The Gift Map

Common goods exchanges, or the voluntary and uncoerced social acts of patrons and beneficiaries in which purposes and resources are shared, mutuality is built up and fairness is assumed are the irreducible units of social, economic and political behavior in the commons. The model of the gift (or benefit) freely given by a benefactor to a beneficiary offers a starting point for analysis of all types of common goods exchange. Much of conventional exchange theory follows grant economics in treating gifts as unilateral transfers, in contrast to the two-way exchanges of buyers and sellers in the marketplace. Such an approach is reductionist in deconstructing all types of gift exchanges to unilateral and unidirectional transfers in “single-round” exchanges and masks other equally important types of common exchange.

An alternative model has already been suggested in the preceding discussion: In common goods exchanges, groups of affluent persons, temporarily not at risk voluntarily forego their own self interest and associate with others to define mutual purposes, pool resources, in the process developing a sense of mutuality within group-determined standards of fairness and justice. This is not to say that all persons make such choices, or do so all the time. Nor is it to say that all affluent persons are obligated to do so. Nor is it to say that all persons act rationally all the time. However, affluent persons acting rationally *may* on some occasions favor the interests of others over their own. In descriptive terms, at least four distinct types of common exchange can

be noted: Patronage and Tributes, Gifts, Potlatches and Offerings. More can be said about each of these without the need to preclude the possibility of additional types.

Patronage and Tributes

Quite possibly the simplest form of common goods exchange is the simple unilateral transfer of a tangible substance, message or other meaningful object (the gift, benefit or benefice) from one subject (the giver or donor) to another (the receiver or beneficiary). We shall follow Boulding and others, and refer to this type of unilateral transaction as patronage and tribute. We shall depart, however, from Boulding's suggestion of patronage as exclusively positively charged ("love") and tribute as negatively charged ("fear"). Instead, the two terms are opposites in an almost infinite variety of different binary status hierarchies (higher and lower, richer and poorer, older and younger, knowledge and ignorance, and so forth) In each case, patronage involves a unilateral transfer ("gift") in one direction, and tribute in the other.

Patronage and tribute exchanges commonly involve interaction between at least two parties of manifestly unequal status. Because they involve manifest inequalities does not necessarily mean that tributes are always objective or rational exchanges or that hierarchies are static, rigidly defined or mutually exclusive. Gifts between lovers, for example, often assume the form of mutual tributes. Likewise, parental support of children has many features in common with other forms of patronage.

It is of central importance to note the risky nature of reciprocity with patronage and tributes. Whether the tribute is to a powerful ruler, a ladylove, parents, children or some other subject, equitable exchange, a contract or obligations of reciprocity is not ordinarily part of the understanding in tributes. The good returned from tributes, in other words, can only ever be probabilistic, not contractual or conditional.

An important question for nonprofit and voluntary studies involves the extent to which prosocial helping behavior and various forms of organized charities constitute tribute. The distinction between unreserved giving and gifts in anticipation of return figures prominently in the distinctive fourth-century positions of St. John Chrysostom and St. Ambrose discussed by Morris (1986, pp.). It is also important in the “degrees of charity” of Maimonides. (19XX) Possibly the earliest forms of tributes involving intermediaries were the priests and temple cults of ancient religions. Regardless of other differences, a major characteristic of most religious observances involves the intermediary or interceding role of the priest, shaman, magician, soothsayer, or other between the worshiper-giver-subject and the god who is the recipient of tribute. In Buddhist ethics, the issue of assuring that gifts given to the intermediary actually “reach” the intended recipient is a major concern of the ethics of tribute. (Lohmann and Bracken, 1991)

Gifts

Tribute can be distinguished from gifts in the ordinary meaning of this term by the so-called norm of reciprocity. Unlike tribute that is given with no expectation of receiving a gift in return such expectations are ordinarily attached to gifts. (Gouldner, 1960) Thus, if I give you a present for your birthday, it is typically with the expectation that you will do the same for me on my birthday. Reciprocity, in other words, is encoded in the gift situation, and establishes a fundamental equality between givers and recipient that is not characteristic of either patronage or tribute. After a period of time, those who fail to respond in kind to our holiday greeting cards may be removed from our lists.

In what remains the classic study of gifts, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1967) defined the gift as given received and returned (that is, a new gift is given by the original recipient to the original giver, and so on, *ad infinitum*). Indeed, it is this continuous, ongoing quality of gift-giving that is the basis for interpreting gifts as a key to social integration and solidarity. In giving and receiving individuals establish and symbolize and demonstrate their on-going relations and mutual obligations.

Giving-receiving-giving logic explains many aspects of common behavior, as well as point up some of the dilemmas of the field. For example, we can use it to offer a more benign explanation of one of the favorite shibboleths of critics of modern charities. It seems to be almost a “law of charity” that a gift given (whether in the form of an individual donation or an institutional grant) will be followed up by a later request for, as we say, “continued funding.” The almost unanimous conclusion of the self-interest theorists is that this is clear-cut evidence of the play of self-interest on the part of the recipient. Moreover, such self-interest easily shades over into purported evidence of greed if one comes to dislike the recipient or question their motives. The message seems clear enough: “I-the-donor did good in my gift to you. You have no right to suggest I have any further obligation to give you another gift!”

We must grant initially, that if one views the matter exclusively from the donor’s perspective, it does indeed appear to such cases involve the simple working of self-interest-cum-greed. If, however, one examines the matter from the vantage point of the other parties to the exchange as well, quite another perspective arises. In the case of such gifts to intermediaries, the logic is quite different, and is entirely consistent with a reciprocal gift perspective. While the donor may react as above, the intermediary is likely to have a quite different reaction, much more like: “You gave me a gift on condition that I use it to help others. I continued the cycle and gave help to others (which was our gift to them--yours and mine). Now, simple reciprocity says unless I receive another similar gift, the chain of reciprocal giving is broken, and I am the victim of bad faith!”

Thus, it would appear that norms of reciprocity based on gift theory are at the heart of a value conflict of overriding importance to the modern commons. In many practical cases, we simply lack an adequate normative basis on which to resolve the seeming conflict between interpretations of donor and intermediary. (We will leave aside entirely the equally important issues of donor and intermediary expectations upon recipients: In exchange for food stamps, for example, how much right does the state, as donor, have to prescribe eating habits?) In general, while it is quite clear that very real norms of

reciprocity do, in fact, exist, it is equally clear that they are inadequate in a number of cases.

Potlatches

In its narrowest sense, the potlatch is a distinctive Amerindian ceremonial gift-giving institution of traditional Tlingit culture on the Northwest Pacific coast. (Kan, 1986) More generally, the term potlatch can serve to identify a broad form of reciprocal gift giving involving serial reciprocity of which the Tlingit potlatch is a noteworthy example.

In the potlatch, reciprocity is trilateral. As opposed to the closed system of reciprocity of gift giving, in the potlatch receiving creates an obligation for further giving, but not simply to the original giver, but to others. (This form might be paraphrased as a message: “Here’s my gift, pass it on!) The potlatch form of giving is, logically, at least, eventually extended to embrace the entire community. In the process, both the self-interest and social status of givers are implicated.

Examples of this are numerous, from the grand patronage of the temples and ceremonial events of ancient Greece to the *mayordomia* of Latin American villages. (Smith, 1977)

Something like the potlatch formalism shows up in some surprising places. The American practice of granting tax-exempt status to various nonprofit charitable organizations, for example, can be interpreted as a potlatch in which an original gift (freedom from taxation) is given by the state to nonprofit organizations in expectation of a return gift to various deserving client groups. In typical potlatch fashion, the process does not stop there, however. The distinctive rhetoric of American social and economic policy also anticipates further steps to this gift, in the expectations that those clients benefited by such services will, eventually, be transformed into productive workers whose efforts will contribute to increased social product, and who will become taxpaying citizens, paying tribute to the state, that will continue the tax exempt status of charitable organizations, and so forth.

Thus, from the perspective of the potlatch, one possible avenue toward resolution of the value conflict noted above is to bring the recipient into the picture: If a donor makes a gift to an intermediary who uses that as a basis to make a gift (as anticipated by the donor) to a recipient, what are the accumulated expectations on the recipient? Is the first part of the transaction a gift and the latter part of the transaction tribute? In that case, we can say the recipient has no explicit obligation to reciprocate. If so, on what basis did the transformation from gift to tribute occur? If not, in what form can the recipient be expected to respond with a suitable gift? Many of the answers to the current quandaries of nonprofit charity theory rest upon the answers to that question.

Offerings

The circuit is completed, so to speak, in a different way by offerings that can be said to be given, received and eventually returned to the giver but not by the receiver. (Strong, 1967, 7) Interestingly, this is the basis of the Judeo-Christian concept of charity: It is the sense of offerings to a generous and loving God in which traditional Christian concepts of alms has been be interpreted. It is also an explanation of the Buddhist concept of *dana*, where donations to the Buddhist monk are interpreted as gifts to Buddha, who can be expected to respond in kind. (Dharmasiri, 1989; Goodman, 1987; Strong, 1967, 7) A gift is given (for example, to a beggar or a monk) who receives it but is in no position to reciprocate; divine reciprocity comes instead.

Because of the overt religious connotations involved exchange theorists have been inclined to discount offerings, or deconstruct them into simpler gift, tribute, patronage or potlatch transactions. Yet the grounds on which theorists deign to redefine the reality of offerings as they are interpreted by various commons is highly problematic. Mauss captures the exact sense of offerings in his suggestion that alms are not really given to the poor, but are actually offerings to gods, deities or spirits who, in turn, grant that the obligations that were sacrificed to them should be given to the unfortunate. In the same vein, the Bible quotes Jesus as telling his disciples that whatever is done to the poor, weak and helpless is done also to him.

While we may be accustomed to thinking of offerings as ceremonial or ritual acts, the concept of the offering as an elementary common exchange may be a difficult one to accept. Offerings, whether sacred or secular, involve exchange among unequals linked to a long chain of serial reciprocity in which the most exalted being, whether human or supernatural, holds the penultimate position. This is the case with the alms example offered by Mauss. In such cases, however, offerings should not be mistaken for, or reduced to, simple tributes, because the various sacred personas assume an intermediary rather than object role.

Thus, it is the case that offerings involve serial, triadic relations, rather than the simple dyadic relations of tributes and gifts. Rather than only the giver, receiver and gift, offerings also involve intermediaries who handle the exchange --whether ceremonially or ritualistically or in more prosaic reality. The offering idea, for example, also appears regularly in modern, scientific professional guises as well. Thus, it is said of the practice of medicine physicians treat illnesses (for example, make the offerings of medicine), only God heals (grants the benefit of health).

Free-Riding

Free riding can be defined as an elementary form of social exchange characterized by acceptance of a benefit not offered. Since its introduction by Hardin in the 1960's, the concept of free riding behavior has assumed the proportions of a given in a considerable portion of nonprofit economic, management and organizational studies. (C.f.,) It is interesting to note, therefore, that findings from several psychological researchers suggest important parameters of the free-riding phenomenon.

A study of 212 undergraduates concluded from this that individuals are more likely to avoid socially responsible behavior when they are in groups than when they are alone. (Wiesenthal, Austrom and Silverman, 1983)

Yamagishi (1986) presents an explicitly social-psychological approach to the problem of public goods and concluded that members who have

realized the undesirable consequence of free riding and the importance of mutual cooperation will cooperate to establish sanctions that assure other members' cooperation instead of trying to induce other members into mutual cooperation directly. Such an approach virtually cries out for connection with various findings in the area of the social psychology of opinion leadership.

Rich (1988, 7) concluded that “there are...countless examples” of successful collective effort not readily be explained by reference to formal or informal sanctions against free riding. Most solutions to the free-rider problem ignore the importance of a sense of community, that is a common good as Rich defines it: the recognition that one’s own interests are intimately bound to the capacity of an identifiable group to satisfy their interests.” (14)

Altogether, these point toward the tentative conclusion that while free-riding behavior is certainly an important element of the psychology of the commons, it is hardly a fixed and immutable characteristic of voluntary group action. In fact, a good deal of work remains to be done on specifying more precisely the conditions under which free-riding behavior occurs. It is quite plausible, for example, that free riding occurs primarily, or even exclusively, under conditions of “normative dissonance” in which the social norms regulating participation, approval and affirmation, sharing and the other dynamics of common action are weak or conflicting.

Rich (14) singles out three conditions affecting the likelihood of free-riding: 1) sufficient recurring interaction so participants have an opportunity to form expectations about the behavior of others; 2) conditional cooperation (willing to cooperate only if others are also willing; and 3) the nature of the common goods should be clear and exceed the individual’s cost. He goes on to suggest that the group size that is relevant to determining whether or not a group can supply itself with a common good is not the total number in the group, but the size of the subset of members who can see the relationship between their interests and the group’s capacity for joint action and are willing to pursue a strategy of conditional cooperation. (15)

Acts of Common Good

The everyday meaning of gifts is of tangible objects -baseball bats and electric trains and fur coats --given and received for birthdays, holidays. It is worthy of note that a synonym for such gifts is “presents”, subtly calling attention to the act of presentation. However, we have already noted that most common goods consist primarily or exclusively of intangible social acts, rather than tangible objects. Acts of common good are by their very nature notoriously varied, that brings us back again to the issue of classification raised in Chapter 2. We can find people praying together and acting and writing and singing and working together to aid those victimized by all manner of threats and perils. We can also find them meeting together in groups for all manner of purposes, doing research and playing games and engaged in myriad other pursuits that are voluntary, mutual, and fair pursuits of common ends with shared means. Yet, we have great difficulty conceiving of the entire class of common goods and seeing any “natural” divisions of such goods as a class. Empirically, this may be because most of us are normally only involved in a small spectrum of the entire class of common goods, and our preoccupations with our fellow participants and the concerns we share with them. Theoretically, such narrow vision leads to the kind of fractured and partial views of the commons to which we have grown accustomed. We shall attempt to deal explicitly with the major categories of organized commons in Chapter

9. For the moment at least, we can forsake the effort at exhaustive typologies of common actions, and instead reduce the vast inventory of possible common actions to two principal categories, that we shall term “presentations” and “problem-solving”. By doing so, we can identify a number of additional interesting dimensions of common action.

Discourse and Presentation

Commons, benefactories and common goods consist of the social acts of persons in time, and as such there is an inherent subjectivity, unpredictability and spontaneity about them that can be downplayed,

but that cannot be arbitrarily ignored in the name of objective science. Common goods are ephemeral human creations in that they cannot be stored, saved or warehoused for later distribution. They are thus, distinctly part of what Simon (1981) calls the "artifice" or the humanly constructed order of civilization. Unlike technology, equipment and products, however, the artifacts of the commons are almost entirely symbolic, rather than material.

In general, the symbolic artifice of the commons can be divided into two broad categories of action: *discourse*, or the use of complex verbal symbols to assert things through a process of successive understanding and aggregation of separate meaning units, (Langer, 1967, 96) and *presentations*, consisting of rites (or rituals), ceremonies and myths. (Morgan and Brask, 1988; Langer, 1967, 271) Moreover, most of the discourse can be subsumed within the pragmatic problem-solving model.

