Nonprofit-government relations: The public policy and advocacy perspectives

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Embeddedness of NPOs

- *Multi-functional organizations*
  - *Social capital*
  - *Economic role*
  - *Religious role*
  - *Service*
  - *Policy*
  - *Advocacy*
  - Global importance
- *= interactions – very different environments simultaneously, different stakeholders, very complex, dynamic shifts*

NNO-government relations

- Legal perspective
- Public policy perspective
- Advocacy perspective

Public policy perspective

- Embeddednes in welfare state arrangements
- To what extent governments and public administration cooperate with NPOs
- Models of nonprofit-government relations

Najam (2000): Four-C model

- based on institutional interests and preferences for policy ends and means
- 2 hypotheses: a) NPOs constitute a distinct institutional sector with particular motivations and structural preferences, b) NPOs have an abiding interest in public policy
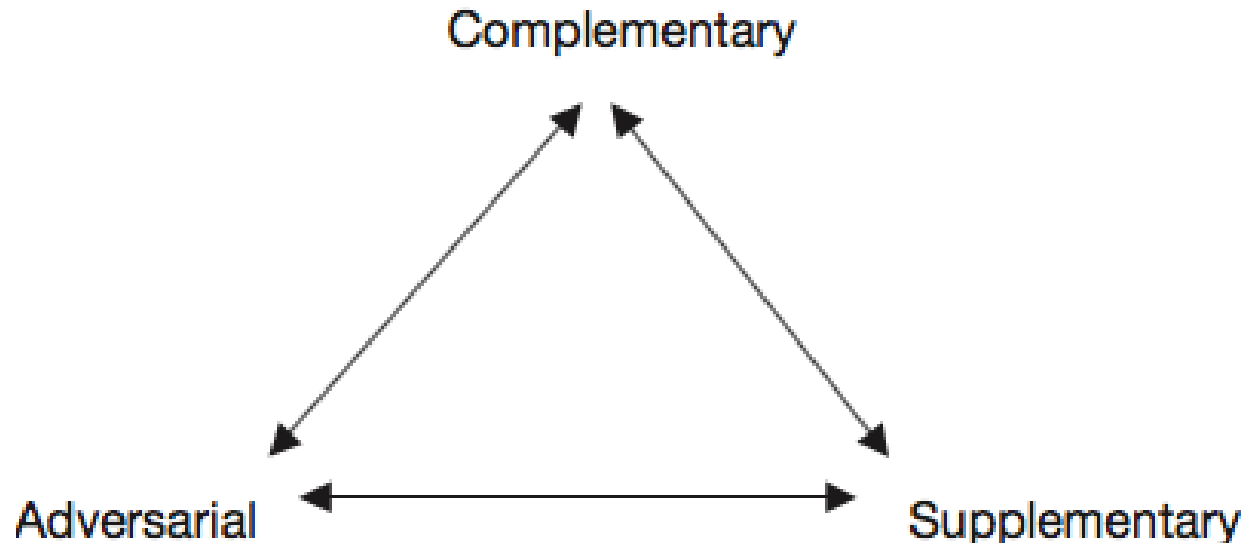
Four-C model

		Goals	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Means	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

Source: Najam 2000. © John Wiley & Sons Inc. Used with permission.

Young (2000)

- Refers specifically to economic theories of nonprofit organizations
- Based on the underlying assumption that output improvement (particularly of social service delivery) constitutes the core rationale for government-nonprofit sector relations
- Refers to NPOs as service providers

Young: A triangular model

Young (2000)

Salamon and Anheier: Social Origins

- explains why the embeddedness of NPOs in welfare state arrangements differs from country to country
- relates to the concept of organizational embeddedness focusing explicitly on broader social and political relationships
- differences of size and composition are explained by different social origins of the sector
- 2 dimensions:
    - a) the extent of government social welfare spending
    - b) the scale of the nonprofit sector

Social origins model

Government Social Welfare Spending	Nonprofit Scale	
	Low	High
Low	Statist	Liberal
High	Social Democratic	Corporatist

Source: Salamon/Anheier (1998: 228)

Advocacy perspective

- How and to what extent citizens make use of the public sphere by engaging in civic activities
- Investigating whether and how civil society organizations give citizens a voice for political participation and provide avenues for societal integration
- NPOs <u>mediate/facilitate civic participation</u> – by providing structures and networks
- NPOs <u>engage in public-interest advocacy activities</u>

Social movement theory argument

- Two sectors are deeply <u>intertwined</u>, but conflictual relationship with government
- A relationship cycle:
  - SMO translates private into public concerns
  - SMO gives impetus for the creation of NPO
  - Succesful NPO influences government policy
  - Government responds:
    - by directly addressing the issue
    - or funds nonprofits
  - Nonprofit in turn addresses public concerns
  - Tries to influence again
- Examples of such successful movements?

Public interest advocacy

- NPO's crucial civic function
- *Goal*: To influence government decisions; to influence government policy (not to govern); or to encourage political participation
- Voicing a broader set of public interests
- ***Ideal vs. Reality***
- Why should NPO participate in policies and policy-making? Reasons to advocate?
- Targets of advocacy activities?

What affects advocacy

- Declining civic engagement

- Government regulation

- Growing businnes competition

- External factors in cooperation?

Nonprofit responses

- have had to become more sophisticated
- created more complex organizational structures
- take advantage of new technologies – Internet activism fundamentally altered civic participation and advocacy
- invested in effective research
- increasingly turned to collaborations, including some with business organizations

Forms: How to advocate?

- Issue identification, research, and analysis
- Education of the public on crucial issues
- Lobbying (direct, grassroots, administrative, for/against): reinfluence a specifiers to activities that are intended to a piece of legislation
- Voter registration and education
- Litigation, legal advocacy in the courts
- Media advocacy
- Public events and direct action (calls for boycotts and demonstrations)
- Judicial advocacy
- Coalition building
- Expert testimony (testifying before governmental bodies)
- Talks with governments
- Monitoring of government programs
- Drawing up of petition letters, participation in referenda or initiative campaigns
- Grassroots organizing and communication with local leaders
- SOCIAL MEDIA: „Tweeting social change"

Public funding and its impact on nonprofit advocacy

- relationship between public funding and nonprofit engagement in advocacy (Neumayr at al. 2015)
- two main lines of argument:
  - resource dependence theory: NPOs that receive public funding will eventually reduce their advocacy activities or even refrain from them altogether for fear of losing their funding
  - the nonprofits who receive public funding will increase their engagement in advocacy

So does it affect…?

- Empirical studies: mixed results, mostly on US
- Austria (Neumayr at al. 2015):
  - no significant relationship between advocacy and the receipt of public funding or the proportion of an organization's total revenue coming from public funding
  - the degree to which nonprofits engage in advocacy is influenced by the geographic range of operation and field of activity

- **Citizen Lobbying: How Your Skills Can Fix Democracy**
- By Alberto Alemanno (at TEDxBrussels)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNf2OPdu8c

- **Going the Digital Route**
- By Marci Harris, a former congressional staffer, founded Popvox, a non-partisan platform to engage digitally with Congress https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aKyYR-iWpc

- **Advocacy Through Social Media: Why Trending Topics Matter**

- By Karen McAlister (at TEDxUTA)

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4sGLLaLq-Q

Thank you for participation