Greenpeace be Nimble, Friends of the Earth be Quick:

Agility, Adaptive Capacity and the Organizational Effectiveness of International Nongovernmental Organizations

Vanessa Timmer
Doctoral Candidate, Resource Management and Environmental Studies
Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Tel: (604) 813-3361
Email: vtimmer@interchange.ubc.ca

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ABSTRACT

As International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) have become increasingly prominent players in global environmental governance, there has been a surge of interest in determining the ways in which INGOs are effective in influencing decision-making and in shaping the global agenda on environmental issues. Efforts to develop performance indicators regarding INGO outputs, outcomes, and impacts have been complemented with indicators that measure the internal organizational strategies and structures that factor into the effectiveness of INGOs. This paper contributes to an emerging literature that examines INGO responses to internal and external changes including their response to dynamic shifts in the political environment within which INGOs operate. The ability of an organization to respond to these changes can be defined as its adaptive capacity. There is a tendency within the NGO and business management literature to focus on adaptive capacity as organizing for constant change through agility. Adaptive capacity as agility is built through establishing processes of emergent strategy formation and decentralized flexible structures in response to continuous change. This paper assesses this approach to adaptive capacity as agility in light of the strategy formation processes and structures adopted by two successful INGOs, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, and identifies an inconsistency with the agility approach and the ways in which Greenpeace responds to change. In response to this inconsistency, this paper proposes a typology of organizational responses to change which includes three distinct and viable approaches: adaptive capacity as agility, adaptive capacity as resilience and adaptive capacity as balance. The conclusion of this paper assesses the possible implications of this typology and proposes possible areas of further research that can investigate the validity and usefulness of this broadened definition of adaptive capacity.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the internal organizational design of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). It focuses specifically on the ways in which INGOs build a patterned response to changes in the environment within which they operate and to shifts within their organizations. This typical pattern of response to change can be defined as an organization's 'adaptive capacity' and is reflected in its processes of strategy formation and in its structure. The term 'adaptive capacity' reflects the fact that this is a capacity that an INGO can build over time, and reflects a long-term and organization-wide ability for change rather than the ability of an organization to make smaller adjustments to specific programs and activities (Letts, Ryan et al. 1999; Fowler 2000; Connolly and York 2003; Ebrahim 2003). The capacity to respond to change has become recognized as a critical factor in the effectiveness of organizations in terms of its impact on an organization's survival and on its ability to achieve its objectives and to remain relevant (Letts, Ryan et al. 1999; Fowler 2000; Smillie and Hailey 2001). The central argument of this paper is that there are a number of distinct and viable approaches to building adaptive capacity. This argument contrasts with a tendency within the NGO and business management literature to focus on finding the 'one best approach' to responding to change, namely, building the capacity of an organization to adapt to constant change (Wheatley 1999; Fowler 2000; Pieters and Young 2000; Larman 2004). In this paper, this approach – defined as adaptive capacity as agility – is placed on a continuum with two other approaches: adaptive capacity as resilience and adaptive capacity as balance. Adaptive capacity as resilience represents the approach to responding to change that is focused on maintaining stability and on exploiting existing expertise in an organization while buffering from internal and external turbulence. Adaptive capacity as balance is an approach to responding to change that is a hybrid combination of the agility and resilience approaches.

The typology of adaptive capacity approaches is built on a unique synthesis of the NGO and business management literatures (Miles and Snow 1978; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al. 1998; Mintzberg and Quinn 1998; Letts, Ryan et al. 1999; Weick and Quinn 1999; Fowler 2000; Ebrahim 2003). The typology intends to serve as a framework for classifying an INGO according to its typical approach in responding to change and for predicting INGO processes of strategy formation, structural features and possible future developments. The motivation for broadening the analytical framework for assessing adaptive capacity beyond adaptive capacity as agility stems from an assessment of two case study organizations, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. As will be outlined further below, these two INGOs can be defined as having been successful at adapting to change; however, they have adopted different processes of strategy formation and distinct structures for operating in a similar environment. The typology of approaches to adaptive capacity was developed because the model of adaptive capacity as agility does not apply equally within these two case studies. Further research and empirical investigation is required to assess the utility of the typology; however, the conclusion of the paper suggests some ways in which the typology may assist in understanding different INGO approaches to adaptive capacity.

INGO EFFECTIVENESS AND A DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

INGOs can be defined as formalized groups that are private, voluntary and nonprofit, have decision-making structures spanning more than three countries, function outside of government and the private sector, and seek to influence social change for the public interest (Smith, Chatfield et al. 1997; Khagram, Rikker et al. 2002). As INGOs have become increasingly prominent players in global environmental governance (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Brown, Khagram et al. 2000; Florini 2000; Khagram, Rikker et al. 2002), scholarly interest has surged in understanding the ways in which INGOs have an impact on decision-making processes and in identifying the factors that influence their effectiveness (e.g., Arts, Noortmann et al. 2001; Betsill and Corell 2001; Corell and Betsill 2001). By assessing the outputs, outcomes and impacts of INGO activities, researchers have concluded that civil society influence derives from their strategic and creative use of credible information and symbols, their persuasive tactics, the moral pressure of principled ideas, and their delivery of services (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Florini 2000; Edwards and Gaventa 2001; Clark 2003a; Clark 2003b). In addition to analyses that focus on determining the effectiveness of INGOs in specific projects, activities and campaigns (Johnson 2000; Khagram 2000; Newell 2000; Arts, Noortmann et al. 2001), NGO management scholars have investigated the internal management and organizational factors that influence the effectiveness of NGOs and INGOs in consistently and repeatedly being able to produce effective projects, activities and campaigns (Letts, Ryan et al. 1999).