Discourse is an important element of action in all commons. Indeed, common language may be the original commons. Discussion, debate, dialogue and argument are all forms of discourse. One contemporary indicator of the importance of discourse is the stress such issues as speaking order and other discursive issues have in constitutions, by-laws, *Roberts Rules of Order* and other common governing documents. The central, fundamental fact of commons is that discourse is the basis upon which the five defining elements of a commons are linked: Free and uncoerced participation and fairness can only be realized, shared purposes and resources identified, and a sense of mutuality and affiliation built up through talk, dialogue, communication and exchange.

An equally important form of action in common goods, and somewhat more complex to grasp is presentation, that is particularly important in understanding the artistic, religious and emotional contents of common goods. The approach taken here follows Langer in defining presentational symbols as direct presentations of objects that speak directly to sense and lack intrinsic generality. Presentational symbols have no adequate permanent units of meaning. Rather, their meanings are grasped only through their relation to larger patterns, structures or

fabrics. (Langer, 1967, 97.)

Because of the importance of discourse and presentation, the building blocks of common goods, that are both created and consumed in renditions, are symbols: In the case of discourse, discursive symbols require elements of both practical context and novelty (Langer, 1967, 13) Discursive symbols are most commonly encountered in activities of a "practical" or problem-solving (in the Deweyian sense) character, like philosophy, competitive athletics, helping, science and social action.

Presentational acts tend to be of three types: rites, ceremonies and myths. Ritual acts are prescribed sets of words and actions used practically without variation and believed to have symbolic powers to produce certain desired effects. Ceremonies are special occasions in which explicit rules of behavior govern the performance of members. (Rose, 1958, p. 36)

Dramas are special thematic complexes of institutionalized social acts that may involve several types of ceremonies in dealing with problems, such as victimage and redemption, sickness and healing, and so forth (Brissett and Edgley, 1990) Many nonprofit problem-solving activities in social services and some types of scientific activity constitute dramas in this sense. Thus, "problem" and "solution" may be knitted together by a fabric of meanings spelling out the normal or typical steps in the problem-solving drama.

Games are strategic social acts of a more or less routine nature (in which everyone "knows the rules") Committee meetings, conferences among experienced persons and budget decisions often constitute games in this sense.

Information and Meaning

The signs that are the building blocks of discourse and presentation can be organized in several different ways. Among the most important behavioral characteristics of such constructions are practical context

and novelty, that correspond closely to what is ordinarily meant by information and meaning. Discourse always requires these two distinct elements: Verbal or practical context (or what we might term knowledge) and novelty (what the speaker is trying to point out or express). Knowledge can thus be defined as the quality of order and predictability in symbols.

Information is generally acknowledged to be a critical factor in all types of community service practice. In social casework, for example, the interview has long been held to be the central process, and information gathering (termed "assessment") and strategic information use (or "intervention") are usually regarded as fundamental dynamics of the interview. In social group theory, theories of group formation and dynamics often revolve around the information group participants have, or learn, about one another. In community organization, the "knowledge is power" dynamic has long been critical, and information is often seen as one of the key variables separating the disadvantaged from various powers and elites. And in administration, Simon and others have identified information as a critical variable in the effectiveness of decision-making.

In general, this approach makes of information and meaning measurable quantities--that which is and is not presently certain, respectively. It also systematically integrates time as a critically important factor in common goods: Both in terms of the time-cost of searching for information, and in terms of a necessary time-referent for separating information and meaning. What is presently known and meaningful (for example, is the client currently employed?) is dynamically alterable and information must be collected again and again. Thus, one cannot in this context speak of information or meaning absent an explicit time reference. At the same time, the value of information and meanings is also dynamically alterable: The fact that the client is not employed today was established at an identifiable cost. If the client is employed tomorrow, the meaning of today's discovery may be lost (and the question arises of whether the cost of information gathering was justified).

The distinction of information and meaning also implicates three

particular types of action as critically important to the theory of common goods. One of these we shall call *search* that is action by which information is obtained. Search is likely to proceed along any of a number of lines including trial-and-error, problem-solving and planning. The other, we shall call *technique* to denote any act in which existing meanings are employed. Finally, there is *learning*, or the acts by which techniques (including search strategies) are disseminated. These categories of search, technique and learning can be employed to classify virtually all types of common repertoires, whether the performance repertoires of the concert musician, the roles of the actor, or the skills of the human service provider.

For our purposes, commons are ordinarily composed by members of leisure classes (in both an economic and a social status sense) who tend to be stratified into three (occasionally overlapping) sub-classes: patrons, who provide the resources; agents, who use those resources to act; and clientele, who are the objects of common goods, and the. Common goods, therefore, are spontaneous acts using resources for the achievement of some purpose.

The question inevitably arises to what extent can we treat discourse and presentation as tribute, gift, potlatch and offering? The first turns out to be remarkably easy: It is standard fare in the context of awards banquets, convocations and numerous other common events to “pay tribute” in the form of speeches of recognition and commemoration, or the presentation of plaques, awards and numerous other mementos to those whose actions in the common good have been deemed praiseworthy or exemplary.

The reciprocal circumstances of common gift giving are only slightly more complex. Most government and foundation grants, for example, explicitly incorporate such exchanges: You give me the money and I’ll give you what you want – a cure for cancer, the solution to poverty, greater understanding, whatever.

Potlatches and offerings would appear to be the real fertile ground for extending our understandings of gift exchanges in the commons: We have already discussed tax-exempt status as an example of potlatch

giving. The serial sponsorship of the fiesta and ancient Greek aristocratic patronage discussed in preceding chapters also conform to the potlatch exchange.

Offerings are sometimes mistakenly associated only with religious observances. Anyone who has ever given a speech or presented an academic or scientific paper representing one's very best efforts to a group of respected and valued peers should also have an intuitive grasp of the offering exchange. Under such circumstances, one may "give my best effort" (or more colloquially, "give it my best shot) in the hope or expectation that others will do likewise. When they do, the characteristic return of the offering is characteristically not associated with any particular individual. In religious terms, it is seen as a divine gift. In more secular terms, such common offerings frequently engender words like "synergy", "actualization" and "gestalt" and phrases like "... greater than the sum of its parts."

Problem-Solving

Discourse and presentation (talking and showing) are thus the elemental forms of organizing action in the commons, and that action conforms consistently to the logic of gift exchange. The further question that arises is to what ends does such talking and showing lead in gift exchange? What, in other words, is the purpose of common discourse and presentation? In the context of the micro-economic model as it is frequently applied to nonprofit endeavors, the answer to that question is simple: People speak and display themselves and their actions and creations in order to gain advantages and rewards for themselves. In the assumptions stated in Chapter 3, however, we explicitly rejected "selfinterest" and "profit-maximization". To briefly restate the matter, our reasons for doing so were largely the view that when they are acting authentically in a manner consistent with the stated objectives of diverse commons, rational actors frequently claim that they are not, and do not appear to disinterested observers, to be merely attempting to serve their own ends. And, the main interest of the theory of the commons is in creating a systematic theoretical statement of the commons that explores the implications of that position.

The pragmatic model of problem solving forms the formal theoretical backbone of a good deal of common activity. And virtually all contemporary problem-solving approaches begin with, or are traceable to, the "problem-solving" model of John Dewey. (see Bernstein, 1971) The view that one solves problems by defining them, identifying alternatives, assessing the alternatives, and choosing among them is so universal in social welfare, extension and other voluntary action fields as to be considered virtually a "natural attitude".

To Dewey, Mead and the other pragmatists, the experience of a problem is a universal one for individuals and groups. Recognizable problems erupt into the flow of "normal" (that is, non-problematic) personal or group experience and divert attention away from other things. In experiencing problems, we redirect our attention, temporarily or permanently, from other concerns and focus on the problem. An important aspect of the meaning of "solving" a problem, therefore, is the redirection of attention away from the problem and toward other concerns.

Experiencing a problem also commonly results in a sense of problematic--of things out of the ordinary and often of an urgent wish to "do something." As a result, the events of awareness and in particular, when we become aware of a problem and when we are no longer aware of it as a problem *per se* (and only as a past experience) offer a convenient way to delimit the boundaries of a problem from an individual standpoint. Thus, in at least a limited sense, a problem is experienced in a time interval between an initial "horizon of indifference" prior to which there was no problem and a later "horizon of indifference" after which the problem is recalled only as a memory. (See Appendix A) In the terminology of endowment theory, after its resolution, the problem itself has become part of our heritage. Knowledge gained in recognizing and resolving problems may in this way become part of our resource endowment for solving future problems. This is in fact the much-prized attribute of "experience" and "practice wisdom" that many social work practitioners hold over against "theory".

Common problem solving that leads to a stable solution, or what

might be termed “a solution in place” often corresponds closely to the gift exchange model as well. Contemporary social problem theory is a good example. In this way, the learning that results and the knowledge of how to solve future similar problems in the future constitute important contributions to the overall endowment of a particular commons, and ultimately of the civilization as a whole (although we commonly only “tote up” such civilization level contributions when we perceive them to have major, overarching significance.)

From the perspective of gift exchange, well-defined and understood problems are as much part of common endowments as solutions. Thus, those cost-benefit approaches that perceive problems as negative valences and solutions as positive valences, and problem solving as “neutralization” (for example, cost reduction) are particularly inappropriate for the commons, because they simply take the problem for granted. The sociologist C. Wright Mills once made a distinction between “troubles” and “problems” that is particularly apt here. An individual or group may have a vague sense “that something is wrong” without ever identifying or defining the trouble as a problem. Such vaguely sensed problems are more likely to be adapted to and lived with than solved. Yet, articulating, clarifying and defining the trouble into an explicit problem, rather than being seen as an offering, can sometimes be interpreted as a setback or a loss.

The history of family violence in America offers a particularly apt example. What some have interpreted as an epidemic or sudden outbreak of family violence may actually be a result of heightened sensitivity to the problems such violence represents and the deleterious consequences. As understanding of the problem grows, simple acceptance of its consequences becomes more and more unconscionable. Thus deeper understanding and more clear-cut definition of problems by themselves constitute powerful resources for contemporary social problem action groups, environmental groups and many others.

Endowment theory, as noted above, is concerned with a pragmatic account of the ways in which communities use resources, including surplus social product and prior problem-solving experience, in the

commons. In the problem-solving context, it is time, rather than money, that is the common metric of problem and solution. Elapsed time is a universal characteristic of all problem-solving ventures, even those conducted outside a money economy such as our own. When problem solving does involve paid employment or other forms of contracted service, some measure of time is typically involved, so that money measures such as wages, salaries and consults are easily converted into time units as well. Thus, time, rather than money, is the universal metric of problem solving.

A Buddhist Ethical Perspective

Those of us familiar with the nonprofit/voluntary sector in the United States are accustomed to the well-known association between Judeo-Christian ethics and various elements of prosocial behavior including altruistic acts, donations and other forms of patronage, and so forth. It may come as somewhat of a surprise, however, that theologians and ethicists in other religious-cultural systems have also been concerned, to one degree or another with comparable sets of issues. (See, for example, Fisher, XX; Fisher, 1978; Saddhatissa, 1970; Dharmasiri, 1989, 27)

On the basis of a study of Burmese Buddhism, Melfred E. Spiro (1970, 109) links this Buddhist conception of merit to explicit charitable and philanthropic actions in the following manner: Merit is the goal of religious action because merit can improve one's karma. Merit is acquired, among other ways, by performing acts of charity and by giving. In the hierarchy of giving, religious giving brings the greatest merit, supporting a monk or building a pagoda, for example. To contribute to a poverty-stricken widow, or to build a school is considered inferior *dana*. Although there may be other variations between Burmese and Japanese Buddhism, this priority order applies in the case of Japanese Buddhism also.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have identified four distinct types of gift exchange frequently encountered in the commons. Tributes, or unilateral exchanges without expectation of return; Gifts, or reciprocal exchanges; Potlatches, or serial chains of reciprocal exchange; and Offerings, that might be termed “broken chain” exchanges, in which a gift is given and a return comes from another source. No claim is made that these types entirely exhaust the possible types of gift exchange. They do, however, occur frequently enough to attract our attention. We will follow up by exploring these four types in the context of specific forms of common social organization in Chapter 9 below.

In the analysis of action in the commons, it should not be necessary to stop with the frequent observations that bone fide common action is not profit-oriented nor self-interested. By employing the models of gift exchange discussed in this chapter and other similar ideal types of gifts, it should be possible to identify more fully the actual occurrence of action in the commons as common gift exchange. In the chapter that follows, we will focus this perspective directly on the economics of the commons. In so doing, we will seek to deal explicitly with the economics of “unproductive labor” that Adam Smith wrote off.

Among democratic nations, all the citizens are independent and feeble; they can do hardly anything by themselves, and none of them can oblige his fellow men to lend him assistance. They all, therefore, become powerless if they do not learn voluntarily to help one another.

They look out for mutual assistance; and as soon as they have found one another out, they combine.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

9. Charity Theory

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, ethical precepts of charity reaching back to the Ancient Hebrews and ethical precepts of philanthropy dating to the Athenian Greeks were gradually merged and transformed into the modern, organized institutional base of social service. This transformation has important enduring implications for the commons. In England and the United States this transformation took place largely within “the voluntary sector” of private charitable organizations.

Three elements of that change are of particular interest to charity theory as a component of the theory of the commons: the focus on “charity organization”, the unprecedented emphasis on science as an element in charitable practice and the belief (at least partly false, as it turned out) that personal and voluntary charity must inevitably become a matter of specialized, professional practice. Although social work and a number of other specialized helping professions have arisen the professionalization of charity has not displaced voluntary acts of charity, or caused the disappearance of amateur organized charities.

Analytically, it appears that western civilization has been characterized by only three distinct systems of charity throughout its long history: 1) personal charitable practice based upon the ethical obligation to perform other-oriented acts of positive good invented by the Hebrews and adopted in turn by Christianity and Islam; 2) religiously based systems of organized charity associated respectively with Jewish *zedekah*, Christian charity and Islamic *zakat*; and 3) the public responsibilities of state charities articulated in the locally-oriented Elizabethan Poor Law tradition and more recently by the nationally-oriented “welfare states”. The first of these is the basis of interest in altruism theory, as discussed below. The second has as a major concern the social organization of commons. The last of these is an important aspect of the contemporary relations between states and commons.

Charity As Ethical Behavior

Within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage, the ethical basis for individual acts of charity has not changed fundamentally in more than 2,000 years. Robert Morris locates the historical origins of Western charity in ancient Hebrew ethics in the revolutionary ethical concept of an obligation to perform acts of positive good that emerged about 800 B.C.E. (Morris, 1986)

O’Connell, Chapter 1 (1989) provides a brief introduction to the fundamental Biblical citations. The positions of unlimited generosity and informed giving advocated by various early church leaders sound entirely familiar to us, as do most of the issues raised in the monastic codes discussed below. Whether we concur entirely with the priority ordering of Maimonides eight “degrees of charity” set forth in the 12th century, there is little in the distinctions themselves to give pause to the modern philanthropist. (Cass & Manser in O’Connell; Morris, 80)

Anonymity in giving was held in highest regard by the ancient Hebrews. What is sometimes called the Chamber of Whispers was an institutional expression of this: a quiet room set aside in the synagogue into that the individual philanthropist went, unobserved, and left

donations for the poor, who went in--also unobserved--to obtain the help they needed.

Principles of donation arose very early in this tradition. The tithe as a morally approved basis of redistribution for various purposes was largely an in-kind contribution, in which the tenth part of the yield of the harvest was to be given to the Lord in support of religion and for the relief of the poor. At every harvest, a corner of each field was left unharvested for the poor. Every seventh year, fields were left fallow and the poor were permitted to garner the spontaneous growth during this sabbatical year.

The Jewish ethical tradition of charity was adopted by emergent Christianity with only slight modifications. Throughout the middle ages, down to the time of the Elizabethan Poor Law and Statute of Charitable Uses in 1601, organized Christian charity was closely associated with the institutional church, reaching back at least to the Roman Emperor Constantine's sanction of donations in the fourth century. In 321, Constantine, who had converted to Christianity, "gave license for persons to give or bequeath money to the church. From that time on substantial endowments began to accumulate around charitable institutions." Beginning about A.D. 150, Christians began to organize their charity work by creating a Church Fund in each church, supported by voluntary gifts. (Marts, 1953, 6)

Deacons are said to have dispensed funds to the needy. Marts also alleges that later districts or deaconries were organized, each containing a hostel (Hotel Dieu) , alms office, orphanage and shelter for babies. The first documentary proof of a hospital or *xenodochium* (established first as a rest room, or *hospitalium*, in the house of a bishop) was one established in A.D. 369 in Caesarea by St. Basil. Apparently, it grew to a large institution with different pavilions for different diseases and residences for physicians, nurses and convalescents. St. Gregory called it a 'heaven on earth.' (Marts, 1953, 7; Morris, 103)

By the Fourth Century, early Christian doctrine had evolved into two distinct schools of thought that constitute what might be termed the

“Theory X” and “Theory Y” of charity: St. John Chrysostom (347-407) advocated a position of open generosity, compassion for the needy and unconstrained giving. “It is the season of kindness, not of strict inquiry, of mercy, not of calculation.” By contrast, St. Ambrose (340-397), St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and others argued that the poor needed guidance and counsel more than money, and that giving should be carefully monitored to assure that it went only to the truly needy. (Morris, 103-4)

A similar profile emerges in Islamic *zakat* that involves personal ethical obligations much like those incumbent upon Jews and Christians, and is venerated as one of the five fundamentals or “pillars of Islam”. Aiding those in need and giving to support Islam is the personal obligation of every Muslim. Moreover, a substantial network of *waqfs*, that are endowments or foundations, grew up in the Arab world over the centuries. (Hourami, pp?) Interestingly, there is little evidence available in English of a system of Islamic charity organization other than the *waqfs*.

We might also note, that the Jewish-Christian-Islamic ethical tradition of charity is distinctive, but not entirely unique among the world’s major religions. Each of the world’s major religions appears to have embraced somewhat similar charitable values and practices. At least by the 16th century, for example, charitable practices were incorporated into model Korean village codes developed by Confucianist public administration scholars. (Hahm, 1991)

Within Buddhism, there is an equally distinctive emergence of charitable norms and practices. About 450 BCE, Gautama Buddha said "In five ways should a clansman minister to his friends and familiars--by generosity, courtesy and benevolence, by treating them as he treats himself, and by being as good as his word." Institutional Buddhist charity (as opposed to such personal obligations) developed somewhat later. A Northern Indian ruler cited in the English language sources as “King Asoka”. In the second century BCE, King Asoka was converted. "He foreswore war, conquest and greed and devoted his wealth and influence to spreading the gospel of Buddha as he understood it." Asoka sent out missionaries to the entire known world

and gave great sums to endow the Buddhist religion. One of the distinctive qualities of traditional Buddhist charity that sets it apart from the Judeo-Christian-Moslem tradition, is its distinctive priorities: Gifts to support Buddhist priests and temples are generally “rated” as greater goods than charity for the poor and needy, that was afforded a secondary status. (Lohmann & Bracken, 1991)

In the west, medieval Christian charity became closely (but not exclusively) associated with the monastic movement. In medieval monasteries, the “Rule” was an important document, serving a role embracing aspects of the modern constitution and by-laws, codes of conduct and professional ethics, with perhaps just a dash of rental lease. Two particularly widely adopted and venerable Rules were those set down by St. Augustine (c. 397) and Benedict of Nursia roughly a century later.

One of the wealthiest and most powerful medieval monastic orders was centered in Cluny, France. Cluny was founded on observation of the Rule of St. Benedict. In the Benedictine rule, six rules relate specifically to charitable practices: Comfort the Poor (#14); Clothe the Naked (#15); Visit the Sick (#16); Aid Those in Trouble (#18); Comfort the Sad (#19); Do not forsake charity (#26) Cluniac rule also mandated an Office of the Cellarer, whose duty it was to care for the sick, children, the poor and guests. ()

There are important connections between monastic rules and charitable practice in the commons. The theological and philosophical writings of St. Augustine are frequently cited as the original source of the concept of “common good” discussed elsewhere in this work. In his Rule, Augustine touches upon numerous aspects of mutuality, shared resources, need and community that are of general interest to the theory of the commons, but says very little directly about standards or rules of charitable behavior. In Rule #3, for example, he says, “Among you there can be no question of personal property. Rather, take care that you share everything in common.” He goes on to articulate a clear-cut standard of need: “Your superior...does not have to give exactly the same to everyone, for you are not all equally strong, but each person should be given what he personally needs...”

(Bavel, 11) Whether one applies them to ancient Greek *koininia*, medieval Augustine monasteries, nineteenth century social movements or twentieth century “voluntary agencies” the charitable principles and standards involved are recognizable and consistent ones.

Overall, the Augustine approach is largely the statement of general principles. Much attention in the Augustine Rule is devoted to proper attitudes and motives. Somewhat in contrast, the Benedictine rule sets forth six rules that relate specifically to charitable practices and appear to mandate specific behavior: Rule #14 admonishes adherents to comfort the poor; Rule #15 mandates clothing the naked; Rule #16 encourages visiting the sick; Rule #18 says aid those in trouble #19 - comfort the sad and Rule #26 says, in general, do not forsake charity. Yet, the underlying motivations are clearly the same as those assumed in the Augustine approach and elsewhere in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition of charity. Whatever differences of interpretation and emphasis there may be within various subgroups, monasticism was clearly associated with the main body of this tradition of charity.

According to some sources, the 10th century Cluniac reformation, that led to major reforms and revitalization of medieval monasticism also contributed to significant increases in monastic charitable practices. (Cass & Manser)

In the medieval monastic system of charity provision for travelers and visitors was of considerably greater importance than in contemporary charitable practice (although voluntary groups like Travelers’ Aid Societies, continue to be of considerable importance in the relocation of immigrants in the U.S.) Benedictine rule mandated an Office of the Cellarer, whose duty it was to care for the sick, children, the poor and guests.

Quite a different approach to charity and poverty grew out of the Franciscan movement of the 13th century. Following the example of Francis of Assisi (and norms of voluntary poverty like those already evident in the Augustine Rule discussed above), Franciscans made a virtue of voluntary poverty even while advocating charity toward the involuntary poor.

At least from the 14th and 15th centuries, confraternities and lay associations like the *grand schule* of Venice and the Portuguese *misericórdia* became common. (Russell-Wood, 1968) The Society of St. Vincent de Paul ("Paulist Order") was founded as an association of catholic laymen to 'promote the spiritual welfare of members through works of charity, material and spiritual" in 1845.

Suppression of the monasteries, together with other economic dislocations that led to dramatic increases in poverty, vagabondage and beggary in England in the 16th century made of the century a period of "welfare reform" much like the twentieth. Very little of the ecclesiastical wealth seized in the English suppressions went to the state. () Most went instead as state patronage to various friends and supporters of the court, laying what some believe to be the economic basis of the unique English system of country estates (more than a few of which were located and still bear the names of abbeys and other monastic buildings).

In the early modern period, public, state responsibility for the poor began to gradually replace the institutional charities of the medieval church. Municipal authorities in England, Germany and the lowlands attempted a variety of punishment, suppressions, and relief. Localism, filial responsibility and community control of vagabonds and itinerants were prominent among the issues addressed in the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601, that has had an enduring impact upon Anglo-American welfare practice. The medieval practice of municipal ordinances against begging has recently been revived in the U.S. In response to the issue of contemporary homelessness, Seattle enacted an ordinance against "aggressive begging" in 1988, and Atlanta adopted an even more rigorous statute in 1991.

In the Reformation, Luther and Calvin were both relatively hard on the poor --pushing to new extremes the early medieval skepticism of worthiness first identified by St. Ambrose and St. Augustine of Hippo (Morris, 104) Much of the contemporary "work ethic" that has such an enduring impact on welfare policy is rooted in reformation protestant ideas.

In colonial America, the Great Awakening was an important period of religious revivalism and populist humanitarianism from approximately 1725-1745. Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were the foremost American exponents. There are suggestions scattered throughout the nonprofit history that the Great Awakening may be of pivotal importance in the extension of the philanthropic and charitable practices of aristocratic and beau monde society to the lower classes. (Bremner, 1988, pp) Likewise, elimination of the practice of primogeniture in the American Revolution also had an important effect on breaking up inherited family fortunes in the U.S. However, full and complete treatment of the formative influences of the Great Awakening and the American Revolution on the American commons is not currently part of the repertory of nonprofit and voluntary research.

The first half of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly a renaissance period for the American commons. DeTocqueville was, by no means, the only visitor to 19th century America who was profoundly affected by what he saw. After her triumphant North American tour in 1850-52, Jenny Lind is said to have grown tired of the frivolous life of the theatre, married her accompanist, Otto Goldschmidt and devoted the rest of her life to charity. (This information is from wall notes of an exhibition at the National Gallery, May, 1988)

A wealth of utopian and communitarian movements inspired by Robert Owen, the Fourists and others also date from the mid-19th century, roughly the time of Tocqueville's visit. Although examination of social movements falls outside the scope of this work, the many possible connections of these and more contemporary movements to the theory of the commons should be on the agenda of future research. Kropotkin's term "mutual aid", for example, continues to be a useful descriptor (often in conjunction with "self-help") of one set of interests among nonprofit and voluntary action scholars. (C.f., Borkman,)

The Emergence of Charity Organization

A renaissance in charitable practice, on par with the earlier transformations of Constantinian, Cluniac, Franciscan and Protestant ones, emerged in Britain and the United States after the middle of the 19th century and is still spreading throughout the world. The key emphases of this movement are upon efficiency and effectiveness in the organization of charitable practices. Some rather obvious “latent functions” are also involved. For example, it is becoming increasingly clear that women in both the Progressive Era and New Deal Washington used associations to further their causes. (Muncy, 1991; New Deal book)

Advocates of charitable endeavor first became interested in improving the organization of their efforts, or what are today called “service delivery issues”. Large cities like London, New York, and Chicago were during times of economic distress faced with literally hundreds of small, independent and uncoordinated helping efforts, and affluent people (particularly those most sympathetic to the doctrines of rugged individualism, social Darwinism and scientific management) felt themselves constantly besieged by appeals for donations. (A somewhat similar condition exists today in the junk-mail charities chaos of the present.) The emergent solution was to better “organize” the charities, improve the “efficiency” of their efforts, eliminate “duplication” and “overlapping” services. Although some of the terminology has been refined, the charity organization problematic retains a remarkable public vitality even today.

The intellectual basis for this movement toward improved charity organization also had implications in the other common domains (health care, the arts, sports, and so forth) as well. This broader focus may properly be called “scientific philanthropy”. At the heart of “scientific philanthropy” and its close cousin “scientific charity” are the assumptions that there are rational “principles” governing philanthropic and charitable practice and that these principles can be discovered and taught. Andrew Carnegie’s attempt to articulate a new public standard of behavior for the rich is but one of a number of related attempts at locating such principles of philanthropy evident in the late 19th century. Amos Warner’s textbook and Kropotkin’s study of the biological basis of Mutual Aid are other examples of this same spirit, as is Frederick Goff’s campaign for community trusts that

included a speech to the American Banker's Association in 1919. (Goff, 1922)

This practical interest in discovering the "principles of social improvement" energized not only the charity organization society movement (and later the social work profession) but also the emerging American social sciences of Sociology, Economics, Political Science and Psychology.

Social work retains a somewhat unique position in this regard. One of the original founding disciplines of the American Social Science Association (along with Economics, Sociology and Political Science), social work is unique among the American social sciences in never having proclaimed or developed a "pure" or "basic science" approach. This is in marked contrast to economics and political science, in particular. Instead, for most of the current century the social work has been preoccupied with reinforcing its claims as a practice profession.

The development of social work as a profession (one type of commons, as noted in chapter 8) and repeated attempts to gain monopoly control over social services have resulted in a series of major transformations within the larger charity commons. (Lubove, 1970; Wenocur and Reisch, 1989) In this work we are not primarily concerned with professional social work activity. That topic is covered by a large body of literature, and (by the very nature of a professional commons) of interest primarily to professional social workers. Nor are we concerned fundamentally with issues arising out of the large number of personnel in social service occupations who are not professional social workers by virtue of professional training.

Instead, we will address the nonprofessional charity commons --the bewildering variety of independent, voluntary, nonprofit, tax-exempt, or publicly subsidized organizations, mutual aid societies, support groups, self-help groups, and other groups that characterize the modern world of social service to the poor and other disadvantaged members of the underclasses of post-industrial society. Often treated as largely an after-thought by the existing literature on social welfare, voluntary charity remains a considerable activity.

Charitable Volunteering As Volunteer Labor

The perspective of the commons can also be extended to volunteering and volunteerism. Stated simply, volunteer effort, with a youth group, a community fund-raising campaign, a church choir, or in some other context, is a type of leisure time activity. DeLaat (1987) suggests that volunteering should be viewed as a key linkage between sectors. Leisure is, by definition, a sign of affluence. One engaged in an active struggle for survival, for example, a Sudanese tribe member or a Kurdish family, does not have leisure by definition. Likewise, soldiers in battle and for that matter entire nations in wartime, may have respite from conflict, but such respite is not leisure in the usual meaning of the term.

At a quite fundamental level, then, there is an important choice implicit in all decisions of whether or not to “volunteer”, rather than engaging (or as we often say “spending one’s time”) in alternative courses of action such as the private activities of the household (reading, watching TV, intimate or sexual behavior, and so forth), household production (gardening, fishing), state-related activities (paying taxes, voting) or market-related activities (shopping, working a second job).

Presentation as Volunteering

The majority of this chapter is concerned with the problems of charity organization, as that phenomenon is ordinarily understood (concern for the poor, social problems, and so forth) Before getting on with that topic, however, let us take one brief digression

It is fairly common for musicians, actors and artists of all types to refer to their extraordinary talent as a “gift” (we examined aspects of this usage in Chapter 5.) Reports of performances thus often fall clearly within the reciprocal cycle of giving and receiving and giving,

as these artists “share” their gift with audiences. In an age as conscious as ours of public image and media manipulation, we can safely assume that at least some of those reports constitute deliberate, public posturing.