With the recognition that NGOs operate in a dynamic environment and experience significant internal changes over time (Young, Koenig et al. 1999; Warkentin 2001), scholars and practitioners have identified the ability to respond to change as a key factor in determining the effectiveness of NGOs. For example, Letts, Ryan et al. (1999) argue that the traditional approach of seeking impact and being effective through programs and program expansion does not ensure that innovative programs and approaches continue to exist over time. According to Letts, Ryan et al., high performance stems from the performance of the organization as a whole and requires that NGOs build "adaptive capacity" defined as "the resources that an organization needs to be sure that it is delivering on its mission" (1999: 21). Organizational adaptive capacity enables the NGO to manage, sustain, adapt, improve, expand or replace programs, activities and approaches if a new approach is more suitable to fulfill the organization's mission and to create large-scale, long-lasting social benefit. Fowler (2000) comes to a similar conclusion in his assessment of organizational effectiveness in NGOs. According to Fowler, organizational effectiveness is strongly influenced by the capacity for "insightful agility," a term that is closely aligned with the concept of adaptive capacity (2000: 144-145). Insightful agility refers to building and enhancing learning processes, adaptability and leadership that not only enable the continuous renewal of an NGO's vitality, which Fowler refers to as "regeneration," but also to build and sustain an NGO's reputation through ensuring relevance and quality in delivering its mission, strategy and activities (Fowler 2000: 134). Fowler (2000) emphasizes that NGOs have to "continually adapt and adjust in a purposeful, and not random, way" in order to sustain themselves and achieve their missions "in an increasingly unstable, unpredictable and chaotic world" (2000: xii).

Dynamic environments require NGOs to increase "both organizational insight and agility in terms of adapting to an ever-changing world" (Fowler 2000: xii).

The environment within which INGOs operate can be deemed to be dynamic due to shifting understanding of how to manage global environmental problems, to changing interests of actors engaged in global environmental governance, and to increasing demands placed upon INGOs including demands to demonstrate their accountability and legitimacy. A recent study of national and international responses to the global environmental problems of acid rain, ozone depletion and climate change (Social Learning Group 2001) identified the ways in which these issues were framed as problems and how this issue framing evolved over time as new knowledge was gathered, new actors became involved in the management of the problem, and as the issue moved from a phase of agenda setting to implementation and monitoring of social responses (Vol 2: 184 - 185). The development of the issue frames was also actively shaped by the actors involved as they tried "to change (or sustain) the prevailing issue frame" in order to forge coalitions and further their interests (Social Learning Group 2001, Vol 2.: 185). This evolution of the agenda of managing global environmental risks is not unique to atmospheric problems but is evident in other global environmental governance processes such as on the issue of biodiversity conservation (Brechin, Wilshusen et al. 2003), and in the evolving global sustainable development debate (Kates, Parris et al. 2005). INGOs participating in and hoping to influence these processes need to take these shifts into account. The interests of the actors with whom INGOs are interacting in global environmental governance processes, including representatives of government, international organizations, private sector, and the media, are also not static but shift according to the characteristics of the particular environmental issue and to new opportunities and demands that emerge from interacting with other actors. For example, Hoffman (2001) traces the fundamental shift in approach to environmental issues by the oil and chemical industries, in part in response to pressures placed upon them by NGOs, towards proactive incorporation of corporate environmental responsibility into their strategies. The shift in approach by some industries and businesses has required a change in strategy from INGOs in their interaction with the private sector (Clark 2003a).

As INGOs have gained in prominence and influence, these actors have also been faced with an increasing number of demands by the actors that they target with their advocacy activities and that they cooperate with to further their mission (Brown, Moore et al. 2003). Questions are posed as to the legitimacy of INGO participation in global environmental governance (Edwards 2000). Whereas legitimacy is framed in terms of the perceptions of the broader public and context, the accountability of an INGO is defined by the extent to which the INGO "can be held to its promises to perform particular activities or services" (Brown forthcoming) for particular stakeholders (Ebrahim 2003). These stakeholders include donors and supporters that provide funding, regulators that process certification, clients or beneficiaries that receive and use services, partners that cooperate on programs and campaigns, targets of their campaigns that question the legitimacy of their claims, staff and the Board that dedicate themselves to the organization, and members who have joined the INGO to be represented by their activities (Brown, Moore et al. 2003). The expectations of these diverse stakeholders

who affect or are affected by the activities of an INGO can vary considerably across sectors and issues. INGOs are confronted with combinations of stakeholder expectations and demands that are complex, often in conflict, and shifting (Brown, Moore et al. 2003). For example, a trend towards a partnership approach to global governance that involves government, private sector and NGO participants, has led to critiques of NGOs that continue to play their traditional role of protesting government and private sector (Juma 2002); however, adopting a cooperative role can raises questions about cooptation of a radical agenda (Clark 2003a). The increasing professionalism of NGOs engaged in global environmental governance is applauded by some stakeholders, such as donors, for demonstrating accountability (Ebrahim 2003), but is critiqued by others, such as supporters, that are concerned that NGOs have become "protest businesses" rather than radical advocates of social change (Jordan and Maloney 1997). These demands evolve over time as the global environmental governance processes change and the role of INGOs change within these processes. INGOs are also adjusting to changes in available technology, including the rise of the Internet as a communications and activism tool (Pickerill 2003). An added layer of complexity arises from the fact that the response to the dynamic environment by the organizational members of an INGO is not necessarily homogenous (Anheier 2000). Anheier (2000) highlights the fact that NGOs are composed of many sub-organizations and "as complex, internal federations or coalitions" require analytical approaches that recognize the multi-faceted layers of these organizations (8). Subgroups within an INGO can perceive the shifts in political environment, in various actors and stakeholders, and in the nature of the demands placed upon them in very different ways, which leads to distinct opinions as to how to respond to change.

Within this external and internal context, the importance for an INGO of building adaptive capacity arises from its needs to survive, to achieve its objectives, and to remain relevant in order to continue to influence global environmental governance (Fowler 2000). Young, Koenig et al. (1999) define an NGOs ability to be "adaptive" and "flexible" as central to NGO effectiveness, and Warkentin (2001) emphasizes that an effective NGO exhibits "dynamism" as demonstrated by "flexibility and adaptability." In fact, Young et al. (1999) argue that it is this capacity to adapt which they define as an NGOs ability to "find creative and flexible ways to organize and manage themselves in order to survive and work effectively" that is a distinguishing feature of NGOs as opposed to organizations of the governmental or private sector. These authors define the environmental factors, which NGOs need to consider in order to remain adaptive, such as changes in political environments, subject issue area and stakeholder needs (Warkentin 2001, 23:24) or civil society in different locations (Young, Koenig et al. 1999). Brown and Moore (2001) present the "strategic triangle model" developed for positioning international nongovernmental organizations within dynamic environments. The strategic triangle represents "three crucial calculations that leaders must make if their organizations are to survive, produce socially valuable results, and successfully adapt to changing circumstances" (Brown and Moore 2001: 2). The points of the triangle – value creation, legitimacy and support, and operational capacity – indicate the three areas that require attention by an INGO in developing and adjusting an organization's strategy. The first point on the triangle, value creation, focuses an INGO's attention on the overall mission and purpose of the INGO in terms of public values and benefit to society. The

second point – legitimacy and support – poses the question: is the organizational purpose considered to be legitimate and authorized and is it politically, legally, and financially supported? Finally, the third point on the triangle – operational capacity – requires that an INGO consider if its purpose is feasible and whether the capacities for achieving the purpose exist within the organization or require alliances with other actors. INGO strategy, based on INGO mission, is depicted in the centre of this triangle in order to clarify that "effective strategies for carrying out INGO missions need to take account of all three issues simultaneously" (Brown and Moore et al. 2003).