What is far more important, however, than what percentage of such reports are sincere and genuine, are the underlying norms that they point to: Underlying the performances of “great artists” and even the near-great is an unmistakable obligation to perform --to share their gift with the world (that ordinarily make it a common good for those interested and willing to appreciate it.) This norm --still observable in the nonprofit art world of theatres, concert halls, museums, exhibitions, but also in the lecture tours of scientific and mathematical geniuses as well --may be of central importance in understanding all types of volunteering, and worthy of further study. The high school dropout housewife who visits shut-in older people to share her “gift of gab” is engaged in a social act that is remarkably similar in certain respects to the musician, artist or scientist.

The Problem of Charity Organization

Because of the heritage of individualism in Western thought, we have grown accustomed to approaching problems of charity and volunteering from an individual perspective. The above discussion, however, should make it clear that the personal obligations of charity will always be assumed in response to the demands of particular situations, and in specific reaction to the requests of others. Thus, charity has an inherent element of elementary organization associated with it. One can easily find the elementary transactions of patronage, tributes, gifts, potlatches, and offerings evident in various forms of charitable practice. In Buddhist ethics, for example, giving implies three direct steps: giving, receiving and giving and thus, conforms to the concept of potlatch introduced in the previous chapter.

Mutual Aid Societies

One of the most fundamental forms of organized charity is the kind of network of reciprocal giving of assistance based on need called a mutual aid society or network. Mutual aid notions run deep in American thought. Cotton Mather had an idea for a system of neighborhood benefit societies that Benjamin Franklin seems to have borrowed for his Junto. (Boorstin, 1958, 221) By the early twentieth century, mutual aid was evolving in various new directions. Kropotkin gave the notion of mutual aid a curious Darwinian twist when he sought to raise the principle of mutual aid to a determinant of human evolution. (Kropotkin, undated) The settlement house movement placed great stress on the encouragement of mutual aid practices in neighborhoods. (Addams,) The mental health self-help movement in the U.S. originating with Clifford Beers' book, **A Mind Which Found Itself** (1906) and resulting in the formation of a large number of local mental health associations rivals the much more notable philanthropic crusades of Dorothea Dix.

Ethnic Mutual Aid Associations

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mutual aid associations were closely associated with the immigrant experience in the U.S. (Jenkins,) Such groups continue to be an essential part of the successful adaptation of immigrant populations. (Borman, 1984) The mere fact that such an extremely wide diversity of ethnic groups engaged in similar practices with respect to burial, emergency assistance and other types of mutual aid is a clue to the very great likelihood that such practices did not originate after immigration. In all likelihood, many, if not all, immigrant groups brought such practices with them, and subsequently found a uniquely fertile ground for their development here. (Kropotkin, Chapter IV "Mutual Aid Among the Barbarians", Chapter V, "Mutual Aid in the Medieval City," and Chapters VI and VII, both entitled "Mutual Aid Amongst Ourselves.")

The Scots Charitable Society (founded 1657) was the first of a long series of "distinctively American" ethnic mutual aid societies founded by immigrant groups in the United States. (Bremner, 217) (The Scots may be counted as first only by ignoring the mutual aid practices of the indigenous native American populations resident here when the

European invasion began.) The Scots Charitable Society was founded nearly a century before the conquest of the Scottish nation by English forces in 1745. It was probably the creation of immigrants from an independent monarchy with 1) a strong sense of national identity and 2) an acute sense of their minority status in the predominantly English colonies of New England.

From the time of the Scot's Charitable Society in Boston associations devoted to providing mutual aid and support for members of particular ethnic groups have been a stable part of the American urban experience. (Jenkins, 1988) Such associations commonly place a premium on aiding the poor, helping the sick and burying the dead. Boston was an early center of ethnic mutual aid organizations. This was followed by the Charitable Irish Society of Boston, German Society of New York and hundreds of other such societies. (Trattner, 33)

The Independent Order of B'Nai B'Rith was organized in 1843 as a mutual aid society for German Jews. Other ethnic mutual aid associations were not exclusively nationality based. They were also organized along religious lines, as with the Episcopal Charitable Society of Boston founded in 1754 for English immigrants. (Trattner, 33)

A variety of evidence points toward resurgence of ethnic, nationality and language group based mutual aid and self-help activity following recent increased immigration to the U.S. and Canada in the past two decades. (Katz, 1981) More conferences like that sponsored by the Canadian Council on Social Development in 1992 on this topic are needed to fully articulate the role of mutual aid in initiating and defining common action.

Self Help Groups

Borman (1984) defined self help or mutual aid groups as voluntary, self governing, self-regulating associations that emphasize solidarity among peers, self-reliance and commitment to the group's common purpose. One of the questions that arise is whether self-help groups are a type of or something different from, nonprofit organizations and

voluntary associations. In a 1973 study, self help organizations in a medium sized city in the Midwest were characterized in the following way: Although half were founded within the past two years and two thirds by stigmatized groups, with stigmatized members in the majority in over three quarters, 85% had formally elected boards, the majority of which met monthly (58%). Although 68% had constitutions, the majority (56%) had not attained tax-exempt status (not unusual, given the high proportion of new groups), and 72% had budgets under \$5,000. (Trauenstein and Steinman, 1973)

Newsome and Newsome (1983) assume that they are distinct and suggest giving self-help groups a legal status similar to that of nonprofit organizations. It seems more plausible to suggest that they are not different and that groups whose purpose is self-help fit easily into the existing legal categories of nonprofit corporation or unincorporated association. This conclusion may be somewhat obscured, however, by reliance upon the “nonprofit organization” concept that lacks legal reference.

Labor organizations remain one of the most important examples of self-help organizations stressing solidarity and mutual self-interest of members. Self-help organizations have, by no means been restricted entirely to the U.S. and Western Europe. Bouman (1990) updated the anthropological study of Indian credit associations with his study of the economic roles of moneylenders, pawnbrokers and self-help savings and loan associations.

Health-Oriented Self Help Groups

In the past two decades, health has emerged as a common interest around which to organize mutual aid of an entirely different sort. One major facet of this traditional concern has been the rapid proliferation of self-help groups of ill and troubled persons seeking to supplement or substitute for more traditional forms of treatment. The range of patients and problems for which self-help solutions have been posed is truly remarkable: recovering alcoholics, former mental patients,

handicapped children and adults, persons with heart disease, cardiac and stoma patients (Butora, 1990) cancer patients (Kobasa and others, 1991) bereaved parents; Multiple Sclerosis (MS) sufferers, obese people, (Maton, 1990) and many more. Helton (1990) discusses what she terms a “buddy system to improve prenatal care.”

In a number of instances, the purpose of the group is to aid caregivers and “significant others” who may be providing care for an ill person. Toseland and others (1985; 1990) examined the comparative effectiveness of individual and group interventions for supporting family caregivers of frail older people. They found that individual interventions produced more positive effects on the caregivers’ psychological functioning and well being than did group interventions, whereas group interventions produced greater improvements in caregivers' social supports.

Contemporary social support theory is largely an ad hoc, middle range and freestanding creation but several recent writers have begun to explore some of its broader theoretical ramifications. (Collins and Pancoast, 1975; Clary, 1987) Their explorations show promise of connecting with the theory of the commons in a number of interesting ways.

Social support can be defined in a manner that brings to mind the expressive/instrumental dichotomy above: “significant others help the individual mobilize his psychological resources and master his emotional burdens; they share his tasks and they provide him with extra supplies of money, materials, tools, skills and cognitive guidance to improve the handling of his situation.” (Caplan, 1974, 6) Examination of definitions led Clary to conclude, “it appears that there are only two aspects to social support --emotional support and task-oriented support...” (Clary, 59) Likewise Shuman and Brownell (1984, 13) bring to mind the discussion of gifts when they define social support as “an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient.”

One of the most connections between social support and the commons

is the dilemma of individual limits and group potentials for action. A Czech writer, Butora (1989) gives an account of experience with self-help and mutual aid groups. According to the author, self-help is often based on notions of individual self-sufficiency, encouraging individuals to rely on their own strength, knowledge, abilities and experience. The functions of self-help groups include social and emotional support, defense against feelings of isolation and loneliness, stigmatization and provide sources of information and practices pertaining to a given disease or state. Self-help groups also encourage more active participation of patients in assuming greater responsibility for their own health. Interestingly, these are often the reasons cited for participation in other types of commons as well.

Stewart (1990) is explicitly interested in “expanding theoretical conceptualizations of self-help groups.” Self-help groups, he says typically lacked theoretical grounding. He proposes grounding self-help group theory in psychoneuroimmunological and social-learning theories (neither of which takes into consideration the interpersonal and interactional aspects of such groups).

In some cases, emphasis is placed on adaptation of existing social theory. Maton (1990) adopted an ecological framework to view mutual-help groups, and illustrated its usefulness by examining aspects of the social ecology of "fit" members of different types of groups.

Types of Self Help Groups

There are at least four distinct functional types of modern self-help groups (examples are listed in parenthesis):

Groups that focus on conduct reorganization or behavioral change (Weight Watchers, Alcoholics Anonymous)

Groups that utilize the “natural resources” of interpersonal relationships to reduce stress, ameliorate anxiety and cope with grief, loss and irresolvable problems. (Parents without Partners, terminally ill patients)

Defensive groups or mutual protective associations that seek to protect their members from harm, maintain and enhance members identity and self-esteem and raise consciousness.

Growth-oriented groups that concentrate on positive experiences and enhancing personal growth, and self-actualization, of already healthy and secure members.

Self-help groups have seldom figured very significantly in recent discussions of nonprofit and voluntary action because of the absence of theory and because a large proportion of them are unincorporated associations that fall outside the established counting and classifying filters.

Self-help groups also stretch the boundaries of nonprofit and voluntary action beyond the conventionalities of nonprofit organization and voluntary association. An important variant on social support theory is “social network” theory that seems to place emphasis on communication networks rather than organized associations. Goodman and Pynoos (1990) studied a model telephone support program involving peer networks of four or five caregivers in regular telephone conversations. A randomized comparison was made of participants in such networks (n = 31) and participants listening to an informational mini-lecture series assessed over the telephone (n = 35) indicated information gains, increased perceptions of social support, and increased satisfaction with social supports.

Several authors, have at least indirectly, suggested links between self-help groups and cults that can have a major impact on their members' mental health. On the basis of research findings, one author describes the charismatic group, a generic model for such cohesive, intensely ideological movements. (Galant, 1990)

Nelson (1990) offers a theoretical model of “reentry” for victims of spinal cord injury that appears to describe a general model of the benefits of self-help groups. The four phases identified are: buffering, transcending, toughening, and launching. Buffering is the nurturing and protective process of lessening, absorbing, or protecting the newly injured patient against the shock of the many ramifications of the

injury and the indignities of being a patient. Transcending involves helping patients recognize and rise above culturally imposed limitations and negative beliefs about people with disabilities. "Toughening up" requires compensating for physical limitations, gaining independence, and maintaining social interactions without "using the disability." Finally, launching involves exposing patients to the real world, exploring options for living in the community, promoting personal autonomy and decision making, and (4) facilitating the ejection of the patient from the rehabilitation program.

As an exercise in applying the theory developed here, the reader with interests in this type of clinical self-help group might try fitting Nelson's reentry model with the concept of repertory, the various elementary forms of benefactor and other components of the theory previously introduced. It should be clear from the result that self-help groups belong within the range of commons along with nonprofit organizations, voluntary associations and the many types of common action discussed in Chapter 5. It should also be clear that although the treatment here is very general, the theory of the commons has potential practice and policy implications worthy of further exploration.

Conclusion

Preoccupation with issues of professionalism and bureaucratization has created a distorted image of the contemporary world of charitable practice in which the ordinary charitable responses called forth by the very ancient and deeply engrained ethics of interpersonal aid are pictured as a mere prelude; a residual action that is only adequate until the experts and professionals arrive.

This picture is in serious conflict with the facts of the case as many people with problems understand them today: a large portion of those engaged in charitable activities of all types are neither professionals nor officials. They are individuals and groups, acting upon traditional norms of personal charity through forms of mutual aid and self-help.

Their actions constitute theoretical as well as practical challenges for nonprofit and voluntary action research. The personal acts of aiding themselves while aiding others are not easily reconciled with the “either-or” nature of self-interest discussions of charity in the nonprofit literature. Nor is the autonomy evident in the self-help movement easily reconciled with traditional professionalism of helping professions like clinical and counseling psychology, social work, psychiatry and medicine. Self-help and mutual aid organizations are not “social agencies” *per se*, nor is the radical individualism of most discussions of self-help easily reconciled with the social nature of the commons. Finally, the national and international networks of self-help groups and mutual aid societies are not easily reconciled with existing models of the nonprofit, and so forth sector. In these many ways and others as well, self-help and mutual aid pose interesting and fundamental challenges to the theory of the commons.

Feelings and opinions are recruited, the heart is enlarged and the human mind is developed only by the reciprocal influence of men upon one another.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

10. Volunteer Labor and Prosocial Behavior

One way to begin to address the challenge posed at the end of the last chapter is to examine the models of the commons that emerge on the home territory of the self-help movement. Far from

What we are calling the theory of altruism is that portion of the theory of the commons that is most directly related to matters of individual psychology. This topic is ordinarily thought to encompass a number of related issues: altruistic motivation, and such specific altruistic behaviors as donating, volunteering and actualization, as well as situation-specific behavior such as crisis and disaster responses. In addition, we will expand the topic to include such additional issues as learning, the psychology of free riding and the nature of altruistic rationality. Moreover, the use of the concept of endowment in the theory of the commons is anchored in the multiple precedents of psychological research.

We shall not be addressing a number of important questions or examining several significant psychological approaches. Most prominent among these are the whole range of questions raised by the social biology debates: We shall not address any of the interrelated

“life science” issues of altruism: the implications of a genetic or evolutionary basis for human altruistic behavior; the emergence and development of altruism; genetic similarity as a basis for friendship selection; ethical reasoning and prosocial behavior in small children; or observations of “altruistic” behavior in ants, birds, chimpanzees and other animal species. Such core socio-biological concepts as kin selection, reciprocal altruism, the genetic basis of altruism and male-female reproductive strategies needs further examination, but not here. In addition, the clinical psychology literatures discussing clinical issues but not reporting research results, and literature on such esoteric subjects as the relationship between altruistic behavior and physical attractiveness was also overlooked. Each of these is an important topic. Indeed, to some degree the very importance of these issues is reflected in the enormity of available literature on the subject. A recent literature search of the Psychology Abstracts, for example, revealed nearly 600 citations on the question of the “prosocial” behavior of children for the five years prior to 1990, and nearly the same number dealing with “altruism”.

Altruism

One of the fundamental components of psychological interest in prosocial behavior is the measurement of altruistic behavior. Yalom (1982) suggests that altruism involves leaving the world a better place to live in, serving others and participation in charity.

Such a conception is reminiscent of traditional conceptions of philanthropy. Kauffmann (1984) defines altruism in terms of behavior that is voluntary, aids others, and expects no reward. Such a conception corresponds closely with the altruism-self interest dichotomy of nonprofit organizational approaches discussed in chapter 2.

An important difference, however, between contemporary psychological research and nonprofit organizational studies is the manner in that the psychologists have looked at the larger picture and attempted to cast altruism as one type of a broader class of prosocial behavior. According to Kaufmann, prosocial behavior can be either positive or negative mood related (by positive feelings or negative

affect), obligatory, associated with the selfish aspects of helping or compassionate.