This paper is interested in a specific set of strategies undertaken by an INGO, namely strategies for responding to a dynamic environment and to shifting internal triggers for change. In the context of a dynamic environment with shifting demands and different internal perspectives on the nature of these external changes and demands, international nongovernmental organizations are faced with the requirement to strategically respond to change, and to build adaptive capacity in order to respond to change repeatedly. Describing the environment within which organizations operate as "increasingly unstable, unpredictable and chaotic world" (Fowler 2000: xii) is not only prevalent in the NGO sector. Private sector firms are also perceived as being in a turbulent, "hypercompetitive" environment characterized by complexity, discontinuity and extreme turmoil (D'Aveni 1994). It is possible to draw from both the NGO and business management literature in order to understand how organizations respond to change and build adaptive capacity. As will become apparent in the discussion below, there are three key features of an organization that reflect its strategy for responding to change: its perception of the tempo of change, its processes of strategy formation, and its structure. Perceptions of the tempo of organizational change can be defined as "the characteristic rate, rhythm, or pattern of work or activity" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 361). Weick and Quinn distinguish between continuous change that is "ongoing, evolving and cumulative" and episodic change that is "infrequent, discontinuous and intentional" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 361).

Analyses of processes of strategy formation within organizations have traditionally focused on the creation of plans deliberately designed by top management of an organization to position an organization in its environment, and to allocate resources, create policies and organize actions in pursuit of an organization's goals and objectives (Thomson and Strickland 1995; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al. 1998; Mintzberg and Quinn 1998). Mintzberg (1998a) argues that this definition is limited as it only addresses those strategies that are predetermined or intended, but does not address the behaviors that result from these strategies. Mintzberg proposes to define strategy as a "pattern in a stream of actions" (11). "The study of strategy making becomes the search for consistencies in decision making behavior, the investigation of their appearance and disappearance, and the analysis of the relationships between intended and realized strategies" (Mintzberg and Waters 1982: 466). This expanded definition of strategy includes strategies that are intended but unrealized, those that are deliberately formulated and completely or partially realized, and those that emerge without preconception or intention and are adopted. Mintzberg (1998a) argues that strategies can appear as a result of human actions without conscious intention, so that it is possible to "distinguish *deliberate* strategies, where intentions that existed previously were realized, from

emergent strategies, where patterns developed in the absence of intentions, or despite them (which went *unrealized*)" (12 – emphasis in original).

In addition to processes of strategy formation, all organizations create structure in order to maintain a set of activities aimed at achieving their objectives. Organizational structure is the design of an organization in terms of its elements, including people, and of the relations and coordination amongst these elements including authority systems, resource allocation, information flows and the division of work (Mintzberg 1979; Young, Koenig et al. 1999). Structure is not only the formal structural design of positions and functions but also includes the informal patterns of behavior that exist within an organization (Mintzberg 1979; Mintzberg 1983). A critical decision in designing the structure of an organization is determining the level of decentralization, defined as the degree to which decision-making authority is distributed throughout the organization (decentralized) or is more centrally concentrated at the top of a decision-making hierarchy. This decision is based on how the organization seeks to resolve "the *division of labor* into various tasks to be performed and the *coordination* of those tasks to accomplish [its] activity" (Mintzberg 1998b: 145). This structural decision as well as decision as to the degree of flexibility in its structures and coordination systems reflect the organization's strategy for responding to change and building adaptive capacity.

ADAPTIVE CAPACITY AS AGILITY

Is there an approach to building adaptive capacity in a dynamic and complex environment that is considered most effective for responding to change? In fact, there is a recent tendency in the NGO and business management literature to depict a specific cluster of structural and strategy formation approaches as the most effective strategy for responding to change (e.g., Wheatley 1999; Staber and Sydow 2002). To briefly summarize this depiction, organizations that adopt this approach organize for constant and unpredictable change by creating decentralized, flexible structures and by employing emergent 'bottom-up' strategy formation processes that focus on exploring new opportunities. As Wilson (1992) states, the "decentralized structure coupled with a task or project-based culture" and "multi-disciplinary teams" of "generalists" has become suggested as the "one best way of organizing" (5). According to Wilson (1992), the certainty exhibited by those who suggest this management science "is striking in its unreflexive nature" with an "almost total absence of any sort of critique in the literature" and an agreement that it is the best way to organize despite the "paucity of empirical evidence available" (5). An example of support for this approach as the most effective approach to responding to change can be found in Staber and Sydow (2002) who consider the approach of "adaptive capacity" that support "ambiguity, diversity and continuous learning" as better adapted to volatile complex environments than adaptation strategies (409).

This paper characterizes this approach as "adaptive capacity as agility" and suggests that the motto of this approach could be "reinvent" (Mintzberg 1998c) or "embrace change" (Larman 2004: 25). Organizational members adjust their actions continuously and focus on organizing for flexibility and discretion rather than for stability and control (Quinn 1988). The word 'agility' is used to categorize this approach to triggers for change

because of the term's association with nimbleness and flexibility, with the ability of an organization to manage change in an unpredictable context that demands rapid response to unexpected changes, and with the ability to move and adjust quickly and easily (Fowler 2000). For example, Fowler (2000) employs the term agility in his discussion of learning and adaptation in nongovernmental organizations operating in the development field. For Fowler (2000) building agility is about improving areas of the organization that enable the organization to become more vital over time and to regenerate which implies actively "feeding and reinvigorating an organization's life force" in order to remain relevant (133). Fowler encourages a focus "on areas of regeneration that better equip an organization to adapt to turbulence and instability as normal environmental conditions" (158). Letts, Ryan et al. (1999) similarly argue that the context within which NGOs operate is changing rapidly, and NGOs "that lack the capacity to adapt will suffer in this changing environment" (2).