Self-transcendence is a term for the psychological mechanism assumed by the theory that allows individuals to use hedonism and self-actualization in ways that transcend their self-interest. (Yalom, 1982)

Hardin (1982) argues that pure altruism cannot persist and expand over time. The principal forms of discriminating altruisms among humans are individualism, familialism, cronyism, tribalism, and patriotism. It is argued that universalism (altruism practiced without discriminating kinship, acquaintanceship, shared values, or propinquity in time/space) is not recommended, even as an ideal.

Another major issue is how altruistic behavior is learned. A model of the acquisition of altruism in children, developed by R.B. Cialdini, D.J. Baumann and others (1981), might equally well be applied to adults: The model proposed three steps: presocialization, awareness that others value altruistic behavior and adoption or internalization of the altruistic norm. This fits in nicely with our role-taking perspective. Rushton (1982) reviews the literature on the learning of altruism, through the family, mass media and educational system. He concludes that classical conditioning, observational learning, reinforcement and learning from verbal procedures such as preaching are all important.

Jankofsky and Steucher (1983-4) argue that altruism is a basic trait of human character and behavior that can be studied in an interdisciplinary context. Comparative evaluations over long periods of time and in different SES and political structures can be made.

Karuzza (1983) noted that while a great deal of research had been done on the topics of altruism and helping behavior, the generalizability and impact of this work on applied settings has been limited.

Frohlich and Oppenheimer (1984) investigated interdependent utility elements in three types of interactive preferences, that they termed altruistic, egalitarian and difference maximizing. When 183 Canadian

and Usonian undergraduates were paired anonymously, and chose payoffs that would variously benefit themselves and their pair-mate, non-maximizing and non-self interested behavior was found consistently. Although attempts to explain the non-self interested choices by reference to psychological and ideological constructs was unsuccessful, statistical relationships between these choices and partisan political preferences were found.

One view, altruism is opposed to egoism as we have seen. Yet, Sober (1989) argues that egoism and altruism need not be viewed as diametrically opposite single-factor theories of motivation that view a single kind of preference (self-regarding or other-regarding) as moving people to act. Treating motives as deriving from single causes may explain why altruistic and egoistic hypotheses fail to explain observed behaviors. He also recommends distinguishing altruistic motivations from altruistic actions.

From another perspective, the opposite of altruism is hedonism. Worach-Kardas (1980) sought to link leisure time use (in terms of instrumental activeness and expressive activeness) to the hedonism-altruism dichotomy.

Daniel Batson has been identified by other researchers (Nancy Eisenberg) as the foremost psychological advocate of the existence of altruistic behavior. In a 1990 article, Batson suggested that psychologists had, for many years, assumed (along with the nonprofit organization researchers) that humans were social egoists, caring exclusively for themselves, but that recent research evidence in support of the empathy-altruism points instead to feelings of genuine empathy for others in need, as well as the capability of caring for them for their own sakes and not for our own. (Batson, 1990)

At the same time, numerous studies confirm the importance of ethnocentrism and group membership at various levels as an important intervening effect. Shane and Shane (1989) provide a psychoanalytic discussion of what they term "otherhood", or the attainment of the status of other for someone else's self. In a study of Canadian and Japanese undergraduates, Iwata (1989) found that in both cultures,

person perception was more positive and affiliative/altruistic behavior stronger toward those with whom the subjects had close personal relations than toward those who were more distant.

A comparative study of middle class female Hindu, Muslims and Christian undergraduates in India found no significant differences in altruistic behaviors. (Seth and Gupta, 1984) However, among the similarities was the fact that all three groups showed a tendency to allocate higher rewards to members of their own group. (see also Seth and Gupta, 1983)

As with many other factors, there may also be important differences in altruistic behavior by age, gender, and other variables such as income. In a study of 370 subjects from age 5 to 95, Weiner and Graham (1989) found that kindness and altruism, pity and helping behavior were all more prevalent among older subjects, whereas anger decreased.

The gender question has also received considerable attention. In a study of 35 men and 35 women, aged 17-68, Mills, Pedersen and Grusec (1989) found no differences between men and women in their resolution of pro-social dilemmas involving self-sacrifice. However, women used more empathic reasoning with other-choices, and attributed their self-choices more to minimal conflict and less to concern with the other's interests than men. Gender differences were also reported in subject's self-reported feelings about their choices.

In fact, Ma (1985) identified just such an altruistic hierarchy: The likelihood of performing an altruistic act depends on the relationship with the beneficiary, with probability decreasing in the following order: close relatives, best friends, strangers who are very weak, very young or elite in society; common strangers and enemies.

Batson and others (1986) reject the likelihood of an "altruistic personality". Although they found evidence of association of increased helping with three personality variables--self-esteem, ascription of responsibility and empathic concern, they concluded that the underlying motivations appeared egoistic rather than altruistic.

Altruistic motivation was said to involve benefit to another as an end in itself, while egoistic motivation helping was seen as an instrumental means to avoid shame and guilt for not helping.

Prosocial Behavior

In general, the concept of pro-social behavior appears to have originated as a general antonym to anti-social behavior, such as shoplifting (Fedler and Pryor, 1984). Its initial theoretical value appears to be to separate the issues of motivation and consequences that are so thoroughly intertwined in the concept of altruism. The concept itself appears to be one of the products of new thinking about moral behavior and its social and cognitive development, research and theorizing about positive social behavior that flourished in the 1970's. (Asprea and Betocchi, 1981) The renewed emphasis also brought into focus the need for refinement of the conceptualization and measurement of empathy, and altruism has been a major challenging facing studies of prosocial behavior in the last decade. (Eisenberg, 1983).

What does the psychological literature identify as the range of prosocial behavior? We can get some idea by looking at the range of substantive topics under study in the 1980's. They include care-giving in families (Hall, 1990; Schmidt, Dalbert and Montada, 1986); interpersonal helping behavior such as helping a graduate student on a research project (Diaz, Earle and Archer, 1987); whistle-blowing (Miceli and Near, 1988); organizational behavior, compliance and commitment (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986); public goods (Yamagishi, 1986); "sociability work" (charitable volunteering) (Daniels, 1985); response to mass emergencies (Lystad, 1985); spontaneous comforting behavior (Samter and Burleson, 1984); sperm donation (Jarrige and Moron, 1982); organizational behavior (Staw, 1984); helping behavior (Wilson and Petruska, 1984).

In seeking to characterize whistle blowing, Dozier and Miceli (1985) argue that whistle blowing is generally not an act of pure altruism, but rather "prosocial" behavior that involves both selfish (egoistic) and

unselfish (altruistic) motives.

And what is prosocial behavior related to? Here too, the field is somewhat unsettled, and the choices are many: empathy (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Elizur, 1985; Diaz, Earle and Archer, 1987; Diaz, Rolando, Maricela, Palos, Rosa and others); sympathy (Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller, Fultz and others, 1989); personal distress (Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller and Fultz, 1989); age-based attitudes (Ryan and Heaven, 1988); satisfaction with performance (Organ, 1988); gender (Stockard, Van de Kragt and Dodge, 1988); need (Krishnan, 1988) anticipation of reciprocity (Krishnan, 1988); personal norms (Schmitt, Dalbert and Montada, 1986); mood (Carlson and Miller, 1987; Shaffer and Smith, 1985); social intelligence (Marlowe, 1986); aggression (Rutter, 1985); task-group experiences (Weathers, Messe and Aronoff, 1984); alcohol consumption (Steele, Critchlow and Liu, 1985); non-urban residence (Amato, 1983); opinion-formation (Orive, 1984); culture (Miller, 1984); religion (Batson, 1983; Morgan, 1983); personality (Penner, Escarraz and Ellis, 1983; Reykowski and Smolenska, 1980); Autonomy (Kofta, 1982); group influences (Mullen, 1983); social responsibility (Banu and Puhon, 1983); attribution of motives (Schlenker, Hallam and McCown, 1983); cost (Staw, 1984; Krishnan, 1988); moral development (Morgan, 1983; Bar-Tal, 1982; Van Lange and Liebrand, 1989; Eisenberg, 1982; Tietjen, 1986; Feldshtein, 1983); focus on self (Gibbons and Wicklund, 1982); and cooperation (Van Lange and Liebrand, 1989)

There have been efforts to bring some conceptual order to this mass of variables. Brief and Motowidlo (1986), for example, argue for four individual antecedents to prosocial organizational behavior: empathy, neuroticism, educational level and mood. They also point to nine contextual antecedents that may be of particular interest to organizational researchers: reciprocity norms, group cohesiveness, role models, reinforcement contingencies, leadership styles, organizational climate, situational stressors and any additional organizational conditions affecting moods and feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

A cross-cultural study of Brazilian and American undergraduates

Bontempo, Lobel and Triandis (1990) categorized subjects as either *allocentric* (subordinating personal goals to the goals of others) or *idiocentric* (subordinating the goals of others to personal goals).

Shaffer and Graziano (1983) concluded that many everyday acts of altruism are interpretable as forms of hedonism: Moods were associated with increases in the amount of help given if the request was likely to have positive consequences. Moreover, there was a clear tendency for moods to inhibit the expression of a prosocial act that could have negative consequences for the benefactor. According to Hook (1982), share-the-gain norms are generally stronger than share-the-loss norms.

Empathy is thought to lead to increased helping only under socially evaluative circumstances. (Fultz and others, 1986) Yet, in 1982, Underwood and Moore reported no relation between affective empathy and prosocial behavior on the basis of a literature review and meta-analysis. Five years later, Eisenberg and Miller (1987) explicitly sought to overturn this finding with their findings of low to moderate positive relations between empathy and both prosocial behavior and cooperative/socially competent behavior.

Batson (1983) reported a series of three studies in which a distinction was made between two emotional responses to suffering --personal distress and empathy --and two associated motivations to help. Personal distress was hypothesized to lead to egoistic motivation while empathy was associated with altruistic motivation. In the first two experiments, the hypothesized relations were identified. However, in the third, where when the cost of helping was especially high, results suggest an important qualification on the link between empathic emotion and altruistic motivation. Apparently, making helping costly evoked self-concern that overrode any altruistic impulse produced by feeling empathy.

Staw (1984) recommends treating cooperative behavior in organizations as a form of prosocial behavior. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) call for further investigation of prosocial behavior in organizations and identify thirteen specific kinds of prosocial organizational behavior. Individual antecedents of such behavior are said to include empathy, neuroticism, educational level, and mood.

Contextual antecedents include reciprocity norms, group cohesiveness, role models, reinforcement contingencies, leadership style, organizational climate, stressors, and anything that affects moods and feelings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. They go on to suggest that four areas of research are necessary to advance the study of prosocial organizational behavior: basic dimensions of POB; possible personal correlates; organizational conditions, practices, and structures that affect prosocial behavior; and how to increase the incidence of prosocial behavior in organizational functioning. They conclude that the construct is value-laden but that some types of POB are important elements of individual performance in organizations.

Smith, Organ and Near (1983) suggest that organizational citizenship behavior includes at least 2 dimensions: altruism, or helping specific persons, and generalized compliance, a more impersonal form of conscientious citizenship.

According to Elizur (1985), empathy consists of four principal components: perceptual, affective, cognitive and object-relations.

According to Pulkkinen (1984), research through the mid-1980's tended to focus on prosocial development as well as on the inhibition and control of aggressive behavior. In a review of the literature on families, Rutter (1985) concluded that aggression in family settings is least likely when prosocial feelings are well developed, when good social relationships are enjoyed, when there is adequate self-control under stress, when the individual experiences high self-esteem, and when there are effective social problem-solving skills.

In a study of 140 male undergraduates, Weathers, Messe and Aronoff (1984) found that that prior group experiences affected prosocial behavior. Ss were more willing to help when they were asked to do so by their former co-worker and when they had had an egalitarian group experience.

A number of factor analyses offer further light on the nature of prosocial behavior. Walkey, Siegert, McCormick and Taylor (1987) found three principal factors in an inventory of socially supportive

behaviors. The three are labeled Nondirective Support, Directive Guidance and Tangible Assistance. Elizur (1985) claims four principal components of empathy: perception, affective, cognitive and object-relations. Marlowe (1986) located prosocial attitudes within a factor structure of five domains of social intelligence. The other four were labeled social skills, empathy skills, emotionality and social anxiety. Prosocial attitudes were further divided into social interest and social self-efficacy.

Batson (1983) suggests that a function of religion may be to extend the range of limited, kin-specific altruistic impulses that are genetically derived, through the use of kinship language and imagery. Such terms as “brotherly love” may provoke and sustain various types of prosocial behavior.

Tyler, Orwin and Schurer (1982) set out to test the hypothesis that holding prosocial norms will not increase prosocial behavior in situations in which such behavior has high personal costs, because those holding prosocial norms will redefine the situation as inappropriate for norm activation.

Gibbons and Wicklund (1982) identify two conditions under which self-focus actually enhanced prosocial behavior. The situation must clearly set off an orientation toward acting on a value of helping; and the person who is called upon to act prosocially must not come to the helping situation with personal preoccupations inimical to thinking about helping. Both of these are related to our assumptions stated earlier.

Bar-Tal (1982) suggests that cognitive, social-perspective, moral skills and self-regulatory skills determine the extent, quantity and quality of helping actions. Altruistic behavior is said to be a specific, highest-level kind of helping behavior.

Helping Behavior

Kerber (1984) examined helping in five non-emergency situations and

concluded that willingness to help in the 5 nonemergency situations was negatively related to costs for helping and positively related to rewards for helping and to personality differences in altruism. He says individual differences in willingness to help may reflect variations in situation perception. In this case, the altruistic person would be an individual who consistently evaluates helping situations more favorably in terms of the potential rewards and costs of providing help.

Moore (1984) cautions that sharing and helping are fundamentally different behavior and should not be confused. Also distinguishes reciprocal altruism from cooperation, mutualism and nepotism. Eber and Kunz (1984) argue that the desire to help others should be seen in the framework of the maturational achievements of the development of the self.

Bystander Behavior

An interest tangent on helping behavior arose in the late 1960's with the celebrated Kitty Genovese case. The young woman was assaulted and killed in front of a large number of onlookers who failed to come to her aid. This incident raised the interesting and troubling question of the circumstances under which "bystanders" would intervene to provide assistance and when they would not, and led to a number of interesting research endeavors. Ethically, the issue is an old and familiar one, dating at least to the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, in which an "outsider" (the Samaritan) came to the aid of a victim after two members of his own community had ignored his cries for aid.

Two variables that should be of primary importance to a bystander deciding whether or not to help would appear to be the need of the victim and the cost to the bystander. A review of the literature, however, provides inconsistent empirical support for the need variable. (Shotland and Stebbins, 1983)

Dozier and Miceli (1985) provide a modified version of a bystander

intervention framework that traces the decision process through 5 steps: awareness of the event, deciding that the event is an emergency, deciding personal responsibility for helping, choosing a method of helping, and implementing the intervention.

Meindl and Lerner (1983) examined what they termed “heroic motives” --the willingness of undergraduates to confront someone insulting a partner. Rimland (1982) found what he termed “empirical support for the Golden Rule” by showing that selfish people were less likely to be happy than unselfish people. (Both selfishness and happiness were established as ratings of their friends of 216 college students.)