Understanding adaptive capacity as agility requires an understanding of how this approach is manifested in an INGO's perception of the tempo of change, its processes of strategy formation, and its structural configuration. As mentioned above, the defining characteristic of this approach to building adaptive capacity is embracing change as being constant, in other words, the tempo of change is continuous (Weick and Quinn 1999: 375). Organizational changes are not episodes that punctuate periods of stability and convergence but "tend to be ongoing, evolving and cumulative" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 375). In this context where "change rates are high," an organization perceives "creative adaptation to unpredictable change" as "the norm" (Larman 2004: 4). For an organization building adaptive capacity for agility, "change is continuous, organizing constitutes organization, and stability is an accomplishment" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 375). There is a question as to whether organizing for constant change is compatible with describing a particular structural configuration. As Staber and Sydow (2002) write, organizations that focus on building adaptive capacity as agility "avoid structures that are too well adapted to specific circumstances" (411). This may suggest that an organization that is structured for constant change never settles into a configuration that can be categorized; however, there have been a number of attempts to categorize organizations that are consistently responsive to a changing and unpredictable environment. The structural configuration of a "network" is compatible with the agility approach to adaptive capacity which "emphasize decentralization and bottom-up approaches in decision-making, and encourage work groups as well as horizontal relations among staff and management" (Anheier 2000: 11). Other structural configurations that align with building adaptive capacity as agility include Burns and Stalker's (1961) organic organizations, Galbraith's (Galbraith 1994) flexible lateral organizations, Pieters' and Young's (2000) ever-changing organization, Ashkenas, Ulrich et al.'s (Ashkenas, Ulrich et al. 1995) boundaryless organization, and Mintzberg's (1979; 1998c) adhocracy or innovative organization.

Mintzberg (1998c) describes the adhocracy, the innovative organization structural configuration, as being "highly organic" with "little formalization of behavior" (308). These structures rely on teams, task forces of experts with integrating managers that are organized in functional units but also deployed to work on particular activities. The

innovative organization structure "achieves its effectiveness by being inefficient" (308). The context within which an innovative organization is most appropriate is one in which "steady or frequent innovation of a complex nature is an intrinsic part of the organization and the industry segment in which it chooses to operate" (Mintzberg 1998c: 308). This demand for innovation requires an organization to "break away from established patterns" that are often associated with bureaucratic structures, highly formalized and standardized coordination mechanisms, and control systems. Instead, "information and decision processes flow flexibly and informally, wherever they must, to promote innovation" (Mintzberg 1998c: 310). Agility is characterized by "rapid and flexible response to change" with the strategic goal of "maneuverability" (Larman 2004: 25). The primary coordinating mechanism is "mutual adjustment" (Mintzberg 1998c). Mutual adjustment refers to coordination of work activities through informal communication and liaison devices across the organization, rather than through standardization or direct control that could lead to routine responses (Mintzberg 1998c: 310). Organizations that structure themselves for continuous change can be thought of as being complex adaptive systems in which "variable inputs to self-organizing groups of actors induce continuing modification of work practices and ways of relating" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 375). These systems produce emergent behaviors and properties at the level of the entire system appear (seemingly) spontaneously that "while obviously originating from the collective dynamics of that system's components – are neither to be found in nor are directly deducible from the lower-level properties of that system" (Bar-Yam 1997; Booth Sweeney 2001; Marten 2002).

Organizations that build adaptive capacity for agility are constantly attuned to triggers for change through scanning their external context and their internal organizational shifts. As Staber and Sydow (2002) note the organization building adaptive capacity as agility "uses feedback from the environment" and can be perceived as being effective "when learning takes place at a rate faster than the rate of change in the conditions that require dismantling old routines and creating new ones" (410). Decentralization is key to this capability for monitoring the environment as "one means of spotting and exploiting opportunities is to develop an elaborate surveillance capability by decentralizing scanning activities to appropriate subunits within the organization" (Miles and Snow 1978: 56). Mintzberg (1998b) makes a similar argument that as the complexity of the organizational environment increases, organizations tend towards decentralized due to the fact that "all the information needed to make decisions cannot be comprehended in one head" but require the "decentraliz[ation] of decision-making power" (154). Instead of innovation being driven by a single entrepreneur, teams of experts are "molded together" to respond to the demand for innovation (Mintzberg 1998c: 308). Fowler (2000) also makes this argument to increase agility by shifting "the scope of authority downwards and outwards, complemented by negotiated performance standards" (Fowler 2000: 160-1). By shifting the scope of authority away from a centralized decision-making body, Fowler (2000) argues that operational decisions can be made at different levels and locations in the organization, and only need to "be approved at the next higher level of authority" (158). This avoids frequent referrals to higher levels of authority in the decision-making chain, which "reduce speed and introduce stiffness rather than flexibility" (142). As Mintzberg (1998c) writes "power over decisions and actions is distributed to various places and

various levels according to the needs of the particular issue" (311). The structural model has also been described as "decentralized structure coupled with a task or project-based culture" (Wilson 1992: 5). Mintzberg (1998c) argues that sophisticated innovation can only occur through this very different configuration that "is able to fuse experts drawn from different disciplines into smoothly functioning ad hoc project teams" (309).

For an organization that builds adaptive capacity for agility, the process of strategy formation is focused on managing for change and also "managing by change" (Lapierre 1980: 9 in Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al. 1998: 176). Flux rather than stability is the norm and strategy processes emerge out of the constant adjustments made in interactions amongst organizational members. This is a grassroots model of strategy formation with emergent strategy processes as its key mechanism (Mintzberg 1998c; Miles and Snow 1978: 53). Emergent strategies can emerge from anywhere inside an organization or be imposed as a pattern from an external source, and this process does not need to be conscious. Strategy is not typically formulated by top managers but emerges from the micro-level interaction of people throughout the organization engaged in fluid working arrangements (Brown and Duguid 1991; Tsoukas 1996). These strategies become organizational when the patterns developed through emergent processes are adopted by the organization as a whole (Mintzberg 1998c: 320). The changes that arise from these micro-scale accommodations amongst the interactions of organizational members "are repeated, shared, amplified, and sustained" and over time can "produce perceptible and striking organizational changes" (Orlikowski 1996). Ford and Ford (1995) argue that "the macrocomplexity of organizations is generated, and changes emerge through the diversity and interconnectedness of many microconversations, each of which follows very simple rules" (560). Organizations that respond to change with agility are focused on exploring possible opportunities rather than on exploiting a limited set of defined capabilities (Staber and Sydow 2002), and are notable in the "rapidity with which [the organization] expands its domain" (Miles and Snow 1978: 29, 49). Exploration and experimentation are central to organizations that build adaptive capacity as agility and forms the basis of the organization's reputation. Chakravarthy (1982) emphasizes the importance of an organization creating latitude for experimentation. March (1991) discusses this same challenge in relation to the ways that organizations learn. Learning by exploration is a form of learning that is adopted when organizations search for new opportunities and ideas. This involves "search, variation, risk taking, experimentation, play, flexibility, discovery, innovation" (March 1991: 71). Rather than pushing for change, organizations that build adaptive capacity as agility pull for change by making change the norm within their organizations.

AGILITY IN FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AND GREENPEACE

The question remains whether the organizational approach of building adaptive capacity as agility is the 'one best way' to respond to a dynamic environment and triggers for change. One method of assessing this claim is by comparing the depiction of adaptive capacity as agility to international nongovernmental organizations that can be considered as having been effective in responding to change over time. Within the global environmental governance arena, two international nongovernmental organizations, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, have been active in campaigning for to advance

their mission of addressing environmental issues and advancing sustainability since the 1970s (FoE 2004; GPI 2004). Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace were selected for this paper because they are considered to be effective in this way but by what criteria can these two organizations be considered effective? One way of defining effectiveness is survival, particularly survival within a turbulent and sometimes hostile environment (Smilie and Hailey 2001) and, both INGOs fulfill that criteria by having survived for over three decades in an environment that can be deemed to be dynamic and requiring agility. These two organizations have experienced the incremental evolution of their subject areas and political environment as well as episodes of abrupt change in their environment, unpredictable shifts in the demands they face, and crises resulting from hostile backlash to their activities (Weyler 2004; Lamb 1996). Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have also sustained their organizations through internal organizational shifts and crises, often triggered by different internal responses by subgroups within their organization to changes in the external environment. Not only have the organizations survived and had some influence through these substantial changes, but Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have also grown to a very large size both in terms of financial income, membership support, and organizational structure and staff with national offices in dozens of countries and hundreds of employees and volunteers. Growth is another criteria for evaluating the success of these case study organizations (Smillie and Hailey 2001: 4; Sowa, Coleman Selden et al. 2004: 719). During the three decades of their survival and growth, these two organizations detail their own successes in pursuing their mission through specific campaigns (FOE 2004; GPI 2004) and have been credited for effectively influencing global environmental governance processes (Arts, Noortmann et al. 2001). Arts, Noortmann et. al (2001) and Newell (2000) chronicle the impact that Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have had on global governance processes focused on climate change, and Stoett (1997) attributes these INGOs with the successful campaign for a ban on whaling within the International Whaling Commission.

How have Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace responded to change over time? Answering this question requires a review of the structural configuration and strategy formation processes that these INGOs adopt. Friends of the Earth is a "highly decentralized" federation of 70 national member organizations with 1.5 million members (FoE 2004). A small international secretariat serves as an information clearinghouse and support to the national members, and is employed and overseen by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is composed of national members elected during the Biannual General Meeting (FoE 2004). Strategy formation processes within Friends of the Earth are "democratic" with 'bottom-up' decision-making supported by broad participation through the general meetings and campaign processes. Every two years, at the week-long biannual general meeting, the "policies and activities of the federation are decided… in which all members have an equal say" (FoE 2004). Greenpeace has adopted a structure that is more centralized in comparison with Friends of the Earth. The 27 national and regional Greenpeace offices autonomously determine much of their activities; however, there is also an international office, Greenpeace International (Stichting Greenpeace Council) in Amsterdam of over 100 staff that centrally coordinates international campaigns, provides services to the whole organization, operates the Greenpeace fleet of ships and campaign vessels, monitors the development and

performance of national and regional offices, and ensures consistency across policies, campaigns and communication (GPI 2004). The Greenpeace International Board approves the budget and audited accounts of the international office, and employs and monitors the performance of the International Executive Director. Strategy formation processes to respond to worldwide campaigns is centralized within the Greenpeace International; however, long-term strategy of the organization as well as its governance structure, its new member applications, the spending ceiling for the budget of Greenpeace International, and the members Greenpeace International Board are decided by the yearly meeting of the Trustees elected by the boards of the national and regional offices. In this way, Greenpeace seeks to "reflect transparency and value for democratic structures while maintaining the high level of internationalism and rigid adherence to its principles" (GPI 2004).

The distinction between the structure and strategy formation processes of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace has been noted by several authors (Rucht; Wapner; Clark; Williamson). Rucht (1999) distinguishes between two types of transnational structures: coalitions and more formal organizations. Within the second categorization of formal organization, transnational coordination involves not only national groups but also an international body, which facilitates both vertical and horizontal coordination. Rucht (1999) then presents a typology of two models, "although most empirical cases lie somewhere in between." (Rucht 1999, 208)

> First, the overall structure could be decentralized, thus limiting the power of the international body, and facilitating a flow of communication from the bottom to the top as well as direct communication among national sections. An example of this structure is Friends of the Earth International, a worldwide environmental umbrella organization that allows only one group per country to become a member. The second model implies a more centralized structure characterized by one or several bodies beyond the national level that, in substantial matters, can impose their will on national groups. In this case, the flow of communication is predominately vertical and top-down. Such a centralized structure presupposes or induces ideational and structural similarities between national groups – a trait that is most likely when all national groups are part of the same organization. Amnesty International is an example of a moderately centralized movement organization that is part of a broader cross-national human rights network (Ennals, 1982). By contrast, Greenpeace International has a highly centralized structure. In spite of its idiosyncrasies, the organization occasionally forms alliances with other environmental groups and thus can be considered part of the transnational environmental movement network (Rucht 1993).

Clark (2003b) makes a similar distinction between FOEI and GPI. Clark defines centralized associations as those organizations that "provide greater national autonomy [than unitary structures]; but major decisions are made by global headquarters, which also control the use of name and standards…examples include Greenpeace." (Clark 2003b: 4). Clark makes a distinction between federations and confederations. Federations are "networks comprising national members with a common name and

charter but also national self-determination," with "strong global boards, comprising members' delegates, making binding decisions" and with a "secretariat that is "largely responsible for implementation."(Clark 2003a, 112) In contrast, confederations are network organizations wherein "network members are fully independent but agree to a set of common ground rules and work together on specific activities where there is mutual advantage…examples include Friend of the Earth International" (2003b: 4). These organizational forms are only two categories proposed by Clark in a typology of organizational forms that include civil society organizations, civil society networks and social movements (Clark 2003b).