In a psychological twist on familiar “costs” and “rewards” formulations, Smith, Keating and Stotland (1989) introduce the possibility of an entirely new level of information exchange based upon sensitivity to the emotional state of the victim and feedback. Specifically, they suggest that the prospect of empathic joy, conveyed by feedback from the victim anticipating help accounts for the special tendency of empathic witnesses to help. In an experimental situation, empathically aroused witnesses offered help reliably to a person in distress only when they expected feedback on the result. When denied feedback, they were no more likely to help than their empathic counterparts, who were, in any event, unaffected by the availability of feedback in deciding whether to help.

DeGuzman (1979) studied by-stander responses to a lost passenger among 120 Philippine commuters. Contrary to expectations, urban commuters helped as frequently as rural, and the quality of intervention was found to be better when a pair of bystanders, rather than a lone bystander, were involved. (De Guzman, 1979)

Donative Behavior

An additional topic that has interested psychological researchers is what might be termed donor behavior: Literature on donor psychology

deals with a number of different types of donations, and the attendant issues they raise: Money, blood, organs, sperm, and children are just some of the objects donated that have been the subject of research. (Kessler, 1975; Titmuss, 1970) At times, this issue also involves cross-cultural implications: For example, in parts of rural Mexico it is apparently traditional for the majority of parents to “donate” their children to the grandparents. (Gramajo, 1988)

It would appear that inducements may aid in inducing initial donations, but that other factors are stronger in continued donation: Ferrari, Barone, Jason and Rose (1985) found that non-monetary incentives significantly increased first time blood donations among a group of 80 college students of both sexes when compared with a control group receiving altruistic appeals only. Such incentives were not considered effective, however, with repeat donors.

It would appear also that even major donations might not be psychologically harmful. Sharma and Enoch (1987) found, in a study of 14 donors and a control group of 9 nondonors refused on medical grounds, that kidney donation does not cause long-term adverse psychological reactions. Parisi and Katz (1986) in a cluster analysis of pre-and post-donation responses by 110 organ donors identified both positive beliefs (“humanitarian benefits” and feelings of pride) and negative beliefs (fear of body mutilation and of receiving inadequate medical care in life threatening situations). Hessing and Elffers (1987) identified two potential “death anxieties” operative in the organ donation context: general attitude toward death and fear of being declared dead too soon. These same authors earlier found that a questionnaire survey of 143 students found neither a direct relation between general self-esteem and post mortem organ donation nor between physical self-esteem and donation. A significant relationship, however, was observed between fear of death and donation behavior with regard to Ss with negative physical self-esteem. (Hessing and Elffers, 1985)

Results of a comparison of 186 blood donors and a control group of 106 nondonors indicate that both the aversive nature of the donation procedure and the donor's motivation exerted considerable influence

on the donors' decision to return and donate again. (Edwards and Zeichner, 1985) Additionally, the donors' experience of physical discomfort and fearfulness about the donation procedure made the major contributions to the donation's aversive nature. Results also reveal significant differences among nondonor, ex-donor, and irregular and regular donor groups on several personality characteristics, on their motives for donating, and on the components comprising the aversive nature of the donation procedure.

O'Malley and Andrews (1983) examined the impact of emotions on giving behavior. Happy, guilty, and neutral mood states in 90 undergraduates were compared with responses to an opportunity to donate blood for free, to donate in exchange for \$5, or to choose between donating for free or for \$5. As expected, there was a significantly higher incidence of helping when Ss felt happy or guilty as opposed to emotively neutral. Contrary to predictions, helping was unaffected by the type of incentive Ss were offered in interaction with their mood state. However, the type of incentive did seem to influence the post-donation emotions of Ss: Guilty Ss who donated for money felt significantly less guilty following donation than prior to it, and happy Ss felt more self-altruistic (kind and generous) following donation when they helped for free.

Piliavin, Callero and Evans (1982) introduce the possibility of an affective "addiction" to blood donation, through a complex emotional response set in motion by the donor's initial anxiety, as one of the complex set of motivations for donation.

In a study of 22 Australian semen donors, Daniels found that, in contrast to some commonly held views concerning the importance of anonymity for this group of donors, there were important psychological bonds and interest in resulting offspring.

One major focus of the donations research is on adding to the repertory of donor-solicitation skills: Fraser and Hite (1989) found that offers to match funds, paired with legitimization of paltry donations, increased compliance rates and donation sizes and generated greater revenues than either tactic used alone. Two field experiments by

LaTour and Manrai (1989) with 2,000 community residents manipulated informational (through a direct mail letter about donating blood) and normative (a telephone request to donate blood from another resident) influences and found that both influences interacted to yield substantial increases in donations. Another study found that subjects who approached either friends or strangers with a direct face-to-face request, including the fact that they themselves had just donated, were more likely to solicit additional donors than any combination of media publicity, personal letters and follow-up phone calls. (Jason, Rose, Ferrari and Barone, 1984)

Weyant (1984) and others, have found that adding a phrase like “even a penny will help” at the end of a solicitation request significantly increased the proportion of those who donated. Lipsitz, Kallmeyer, Ferguson and Abas (1989) found that asking for an additional commitment during a reminder call can appreciably increase blood drive participation rates for college students.

On the other hand, Wiesenthal and Spindel (1989) reported no statistically significant differences in return rates among 209 first-time blood donors who received follow-up telephone contacts using four different “scripts” and a control group receiving no follow-up contact. Research in Germany by Strack, Schwarz and Kronenberger (1987) suggests differential effectiveness of “abstract” and “concrete” appeals in generating funds.

Williams and Williams (1989) did a door-to-door donation study of 204 households. Their results support the existence of two distinct patterns of the strength of sources of influence on donation requests: On the one hand, they found that if the underlying motive for complying with a donation request was some form of external impression management (as hypothesized in the door-in-the-face technique and an earlier social impact theory put forth by Latane), stronger influences were likely to have greater effect. If, however, compliance is internally motivated, such as by self-perception (as hypothesized in the foot-in-the-door technique), the strength of a source of influence probably will have little or no effect. Giecken and Yavas (1986) assessed the potential impact of opinion leaders on

donation behavior. They concluded that the impact of opinion leaders was greatest when the leader was demographically similar to the prospective donors, actively involved in the topic and attentive to mass media messages about the topic.

Another major thrust of donations research has been to isolate characteristics of individual donors. One such study compared 715 donors with 1,245 nondonors of money and time to nonprofit human service agencies. Donors were more likely than nondonors to be employed, have some college, be older, have larger incomes, have a more positive attitude toward the agency's fund-raising efforts, believe volunteer training is important, have benefited from the agency, and think the agency is efficient at channeling funds to the needy. (Harvey and McCrohan, 1988) Another study of heavy blood donors (for example, those who donated most frequently) were predominantly male, older and less educated, effectively reached by direct mail and motivated by the perception that their 'blood type is always in demand'. (Tucker, 1987)

Gender is an issue of some importance in this context: Carducci and others (1989) found a greater willingness to become organ donors among female college students than among their male counterparts. Another study found that Canadian men and women donated about equally to a voluntary blood donor system, but that women were less likely to donate to a market-based blood procurement system. (Lightman, 1982)

Age is also an important factor. In a cross-sectional study of persons aged 5-75 that controlled for financial costs, elderly persons proved to be the most generous. (Midlarsky and Hannah, 1989)

The ethics of various forms of donation are always of considerable concern in nonprofit and voluntary settings. Bouressa and O'Mara (1987) discuss the ethical implications of informed consent of organ donors, brain death, the emotional needs of the competent donor and the emotional responses of health care providers engaged in retrieving organs.

Quigley, Gaes and Tedeschi (1989) found that any information that could suggest selfish motivation (whether the prosocial actor was aware of the information or not) was found to detract from attributions of altruism, charitableness, benevolence, and friendliness. When no information for selfish motivation was present, positive attributions occurred.

Volunteering

The behavior of volunteers has been a stable, long-standing interest within ARNOVA and the broader nonprofit and voluntary action community. (Rose, 1955; Smith and Freedman, 1972; Smith, 1974) To anyone familiar with the literature on volunteering and volunteerism, the psychological studies in this area will be much more familiar territory than many of the topics previously discussed. However, in contrast with the traditional social literature on voluntarism (c.f., Sundeen, 1990), most of the studies in the psychological literature involve investigations with undergraduate student populations.

McCarthy and Rogers (1982) found evidence of the paradoxical quality of altruistic behavior. In a study of 48 undergraduates, half of an experimental group who had lost a reward still agreed to volunteer help, while all of a control group who gained the same reward agreed. Subjects who had lost rated themselves higher on altruism than those who refused, those who gained and a control group who were not asked to help. The authors concluded that their results suggest the most effective way of inducing altruistic responding may be to provide an extrinsic reward. However, this can undermine intrinsic motivation and reduce future helping behavior. At the same time, loss of reward may raise self-ratings of altruism for those who help and increase the likelihood that they will help again.

Types of Support Groups

...the growth of a vast range of support, self-help and “natural helping” groups in the past two decades. Within the practice contexts of mental health, aging and alcohol services and other areas, a voluminous literature has grown up in this area. An electronic literature search, for example, turned up more than 700 citations on “social support” in the period 1984-1991. Much of this literature, however, is highly empirical and practical in intent, and numerous sources comment on the lack of theoretical development in this area. Social support theory appears an ideal candidate to develop in concert with the theory of the commons.

Because of the central place of social approval and affirmation in support theory, it could be of major long-term importance in explaining the dynamics of why and how people become involved in charity, philanthropy and other common activities.

Disaster Response

Many of the clearest cases of social affirmation processes in operation are to be found in the aftermath of various types of disasters. In many respects, the volunteer fire department is the quintessential American symbol of voluntary action. (Perkins, 1989) Recent work by nonprofit and voluntary action researchers in Australia, Canada and elsewhere on organized disaster response services points up an important and understudied phenomenon. (Britton, 1991) Modern disaster response studies remind us that nonprofit and voluntary action has also long been important during and after floods, landslides, tornadoes and myriad other forms of disaster. Moreover, disaster research points to important international and cross-cultural examples of concerted common action. Britton reviews the implications of many of these studies for voluntary action research.

Edney and Bell (1984) conducted a study in which 180 undergraduates divided into groups of 3 participated in what the authors termed a commons game in which they had to harvest resources from a shared pool so as to maximize their individual harvests without overexploiting the pool. In one third of the groups, the group

experienced a disaster” that cancelled all their earnings. A second third only one member experienced the disaster, and in the remaining third there was no disaster. In this gaming environment, stealing was about five times as frequent as altruism. However, groups made higher scores and showed more altruism and less stealing when members' scores were tied to the group's score. Paradoxically, more stealing occurred in groups that did not experience ruin. The authors concluded that stealing of this type was in fact functional in preserving the life of the commons, but not in improving members' scores.

Conclusion

Psychological researchers have invested a good deal of common effort in the investigation of prosocial behavior. In the process, they have provided a number of important avenues for further exploration by the interdisciplinary community of nonprofit and voluntary action scholars. Most importantly, the concept of prosocial behavior --even in the present, somewhat uncertain form in which operationally oriented researchers have left it --appears to be an umbrella concept vastly superior to the altruism/selfinterest dichotomy that still permeates far too much of the nonprofit and voluntary action dialogue.

Popular stereotypes notwithstanding, one does not need to wear a hair shirt and take vows of life-time poverty, chastity and total commitment to altruistic self-denial in order to engage in prosocial behavior, or participate authentically in a commons. At the same time, one hardly needs to add that the commons hardly has a monopoly on pro-social behavior. For example, one of the genuinely intriguing issues that economists understand, but which other social scientists have been somewhat prone to ignore are the pro-social implications of market consequences pointed to by Adam Smith's famous (but often confusing) "hidden hand" concept.

At the same time, much of the present psychological literature is limited in generalizability, because of the tendency to focus heavily on studies of captive populations of school children and college students,

and on the origins and development of moral attitudes. While these may be important questions in themselves, their utility for enriching the nonprofit and voluntary action dialogue is somewhat limited. However, many of those limitations would be enormously expanded if similar investigations were conducted with adult volunteers (and non-volunteer control groups), patrons and other common participants and beneficiaries. Some intriguing starts have already been made in this area in the by-stander studies, in disaster studies, and certain other areas, but much significant investigation of this type remains to be done.

If people are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased.

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

11. An Interdisciplinary Value Theory

The 1972 interdisciplinary voluntary action task force planning conference identified “The values of voluntary action” as a major analytical topic of voluntary action theory and research. (Smith, 1972) Although the interdisciplinary literature on values offers a bewildering variety of approaches, definitions and analytical styles, a common central theme is normative analysis of goods, preferences, norms, beliefs, and interests. Based upon the belief, stated in Chapter 1 that a complete theory of the commons must include a normative component this chapter is devoted to an exploration of possible common value bases implicit in the commons. Such a discussion must, of necessity, be offered largely in terms of the metavalues upon which common values are based, since freedom to act in an internally

consistent manner is one of the defining characteristics of commons.

This discussion is addressed primarily to the contemporary American context. Its full historical and cross-cultural implications must, of necessity, be left largely unexplored. Nonetheless, comparative value theory may be one of the ways of approaching the spreading, worldwide phenomenon of nonprofit and voluntary action. Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) suggest a common psychological content to human values across cultures. Prosocial motives are one of the eight classes of “distinct motivational types” they identified. Brown (1991) develops a listing of 400 “human universals” traits and characteristics said to be present in all known cultures in the intriguing format of a discussion of what he calls “the universal people.” Some of these traits, such as gift giving, relate directly to the commons.

Value Theory For the Commons

Commons have been defined here as collectivities in which uncoerced participation, sharing, mutuality and fairness play an important part. On this basis, it is reasonable to ask what standards of participation, sharing, fairness and mutuality in the commons may be. In some common contexts, most notably religious ethics and scientific methodologies, such questions are addressed directly and explicitly. In other cases, predominant economic values such as efficiency, effectiveness and productivity have been asserted. In still other cases, approaches to value issues are more indirect and implicit. In general, however, certain recurrent themes are evident.

The previous suggestion of the pragmatic origins of the theory of the commons bears directly on application of its theory of value to common situations. As many commentators have noted, pragmatic philosophy incorporates a unique and distinctive approach to values. (Bernstein,) That approach may be summarized roughly as the view that values can be tested and verified in much the same manner as facts; that both are subject to verification in terms of their consequences; and that value-and fact-testing are important steps in fully informed action. According to Hill (who refers to pragmatism by Dewey's term, instrumentalism): “Perhaps the greatest contribution of

the instrumentalists to economics and the other social sciences is their theory of normative value. Dewey believed that normative value judgments are instrumental and corrigible. People have the ability to learn how to derive values from experience and how to use these values in the instrumental process of making normative value judgments and solving practical problems. Moreover, people also have the ability to test and to verify the truth of value judgments by drawing from experience to evaluate their practical consequences. You should accept a fact as true only if it relates the various parts of your experience into an authentic whole and successfully integrates your past with your future. You should accept a value judgment as true only if it is based on a true value and only if it contributes significantly to the instrumental process of solving problems. This process of instrumental verification can result in a revision and improvement of both values and value judgments.” [Dewey, 574-598] (Hill, 1983, 7)

This view is consistent with the previously stated assumptions of the theory of the commons, particularly the assumptions about the capacity of commons to make and enforce their own worldviews. Presumably, such worldviews incorporate value judgments and their evaluations of practical consequences.