This brief analysis reveals that although Friends of the Earth aligns with many of the characteristics of the adaptive capacity as agility approach to responding to change, Greenpeace appears to differ substantially from this approach. Young, Koenig et. al (1999) suggest that structural differences across INGOs reveal that INGOs "employ a variety of structural forms to carry out their work" and that "any specific organizational design, if carefully conceived, may be able to minimize the generic weaknesses of a given model and function satisfactorily" (340). The inconsistency in terms of structures, and in terms of strategy formation processes, across Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace suggests that theories that highlight an approach to building adaptive capacity as agility as the most effective response to change are insufficient. The model of adaptive capacity as agility does not explain why two INGOs that are comparatively successful can have different approaches to responding to change. In light of this inconsistency, this paper proposes a typology built on a unique synthesis of the NGO and business management literature and identifies three unique and viable approaches to adaptive capacity representing positions on a continuum. At one end of the continuum is the approach to adaptive capacity as "agility" that has been described above and characterizes an organization as being configured for continuous change through decentralized, flexible structures and emergent strategy formation processes focused on exploration and experimentation. At the other end of the end, adaptive capacity is defined as "resilience" with the INGO configured to buffer from change and promote stability in order to become more efficient at its core expertise. Adaptive capacity as "balance" lies between these two archetypes and represents the patterned response of organizations that incorporate both agile and resilient components. The paper concludes with a preliminary assessment as to the insights that can be gained by adopting a more inclusive definition of adaptive capacity and as to further research that can be conducted within this approach.

A TYPOLOGY OF ADAPTIVE CAPACITY APPROACHES

This section presents a typology of adaptive capacity based on a unique synthesis of the organizational literature, drawing on the theoretical contributions of scholars in the NGO management literature and in literature on organizational strategy and change. The aim of the typology is to provide an analytical framework for understanding the adaptive capacity of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). As stated in the introduction above, adaptive capacity is defined as the patterned response of an organization to internal and external triggers for change manifested in its strategy formation processes and structure. The different strategies NGOs adopt to respond to change can be characterized as archetypes. These archetypes can serve to classify INGOs

according to their strategy for adapting to triggers for change and to predict each INGO's structural features and possible future developments. The three archetypes presented below – adaptive capacity as agility, adaptive capacity as resilience, and adaptive capacity as balance – were built on a unique synthesis of the organizational theory literature, particularly focused on theories of organizational change and development. The theoretical construct draws its inspiration from some of the three key contributions to this for-profit literature – the work on organizational configurations by Henry Mintzberg and his colleagues (e.g, Mintzberg and Quinn 1998; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et. al 1998), the typology of product market strategies and strategic types developed by Raymond E. Miles and Charles C. Snow (1978), and the contribution by Karl Weick and Robert E. Quinn on the tempo of change (1995). The theoretical construct builds on the contributions of these authors and the work of other scholars (e.g., Ebrahim 2003; Staber and Sydow 2002; March 1991) on understanding different strategies to responding to organizational change.

The typology is based on three assumptions. First, the environment within which an INGO is embedded is a multifaceted entity, therefore, there is not one preordained set of environmental conditions that can be identified to which organizations respond but organizations "instead *create their own environments* through a series of choices" (Miles and Snow 1978: 6) in a process that has been termed 'environmental enactment' (Weick 1969; 1977). Although there are trends and changes in the environment within which INGOs operate, INGOs will respond to these shifts in different ways depending on whether and how they perceive those shifts. Second, organizational members in INGOs have a *degree of strategic choice* in determining an INGO's response to internal and external changes, and this strategy can range from being a formalized plan determined by a strategic group to an informally created and emergent strategy that arises from the interactions and actions of organizational members (Mintzberg 1998a). Third, *this strategic choice is constrained by past patterns of decisions that become embedded in the structures and processes* of the INGO. In other words, "the structure and functioning of organizations are the result of strategic choices made either implicitly or explicitly by coalitions of people both within and outside the organization" and these reflect typical patterns of responses over time (Van de Ven and Ferry 1980: 380). March and Simon (1958) argue that organizations create structures and processes in order to reduce the uncertainty and limited capacity for completely rational decisions in interacting with the environment. The rules, repertoires of action and structural configurations adopted by an organization reduce the complexity of decision-making but also result in organizational members limiting their search for alternative strategies (Cyert and March 1963). In this way, *organizations over time become more routinized* and are less likely to veer from the course that has been set. The typical responses become a pattern that enables the organization to do certain things well but also lack in capabilities in other areas. It is typical versions of these patterns that this typology seeks to identify.

The inertia to shift from one organizational response to another can come from a variety of sources. Weick and Quinn (1999) review different theories of sources of inertia and attribute it to "deep structure (Gersick 1991), first-order change (Bartunek 1993), routines (Gioia 1992), success-induced blind spots (Miller 1993), top management tenure (Virany

et al 1992), identity maintenance (Sevon 1996), culture (Harrison and Caroll 1991), complacency (Kotter 1996), or technology (Tushman and Rosenkopf 1992)" (369). Organizations routinize their systems of interrelated parts in part because it is the organization's answer to creating a culture of "*basic assumptions and beliefs* that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (Schein 1985: 6 – emphasis in original). The culture and organizational structure and systems that are created, including an organization's patterned response to change, are "*learned* responses to a group's problems of *survival* in its external environment and its problems of *internal integration*" within the organizational system (Schein 1985: 6 – emphasis in original). The organization and its culture and its patterned response to change can be conceived as a "learned product of group experience" (Schein 1985: 7 – emphasis in original) that is difficult to change, particularly, as Miller (1993; 1994) notes, if this response is deemed to be successful. As organizations receive feedback about successful performance, organizational members are more likely to veer towards inertia and simplify an organization to focus on successful performance responses. As Weick and Quinn (1999) concisely state in summarizing Miller's research, "successful organizations discard practices, people and structures regarded as peripheral to success and grow more inattentive to signals that suggest the need for change, more insular and sluggish in adaptation, and more immoderate in their processes, tending towards extremes of risk-taking or conservatism" (369). It is this tendency for organizations to develop patterned responses that drives this dissertation's search for patterned responses to change.

The typology presents three archetypes of patterned responses to change, defined as an INGO's adaptive capacity. These strategies for building adaptive capacity can be arranged on a continuum arranged according to Weick and Quinn's distinction between continuous and episodic change. The patterned response of adaptive capacity as *agility* aligns with continuous change. The patterned response of adaptive capacity as *resilience* aligns with episodic change. A hybrid response that incorporates these two ends of the continuum is termed adaptive capacity as *balance*. These three strategies for building adaptive capacity represent integrated responses and patterned behaviors of an organization that arise at it align its strategies and structures to its environment and in response to shifts within the organization. The aim of the typology is not to identify the most effective strategy, as there are inherent strengths and weaknesses in each approach, rather these three strategies for building adaptive capacity are all viable responses. The key to effectiveness is in the consistency of strategic approach and in the recognition and enhancement of the strengths of that approach and the identification and minimization of its weaknesses. Ineffectiveness in building a continually adapting organization results from an incoherent and inconsistent approach to triggers for change. Table 1 presents a summary of the three archetypes.

Table 1: Three Approaches to Building Adaptive Capacity

Dimension or construct	**Adaptive Capacity as Agility**	**Adaptive Capacity as Resilience**	**Adaptive Capacity as Balance**
Tempo of change	Continuous and cumulative change that is inherently unpredictable	Infrequent episodes of change that are known or predictable	Continuous micro-level adaptations combined with infrequent episodes of change
Structure	Decentralized, flexible structures with an emphasis on teamwork	Deep structures of interrelated parts with a tendency towards hierarchy and centralization	Hybrid structure containing both flexible teams and deep structure
Strategy Formation Process	Emergent, bottom-up strategy formation focused on exploration and experimentation	Deliberate, planned, often top-down strategy formation focused on exploitation of existing expertise	Combination of emergent and planned strategy formation focused on both exploration and exploitation

Adaptive capacity as agility

The archetype of adaptive capacity as agility has been described above and can be summarized as an approach to building adaptive capacity that responds to continuous, cumulative, unpredictable change by creating decentralized, flexible structures with an emphasis on teamwork, and an emergent 'bottom-up' strategy formation process focused on exploration and experimentation. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to embrace change as a constant and evolving process. Triggers for change are not simply something an organization responds to at specific intervals, but a continuous dynamic flux that requires structure and strategy formation processes that accept this condition. By adopting a decentralized, flexible structure composed of ad hoc teams, and by embracing grassroots strategy formation processes that allow strategies to emerge, organizations that build adaptive capacity as agility are organizing for continuous change. For Staber and Sydow (2002), adaptive capacity as agility – what they term "adaptive capacity" – is a more appropriate organizational response to organizational effectiveness and survival in "highly volatile and complex environments" than the conventional approach – which they term "adaptation" – that focuses on building efficiency (408). This approach is particularly well suited for individuals who "dislike both structural rigidity and the concentration of power" or, in other words, embrace the organic and decentralized structures and systems that encourage "more democracy with less bureaucracy" (Mintzberg 1998c: 322). It is this characteristic that is also one of this approach's greatest weakness. Most individuals in organizations also seek order and stability and the agility approach to responding to triggers for change can generate frustration due to its "fluidity", "confusion" (Mintzberg 1998c: 322), "considerable ambiguity and complexity, with contradictions that are difficult to manage and with payoffs that are rarely immediate" (Staber and Sydow 2002: 409). An organization that

builds adaptive capacity as agility may contain anxious organizational members that do not have clarity as to their role in responding to change and that can turn to politicized and ruthless tactics within the organization (Mintzberg 1998c: 322).

There are also issues with the "exploration" strategy of this approach. Rumelt (1995) warns organizations from exploring and expanding to new area that are too far from its initial domain as this may have negative consequences for its reputation and legitimacy in the eyes of its stakeholders. Kraatz and Zajac (2001) make the point that a propensity to constantly explore new opportunities can have negative effects on the internal culture and resources of an organization in terms of building competence and identity (636). The search for "flexibility" can result in the organization "seldom attaining the efficiency necessary to reap…benefits" from its past response to triggers for change (Miles and Snow 1978: 58). There is also a danger of overextension through a "constant shuffling" to respond to triggers for change and new opportunities (Miles and Snow 1978: 58). This approach "gains its effectiveness (innovation) at the price of efficiency" (Mintzberg 1998c: 322). The flexible work structures and the high expense of mutual adjustment communication processes can make this approach to responding to triggers for change very costly (Mintzberg 1998c: 322). Miller (1982) argues that "there may be hidden costs in making prompt incremental piecemeal changes to organizational structure to cope with new strategy or environment" in particular "incremental structural changes may create severe and costly disharmonies as they destroy an integral structural configuration" (131). Miller (1982) suggests that there are benefits to delaying change and building stable structures, a strategy to responding to change that aligns more closely with adaptive capacity as resilience.

Mintzberg states that this approach "suits the industry of our age" (1998c: 159) but he does not identify this approach as being superior. In fact, he suggests that the innovative organization that builds adaptive capacity as agility represents organizations that are predominately in their youth, and that organizations seek more stable environments as they mature and bureaucratize (Mintzberg 1998c: 316). When these organizations are "tired of perpetual change," there is a tendency to standardize their work, focus on a particular activity that was successful and exploit it; however, this transition may not be appropriate as the "organization came into being to solve problems imaginatively, not to apply standards indiscriminately" (Mintzberg 1998c: 323). What is a weakness in organizations that build adaptive capacity as agility to make "an inappropriate transition" in order to stabilize and solve the problems of ambiguity and inefficiency, is a strength in the second archetypal approach to building adaptive capacity – adaptive capacity as resilience.

Adaptive capacity as resilience

Organizations that adopt a patterned response to internal and external triggers for change that builds adaptive capacity as resilience could be given the motto 'restore' (Holling 1996) or "foster efficiency" (Staber and Sydow 2002: 409). The term resilience is applied here because it is commonly used to describe the ability of a system to recover from disturbance (Holling 1996). As Miles and Snow (1978) indicate, organizational members of organizations that build adaptive capacity as resilience "perceive a great deal of