Since the work of C. S. Peirce, the concept of “community” has served as an important marker of common pursuits in science. According to Bernstein "Peirce's theory of inquiry stands as one of the great attempts to show how the classic dichotomies between thought and action, or theory and praxis can be united in a theory of a community of inquirers committed to continuous, rational, self-critical activity." (199) This concept of community is likewise implicated in the pragmatic approach to reality itself. The pragmatic concept of reality encompasses the concept of community in a way that has direct consequences for value determinations in the commons:

“The real, then, is that which sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a community, without definite limits, and capable of a definite

increase of knowledge. And so, these two series of cognitions--the real and the unreal--consist of those which, at a time sufficiently future, the community will always continue to affirm; and those which, under the same conditions will ever be denied. Now, a proposition whose falsity can never be discovered, and the error of which is absolutely incognizable, contains, upon our principle, no absolute error. Consequently, that which is thought in these cognitions is real, as it really is. There is nothing, then, to prevent our knowing outward things as they really are, and it is most likely that we do thus know them in numberless cases, although we can never be absolutely certain of doing so in any special case.” (Bernstein, quoting Pierce, 1971. 176)

The immediate task that faces us now is applying this perspective to the circumstances of the commons in useful ways. In particular, two issues will concern us here. The first is the question of further identifying an appropriate theory of value for the commons, and the second is the related question of the place of need in value judgments made in the commons.

Value and Role-Taking

Is it possible in the context of the commons, to set forth a limited, institutionally specific theory of value that is of relevance to the particular, associational context of the pursuit of common goods? The tentative answer offered here is in the affirmative. The conception of a community of inquirers (or what might be thought of as a rational community) set forth by Pierce offers a solid base upon which to suggest that there is a "natural" (that is, spontaneously occurring) value standard that arises in most human groups and is operational in most common decision contexts. We can call this a common theory of value, and state it thus: *Things are of value to participants in a commons because they are of value to other persons whom they value.* This is the standard of value underlying peer review of scientific proposals and scientific publication, critical reviews of artistic productions, the notion of board members as “trustees” of the

membership found in many member associations and a host of other specific values found in the commons. This may also be the most powerful sanction available to commons: Rejection, shunning or expulsion from the commons of those who disregard or violate common values is one of the most universal practices of religious, scientific, artistic and other commons.

Common goods are not of value because they allow us to survive, as would be assumed by a labor theory of value. Survival is a precondition of the commons. Nor are they valuable to us because of their use-value or their exchange value. We value common goods in response to others' valuations (and they, in turn, respond to our valuations if and to the extent that they value us.) This is one of the most fundamental implications of the mutuality of the commons.

General Principles of Allocation and Distribution

Two further principles of common behavior must be articulated in order to adequately cover the issue: Rational actors operating within a commons, and possessed of knowledge of the values of their peers, also require principles upon which to ground their choices (analogous to the economic principle of maximization) and principles of distribution (analogous to Paretoan optimality).

In the first case, we may suggest the principle of *satisfying* (derived from traditional philosophical concerns with "satisfaction" or "happiness" by way of Herbert Simon's satisficing principle of organizational decision-making). Satisficing, according to Simon, is a rational decision procedure to terminate the process of considering all possible alternatives by selecting the first alternative that fully meets the criteria. (Simon, 1974) Simon may have felt it necessary to use the neologism he did, rather than the simpler gerund *satisfying*, because of the enduring Benthamite utilitarian associations of satisfaction with pleasure and pain. It is essential to a proper understanding of this criterion that it be stripped of the futile utilitarian legacy of debate

over the issue of pleasure and pain. There need be no necessary connotations of hedonism or satiation raised in this connection. Thus, for example, the principle of satisfying as used by Simon might imply that one need not be familiar with all possible dramatic works to determine that Hamlet is the greatest of tragedies. One willing to “join” the commons defined by knowledgeable authorities on drama can note that this is the consistent conclusion of the field. This is, however, a purely voluntary and uncoerced choice for all concerned and one is completely free to reject the consensus and continue searching for a better tragedy.

Satisfaction as a decision-criterion refers explicitly to the intersubjective dialogue of decision-makers: Specifically, it refers to the transfer of interest or attention among the actors in a common decision situation. It relates directly to contemporary psychological perspectives on attention and perception, and in particular to the pragmatic concept of "problem" as articulated by Dewey, Mead and the other pragmatists. It is also an explicitly behavioral and verifiable criterion.

Satisfaction is attained, in the commons, when search is suspended, and dialogue on awareness and purpose are shifted elsewhere. Thus, the point of rational decision-making in the commons is not to attain a maximum of goods (that is, “maximization”) or even attaining some optimal level of goods, but to attain *satisfactory* levels of goods. That is, to attain a sufficient level of goods that the problem that prompted the original search is arrested, and attention is shifted elsewhere. Actors in the common context recognize when this point has been attained and shift their attention elsewhere. Excessive preoccupation with maximization in the context of commons, therefore, is not a virtue but a serious shortcoming, and a form of irrational behavior.

Sometimes the suspension of search and the shift of attention that are implied in the criterion of satisfaction occur when needs have been met. Needs-meeting, in this sense, is not the basic concept of value that it is sometimes set forth as being, however, for the simple reason that satisfaction, in this sense, may also occur for other reasons.

Proportion As A Criterion

The second principle involves the specification of a criterion governing distribution of resources within a community and between communities. The term that has been chosen for it is "proportion", at least partially because of connotations associated with classical aesthetics (for example, the "human scale" of classic Greek architecture) and ethics (for example, the Aristotelian "golden mean"). As employed here, the criterion of proportion can be used in a problem-solving contexts so that the resources used are approximately equivalent (or in proportion to) the "needs met", the problem solved or the results attained. It can also be employed in a similar vein in religion, athletics, art and other presentational settings. In both instances, the criterion of proportion has an operational expression fully as coherent as Paretoan optimality: *Resources should be allocated in such a manner that no rational actor with standing to do so will act to gain more resources except from unallocated funds.*

The criterion of proportion in no way suggests that all actors involved in a situation in which resources are distributed by or among endowments must be fully pleased or happy with the outcomes. Given the range of human differences, and the plurality of human values, that seems as excessive and artificial a standard to apply to nonprofit activities, as would be the related standard that everyone should (or must) "profit" by such transactions. More important in a context of sharing and mutual trust is the question of whether anyone is sufficiently displeased to object. It is in such objections that self-interest begins to overwhelm the shared interests of the commons and mutuality begins to break down.

One can see particular manifestations of this principal in operation in contemporary United Ways, for example. Few, if any such community fundraising campaigns ever collect all of the contributions they may need or desire, and there may be intense competition for shares of the funds collected, and dissatisfaction with the resultant distribution. However, the most common reaction most of the time for most of the competitors in such distributions is satisfaction, in the above sense that

further seeking after additional funds is abandoned and attention shifts elsewhere. The effect upon the commons as a whole of a series of such independently arrived at is the condition we are calling proportion. (Based upon the common phrase “putting things in perspective” and “keeping things in proportion” that are often used to describe such acceptance.)

Proportion in this sense serves to sanction the equilibrium of networks of common institutions. Where it exists, the rule of proportion functions as a rough-and-ready kind of concept of equity among endowments, as well as accounting for the social order or equilibrium of the commons, in a Hobbesian sense. Proportion provides a general criterion for how rational allocative decisions are made in commons settings. Like satisfaction, it applies to a broad range of different possible situations, and encompasses proportion grounded in despair of further gains as well as proportion based in contentment or satiation.

Contextualism

Yet a third principle is also necessary to properly set common decisions within a context of values by which they are to be judged. We have already begun this task with the statement of the emergence of value in role taking above. There remains, however, the issue of locating an adequate substitute for the misleading model of universal objectivity put forth by utilitarian economics. We might characterize this as the "grandstand model" of objectivity: The "full knowledge" premise of classic rationality sets up a circumstance much like that of a spectator in the grandstand with full view of all the action (or decision-making) occurring on the field. In reality, no one is ever afforded such a grandstand position with respect to organized decision-making, as Braybrooke and Lindblom, Simon and others have been at pains to point out. (Simon, 1976; Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963)

Recently, works in the history and philosophy of science working in

the Pierce tradition have pointed up the need for such a criterion in the debate over "scientific revolutions" beginning with Kuhn's famous paradigm shifts. (Berger and Luckmann, 1970; Bernstein, 1983; Kuhn, 1962) Such paradigm shifts have major implications for common resources and goods. In major paradigm shifts, any type of resources, from treasuries, collections and repertoires to key or central problems may be transformed from valuable to worthless, or vice versa. Thus, for example, the paradigm shift accompanying the development of printing not only placed new importance on research on the chemistry of ink; it also relegated the medieval scriptorium to unimportance except as an historical curiosity.

Anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians, theologians, librarians and others concerned with issues of the value of manuscripts and other artifacts from cultures widely different from our own have had to struggle with this issue, as have social workers, psychiatrists, special educators and others who deal with what are euphemistically called "special populations." Amateur athletics has had its own distinctive struggle with similar issues around the definition of "amateurism" in other (particularly nonwestern) cultures.

What is needed is at least partial relief from the burdens of judgmentalism placed upon us by preoccupation with universal objectivity without succumbing to the equally oppressive burdens of relativism. The pragmatic theory of value cited above offers a philosophically grounded, empirical basis for dealing with the contingencies of such relativism as they apply to the commons.

Perhaps the most interesting candidate of all has evolved in the multidisciplinary field of studies of biblical texts. It involves the interpretation of "texts" in context, that is with reference to our knowledge of the social, political, economic and historical circumstances in which they were written, and not from our "hindsight" vantage point. Gadamer and other European advocates of hermeneutics have broadened and generalized this central idea into a full blown philosophical position in recent decades. Bernstein has explored closely the connections between European hermeneutics and American pragmatism of Pierce and others ()

The intent is only to suggest that *values that are the basis of judgment of all decisions--including those allocating resources--arise in the context of particular communities or commons, and can only be properly assessed within the context of those commons.* We shall refer to this as the contextual principle, and set it off against the "universal objectivity" principle widely endorsed in social science.

The bottom line objection to the use of maximization, production and optimality is that while these may clearly be the group values of the researchers conducting the investigations, they have not been shown to be values adopted or endorsed by the commons being studied. Nor are there existing explanations for why such values are superior to those adopted by participants of the commons, or should be coercively imposed upon the commons.

Majordomia: The Carnegie Principle

There are other possible general values or principles of the commons that speak directly to various aspects of common experiences. There are many value premises of possible general interest articulated in the literature on nonprofit and voluntary action. One of these, *the Good Samaritan rule* is intended to protect volunteers from legal liability arising from actions associated with helping others. Some would, for example, invoke what could be called *the Asoka principle* in some instances and argue that rulers in control of significant patronage have a responsibility to create endowments to further the advance of religions. Then, we might debate the relative merits of a *Chrysostem principle*, stated as "Give Unreservedly to the Poor" and a *Gregorian-Augustine principle*, "Give Generously, but Prudently". (Morris, 1986) Further, we might also isolate a *Bonifacius principle*, which states that charity like virtue is its own reward. This view was articulated by the Boston cleric and Puritan theologian Cotton Mather in his famous essay on philanthropy entitled *Bonifacius: An Essay Upon the Good* (Levin, 1966; Bremner, 1988).

We might also look more closely at the central principles articulated by Andrew Carnegie in his Gospel of Wealth. Carnegie's "gospel" is

one of those cultural icons that is universally celebrated in public school civics texts, and alluded to frequently by scholars but seldom actually read or taken seriously by anyone.

Andrew Carnegie's name is familiar to every American school child as the Scottish immigrant steel entrepreneur whose life was a "rags to riches" tale, and whose generous beneficence salted the American and English landscapes with public libraries (66 branches of the New York Public Library alone). College or university faculty also know Carnegie as the initiator of what has become the Teachers Income Annuity Assistance (TIAA) program, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, while residents of the Pittsburgh area know Carnegie also for the museum, auditorium and collection of the Carnegie Institute, Carnegie Tech (now merged into Carnegie-Mellon University) and the industrial suburb bearing his name.

In all, Carnegie created 11 enduring charities bearing his name in the United States, Britain and his native Scotland, and gave away an estimated \$350 million. We are less interested here in his philanthropic actions than in his spoken and printed thoughts on the responsibilities of patronage. Quite independent of his motives, whatever they may have been, Carnegie's actions represents a veritable archetype of modern American patronage, and his "gospel" offers a possible standard by which to evaluate patronage of all types.

Carnegie recognized the necessity for flexibility in the management of a "charitable trust." In his first "letter of gift" to the trustees of the Carnegie Corporation, for example, he wrote:

"Conditions upon the earth inevitably change; hence, no wise man will bind trustees forever to certain paths, causes, or institutions. I disclaim any intention of doing so. On the contrary, I give my trustees full authority to change policy or causes hitherto aided, from time to time, when this, in their opinion, has become necessary or desirable. They shall best conform to my wishes in using their own judgment." (Chronicle of Higher Education, p. 11. August 7, 1985) This statement is an interesting twist on the *cy pres* doctrine that in new or unenvisioned circumstances trustees of an endowment have an

obligation to engage in those actions which most closely conform to the wishes of the patron.

The issue to which Carnegie (and the *cy pres* doctrine) was responding is a serious one in which a good deal of thought has been invested. Brickwedel (1929) cites the case of a fund left to accumulate for 335 years before any portion may be spent. A number of trusts established by Benjamin Franklin in the late 18th century only matured in the 1990's. The problem is not exclusively an American one. Under Islamic law, a number of very ancient educational and religious endowments have endured. The Waqfizah of 'Ahmed Pasa, for example, was a Turkish endowment of the sixteenth century which continued at least into the 1940's. (Simsar, 1940) (It may, indeed, still exist today. Efforts to locate information on it have been unsuccessful.)

More controversial (especially among the higher income segments of American society) are Carnegie's sentiments on the responsibilities of the rich, and his standard of what might be called the "inverse tithe". Carnegie's views, which have always been treated as somewhat eccentric and largely ignored or discounted as philanthropic principles, were set forth in a famous essay entitled "The Gospel of Wealth," His personal performance against this standard is a matter of record.

Carnegie's famous paper on philanthropy was first published as "Wealth" in the North American Review in 1889, and later as the Gospel of Wealth (1900). Carnegie wrote that "the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced," and he went on to state that the rich were obligated to spend their surplus wealth for the public good. Following the sale of his U.S. Steel company to J.P. Morgan in 1901 for \$400 million, Carnegie spent the rest of his life practicing his principles.

One can argue many different interpretations of the motivations of wealthy men such as Carnegie. He may "really" have been motivated by a desire to prevent the initiation of an income tax in the United States, or to avoid the payment of inheritance taxes. Others are inclined to interpret all such acts of --large and small--as futile efforts

to prop up a faltering system of class domination by capitalists and forestall revolution by the underclass.

Viewed as an issue of endowment patronage, Carnegie's actions stand alongside numerous other examples of comparable behavior that one might identify throughout world history. For example, throughout history, military generals have returned home rich with the spoils of war. Pericles, however, devoted spoils from the Persian War to the construction of the Acropolis, thereby committing an uncommon act of common good. King Asoka, following his conversion to Buddhism, announced and sought to practice a principle of philanthropy quite different in intent but very similar to Carnegie's in its overall effect.

The rich in America today (many of whom may be arguably less rich than Carnegie) feel very little obligation to follow the precedent set by Carnegie. Indeed, one might argue that for most of the contemporary rich, Carnegie's problematics of: 1) selecting trustworthy trustees and 2) not dying rich have been replaced by the quite different problematics of celebrity image-maintenance and tax avoidance.

Unfortunately, the central problem in the practice of patronage today, at least as it is presented by countless tax accountants, media consultants and others bears little relation to the entire philanthropic tradition, but is instead a perverse variant of the profit maximization theme: how to appear maximally generous on minimal contributions. Corporate executives "on the way up" see service for themselves and their wives on the boards of community charities as tribute to the well-crafted corporate leadership image. Personal managers of athletes, politicians and other popular culture celebrities work hard to create public images of their clients as patrons of charity, culture and politics. While every celebrity player in the professional sports during the past decade appears to have posed with a handicapped child for a fundraising poster, actual amounts of their contributions are less regularly publicized. One suspects this may be for good reason.

The contemporary rich in American society --the *beau monde neuvo* society of "jet sets", oil barons, stock brokers, rock musicians and professional athletes, among others --get off remarkably easy in terms

of their personal obligations to community services; certainly easier than comparable elites in ancient Athens, Central American villages or urban elites throughout history. This is particularly true in personal (as opposed to purely financial) terms. Tax accountants, media consultants, lawyers and other retainers have simplified and routinized the contemporary procedures often to the point of simple, painless signing of a statement of "after-tax income" and a few checks. Charitable contributions easily become not an act of personal (or even foundational) patronage at all. They have become merely the afterthoughts of tax calculation; part of an overall plan to maximize after-tax income.

It is easy from this perspective to engage in a "flog the rich" --those people, who in F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous canard "are different from us"--and to develop a campaign of moral smugness and superiority with statement such as those just made above. To counter act this tendency, we can easily characterize middle and upper middle-income groups in exactly the same way. With average estimated giving hovering between two and two and a half percent of personal income, it seems clear that there is little concern for the kind of patronage of which Carnegie spoke, and a motivation primarily of tax-avoidance.

The real challenge facing non-profit fundraising in America, therefore, is not "management improvement" or "greater efficiency". It is not economic, or even narrowly political (in the sense of campaigns for policy or legal changes). It is more fundamentally practical: Specifically, the discovery of a modern "moral equivalent" to the *majordomia, liturgia*; accepted moral norms which create sufficient incentives, if you will, for people to contribute to civilization. The traditional philanthropic nominalism (naming as tribute honoring patrons; the practice of naming towns, buildings, rooms, furniture and even picture frames after benefactors) and tax advantages of philanthropic behavior alone are insufficient to generate the necessary revenues. It is this insufficiency, and not the mismanagement and inefficiency of community services, which is at the heart of the current crisis in philanthropy.

Inflation, technology and the legitimate wage demands of employees

in the community service sector have acted to send costs skyrocketing, while real contributions (adjusted for inflation) have risen only slightly or perhaps even fallen. To speak of Carnegie's 90% contribution, or even to fall back to the traditional Biblical tithe (10%) is almost farcical; most Americans do not give 5%! Many do not even give 1% of the wealth to community services. For the \$20,000 a year worker, \$10 to the United Way and \$100 a year to the church does little but perhaps salving a guilt conscience.

Conservation and Prudence

Finally, there are two distinct monetary principles that can be applied to common treasuries, and perhaps to collections or repertories. Each is a reflection of the mutual obligations participants in the commons feel for one another. One is sometimes mislabeled “efficiency”, “cost-effectiveness” or “cost-efficiency”. The other is seldom given a name.

Generally speaking, attempts to apply “efficiency” and similar concepts to the commons have been largely exercises in metaphysics, and devoid of empirical content or referents. They usually an oversimplified engineering metaphor, in which efficiency is “defined” as the ratio of one group of arbitrarily selected situational elements labeled “inputs” to another arbitrarily selected group of elements arbitrarily labeled “outputs”. Since the directionality of conversation and interaction is subject to some indeterminacy, there are no generally applicable rules and what is determined to be input and what output is strictly an *ad hoc* determination. What is usually missing is an understanding that because we are dealing with social acts, rather than physical substances, no underlying assumptions like those of the conservation of matter and energy are appropriate. As a result, there is no particular reason to expect that routine, predictable, or even measurable ratios will result from this effort. No generally recognizable measurements of the “efficiency” of rendering common goods have emerged from this approach, and as a result, discussions of “efficiency” in the commons usually confuse and obscure what are, in fact, two principles of action that actually are quite important in the

commons:

Karst calls the first *the principle of conservation* and sums it up as follows: "There remains substantial unanimity on one goal: the greatest possible portion of the wealth donated to private charity must be conserved and used to further the charitable, public purpose; waste must be minimized and diversion of public funds for private gain is intolerable." (Karst, 1960) It should be noted that although Karst uses the term "public" here, his intent is clearly directed at nongovernmental efforts, and the term "common" would be more suitable. Trustees of commons who spend excessive sums for purposes unrelated to the rendition of common goods, or who pay excessively high prices to obtain needed resources, or divert common resources to their own profit are clearly violating the principle of conservation.

The second principle we can call *prudence*, which is, as Wooster stated it, "to maintain and increase dollar income without excessive risk to principal. Judgment and experience will continue to be the most valuable tools available." (Wooster, 1952) The principle of prudence, as it applies in the commons is, in fact, broader than Wooster's statement, since it applies not only to treasuries, but also to collections and repertories. The key to the principle of prudence is avoidance of excessive risk. The trustees or agents who protect a priceless painting by placing it in a fireproof vault, and those who protect the rigorous standards of a science or profession both may be said to act prudently.

Principles of Consensus

Together, these principles form the core of a normative model of common goods that can be found in operation in the everyday life of most American commons. In the most general sense, the principles of satisfaction, proportion, contextualism, conservation and prudence as they operate in the commons are all principles of consensus and community. As such, they prove most workable in circumstances of cooperation. Their greatest collective weakness (and the greatest weakness of common action in general) is the inability to adequately

resolve contested, controversial or difficult issues. It is this inability, and not “inefficiencies” or “mismanagement” which is the most frequent target of contemporary concern by the management scientists.

Examples of this basic inability abound among common institutions. The Protestant Reformation and the continuing tendencies toward schism evident in many contemporary religious bodies are evidences of the unsatisfactory nature of this process. When religious factions quarrel over matters of doctrine, ritual or belief, the issues often have major economic implications involving the proper use of collective treasuries and collections or the proper selection and enactment of presentations--rituals, music, and other ritual elements. Luther's concern over the sale of indulgences, Puritan opposition to 'idolatrous' displays of religious icons, and the schism of two branches of the American Church of Christ over the use of music in worship services are three of many possible examples of this type.

Similar phenomena can be found in many types of commons. Indeed, contemporary efforts to apply market economic principles to the commons must be seen as arising from one such situation. Suggestions that nonprofit efforts are not sufficiently “efficient” or as “effective” as they might be are themselves expressions of latent or real conflict between factions within many contemporary commons. In many cases, the issue is further exacerbated as partisans of one point of view or the other appeal to academic economists on the one hand, and decision makers in government on the other to reinforce their particular views. Regrettably, the scientific issues of nonprofit economics cannot be entirely divorced from this hermeneutical conflict at present.

What is at issue in the current situation in public funding or social services and the arts in particular is often as much who shall control the definition of appropriate action in the commons, as it is who shall control the actual resources. In general, the absence of adequate consensus and community, however, does not constitute a sufficient rationale for ignoring or violating the principle of hermeneutics and the autonomy of groups in the commons. Discovery of possible general solutions to the problem of hermeneutics that could be applied in the same way as the other economic principles of the commons is perhaps the single greatest theoretical challenge facing the theory of

the commons.

Conclusion

There is very little to be gained by attempting to apply the existing value theories of economics to the commons. The plurality of standards --labor content, use, and exchange --leave us unable to resolve important questions of resource application through this means. Likewise, however useful the concept of need may be for other purposes, it has been shown not to be especially helpful in settling important or controversial questions of resource use in the commons. Need is, at best, only part of the answer to adequate criteria for an economic theory of value in the commons.

The real basis of value theory for the commons is recognition of the reference group character of value determinations made by benefactors. Need is important, for example, not for any theoretically transcendent reasons, but because large numbers of actors in the commons consider it important, and therefore take it into account in their actions. It is not universal, however, because of the observation that many in religious, scientific and other commons appear to have no particular need for the concept. In a similar way, the criteria of satisfaction, proportion and hermeneutics do appear to be widely employed in contemporary and historical commons. Yet we have no choice but to leave it to the pragmatic test of consequences to determine whether, indeed, these principles are truly universal or situationally and culturally specific.

This approach is not as unsatisfactory as it may initially sound: Ascribed motives and value standards are also at the heart of market economics. The criteria of profit and maximizing behavior which are critically important in market economics are not grounded in deep philosophical principles, but in the commonsense observation that ordinarily businessmen --producers, traders, arbitragers, or retailers --act in ways consistent with an assumption of profit orientation and maximizing behavior.

The problem of economic value in the commons generally is resolved into two broad possibilities: When community and consensus exist, the criteria of satisfaction, proportion and hermeneutics are ordinarily sufficient to secure adequate shares of the social surplus, in the form of endowments of money, collections of valued objects and repertoires of skilled presentations and problem-solving strategies. Where value consensus breaks down, neither the economic value theory of the commons nor importing of use and exchange values criteria from the market is satisfactory to the task. Therefore, the greatest challenge currently facing nonprofit economics involves solving this problem of contested value.

12. Summing Up

The core of nonprofit and voluntary action encompasses a single theoretical domain that is only partially examined by current research investigations on nonprofit organizations, voluntary action and prosocial behavior. The theory of the commons opens up a potentially powerful theoretical English-language vocabulary for treating many interrelated aspects of such action using terms which have evolved over the centuries to discuss various related associative, philanthropic, charitable and related ideas. Linking all of these terms and concepts is the concept of the commons as a social, economic and political space for uncoerced participation, sharing of resources and purposes, mutuality and peer relations.

Commons are spaces outside the home and away from families, and independent of political states, and economic markets. They are found in many different cultures, locations and historical periods. We refer generally to participation in commons as voluntary association. Truly voluntary association is possible only under conditions of leisure, or freedom from necessity and labor, and those who are thus free constitute, to varying degrees, leisure classes. They are engaged in what may be seen from some perspectives as paradoxical behavior: unproductive labor or productive consumption. Ultimately, the volunteer labor of such leisure classes is justified by the observation that civilizations are built up of such common goods.

Purposes shared in association can be termed common goods. The pursuit of common goods is rational behavior, albeit distinguishable from the self-interested pursuit of profit that characterizes markets. Such behavior often consists of prosocial mixtures of self-interested and altruistic behavior, whether the prosocial involved is philanthropic (for the common good of all who would benefit) charitable (for the common good of others) or mutual (for the common good of our group).

The shared resources of commons constitute endowments --treasures

of money and marketable goods and services; collections of valued objects and repertoires of routines, rituals and performances.

Mutuality and fairness find expression in explicit value preferences for satisfaction, proportion, autonomy, conservation, prudence and the social responsibility of leisure classes.

The theory of the commons as offered here is a fit platform to issue a number of challenges to the multidisciplinary community of nonprofit and voluntary action scholars: Psychological researchers have built up a large body of findings in the area of altruistic, charitable, bystanders, donative and other forms of “prosocial” behavior. They have generally shown little inclination or interest in connecting this up with the main body of interdisciplinary commons studies. Researchers engaged in the study of common social organizations have, on the whole, shown relatively little imagination in looking beyond the traditional American view of associations and nonprofit social agencies to the broader world of multicultural common activity. At the same time, political researchers have been generally reluctant to acknowledge the link between their studies of parties, interest groups and factions and the broader research community of organizational studies, restricted though it is. For their part, economic researchers have concentrated chiefly upon a rather narrow band of “profitable nonprofits” --particularly hospitals and nursing homes --as indicative of the entire domain. And social welfare researchers have until recently neglected the continuing importance of volunteer charity organization.

There are many examples of hybrid institutions mixing characteristics of commons with families, states and markets. Recent preoccupation with revenue-generating nonprofit corporations, for example, is such a concern. Such organizations are neither truly market-oriented, nor truly in the commons.

Many other types of organized benefactor in addition to social agencies and public bureaus can be identified. Recently, we have seen a trend away from group-trusteeships in the direction of nonprofit organizations in the effective control of a solo trustee. Campaigns,

committees, conferences, producer and consumer cooperatives, disciplines (whether academic disciplines, religious orders, or professions), festivals, foundations, literary and scientific journals, political parties, pilgrimages, research institutes, secret societies, sciences and trusts are among the many possibilities. The conventional term for control centralized in a small group is oligarchy, but we shall refer to nonprofit organizations controlled by an individual as solo trusteeships. (Michels, 1949)

The democratic political state can be seen as a special type of commons that has been termed a dominant protective association. Political states arise out of the common goods and mutual actions of interest groups, factions and political parties, and in turn exercise a measure of control over the activities of commons. The American constitutional tradition, and in particular, the first amendment rights of assembly, freedom of speech, religion and redress of grievances establish strong normative barriers against excessive state interference in the pursuit of common goods. They are a major institutional expression of the value of institutional harmony.

The problem of charity organization is a continuing concern, even in a period characterized by extensive networks of nonprofit charitable corporations, helping professions. Although the general approach of social work and other charitable professions has been to ignore or downplay the importance of charity commons, the phenomenon itself remains alive and vital.

Economists have grafted a substantial theory of nonprofit economics onto existing economic theory by relaxing definitions of firms, public goods and related concepts on the basis of the general “rational choice” models of human behavior. Beyond the limits of this model, where the customary assumptions of scarcity, production, profit maximization and unrestrained self-interest do not apply, very little work has been done. Although there are numerous bold proposals and sound theoretical reasons for transcending this particular limit, the paradigm of the scientific commons of the economic profession still seeks to encompass all common goods economics within conventional perspectives.

Finally, there are many additional disciplinary contributions yet to be made to our collective understandings of the commons. In particular, further examination of psychological, anthropological, legal and historical studies are likely to bear much fruit. (In this regard, note the many excellent suggestions of anthropologists responding to Kerri's 1976 article in Current Anthropology.)

The focus in this volume has been upon rethinking traditional perspectives on nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations, with particular concern for extending the scientific research commons of nonprofit and voluntary action studies. That is, in the language of the model presented, on identification of a plausible common good. By the very nature of common goods, however, the broader adoption and utilization of this good is dependent not on the author, but on its acceptance and transformation by the community of readers. Mutual concerns were the starting point of this exercise. An effort has been made to call upon the rich endowment of the English language as a shared resource for the writing and speaking that make up the dialogue of this particular commons.

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