stability in their organizational environments" even if "to the casual observer, such perceptions may appear to be unwarranted" (37). There is a tendency to view the environment "as a collection of relatively few important factors whose behavior can be predicted with considerable certainty and whose actions probably will not have a large impact on internal operations" (Miles and Snow 1978: 38). Instead of organizing for flux and change, this organizational approach is about organizing to buffer from those dynamics and to focus on building stability and control through robust and persistent structures and strategies (Quinn 1988). A focus on stability and a degree of persistence does not require an organization to remain within a specific stable state of structures and strategies. The organization can shift from one stable state to another, but retains its focus on restoring stability once a transition is made (Holling 1996). Hurst (1995) describes the return to stability as a progression through an organizational eco-cycle. The eco-cycles is based on a model of ecosystems that cycle through phases of growth, exploitation to fill an available niche, of conservation to establish stable relationships amongst organisms in an ecosystem, of destruction often by external crises such as a forest fire, and of renewal to rebuild the ecosystem (e.g., Holling 1973). Similarly Hurst (1995) argues that organizations cycle through endless cycles of stages of growth, conservation, crisis and renewal, which enable an organization to remain resilient to change that it encounters. The eco-cycle describes both periods of convergence during which an organization engaged in conservation and the deepening and fine-tuning of existing structures, strategies, and competencies, and periods of divergence after a crisis that trigger change and a period of renewal. For organizations that build adaptive capacity as resilience, this cycle leads an organization to another period of conservation and convergence wherein deep structures and strategies and a degree of stability are created. This is distinct from the response of an organization building adaptive capacity as agility that reacts to triggers for change by organizing for constant change, flexibility and discretion.

The tempo of change is episodic. Weick and Quinn (1999) characterize this change as "infrequent, discontinuous and intentional" and "an occasional interruption or divergence from equilibrium" (366). An organization that builds adaptive capacity as resilience focuses on maintaining and adapting the organization in periods of convergence, which can be punctuated by episodes of organizational change when there is a "growing misalignment between an inertial deep structure and perceived environmental demands" or perceived internal organizational shifts (Weick and Quinn 1999: 365). Organizations in this archetype are "inertial" and changed by dramatic episodes of infrequent and radical triggers for change (Weick and Quinn 1999: 366). Similar to the eco-cycle model that Hurst (1995) presents, Tushman and Romanelli (1985) provide an image of the nature of the organizational change as built around the concept of 'punctuated equilibrium.' Tushman and Romanelli propose that organizations, like species, converge and build deep interdependencies during periods of relative equilibrium; however, that this convergence can be interrupted by the need to respond and adapt to triggers for change. These periods of convergence are punctuated by periods of revolutionary organizational change, which occur when organizational responses to triggers for change lag behind and create a dissonance between the organizational approach and the demands and pressures for change. These changes can lead to a fundamental restructuring of the

organization and a new equilibrium. In the microcomputer industry, Tushman and Romanelli found these periods of discontinuous episodic change with the evidence drawn from clustered changes of strategy, structure and power distribution.

Organizations that adopt the approach of adaptive capacity as resilience build "deep structures of interrelated parts" driven by "powerful norms embedded in strong subcultures" punctuated by episodic changes (Weick and Quinn 1999: 366-7). This archetype can adopt a number of different configurations (Mintzberg 1998b; Miller 1990); however, there is a focus on building deep alignment amongst the structures and systems (Pfeffer 1998) by creating lean structures that emphasize the core competency of the organization, streamlining routines and tightening resource belts (Harrison 1994). By building deep structure during periods of convergence, the organization is vulnerable to perturbations during distinct and infrequent periods – periods of divergence – which require readjustment and organizational change of this deep structure in response to internal and external triggers for change. Miller (1982) argues that this approach of remaining resilient to change has benefits as "changeless stable intervals punctuated by infrequent but revolutionary periods of 'quantum' or multifaceted structural change may sometimes be the most economical strategy" (131). The emphasis on efficiency and stability requires a higher degree of prescription of behivior and work processes. There is a tendency towards hierarchy and centralization in this approach with hierarchy referring to "centralized decision-making, top-down approaches to management, low span of control for middle management, and an emphasis on vertical relations among staff" (Anheier 2000: 11). Brown and Iverson (2004) similarly emphasize that "more centralization should be possible" in these types of organizations "because of the focus on efficiency and tight control of existing processes" (2004: 382). The tendency towards centralization is due to the fact that the specialized information that is required at the subunit level requires a centralized structure that "has the necessary information and the proper vantage point to control operations that span several organizational subunits" (Miles and Snow 1978: 44). This coordination can also be accomplished through "polycentralization" wherein "department heads act in a relatively independent fashion within their own areas of responsibility and engage in limited lateral communication" (Miles and Snow 1978: 44). Information flows are "normally restricted to vertical channels: directives and instructions flow down the hierarchy, and progress reports and explanations flow up" in "long-loops" from the lower levels all the way to top management (Miles and Snow 1978: 44). Subunit interdependence is managed through "uncomplicated and inexpensive forms of coordination such as standardization and scheduling" and any conflicts between subunits can usually be handled through normal hierarchical channels (Miles and Snow 1978: 45).

Organizations that approach adaptive capacity as resilience have strategies that "tend to persist over time" (Ghemawat 1991: 14) that create the opportunity for the organization to develop competencies and commitments that set it apart. Organizations that are most distinctive often persist with their original or traditional strategy *despite* triggers for change (Ghemawat 1991; Selznick 1957). When strategy formation and organizational change does occur in this archetype, it is "more deliberate and formal than emergent change" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 368). The close association between planned, intended

change and episodic change is due to the fact "episodic change requires both equilibrium breaking and transitioning to a newly created equilibrium" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 371). The focus of the strategy formation process is on creating stability, even within a dynamic environment and organizational context, by "sealing off" a part of the environment as a stable domain within which they can operate and focusing on carving a niche in order to exploit a set of limited capabilities. This relates to the tactic of "buffering" (Scott 2003: 214) an organization "from external disturbances so that it can operate continuously and efficiently" (Miles and Snow 1978: 40). In this way, building adaptive capacity as resilience involves "deliberately create stability through a series of decisions and actions which lessen the organization's vulnerability to environmental change and uncertainty" (Miles and Snow 1978: 37). By focusing on a core set of capabilities and being cautious about growth, organizations that build adaptive capacity as resilience can emphasize exploitation of existing capabilities and efficiency (Miles and Snow 1978: 550; Weick and Quinn 1999: 367). This approach is associated with "learning by doing" wherein "an organization is likely to repeat a routine that is associated with success in meeting a target" (Ebrahim 2003: 108). March (1991) and Levinthal and March (1993) discuss exploitation as the use and improvement of proven routines, which are often found through a "repetitive trial-and-error process" to find successful routines (Ebrahim 2003: 108).

The strength of this approach lies with its ability to have "intimate familiarity with its domain" and become efficient at the organization's response to change. Organizations that build adaptive capacity as resilience also provide a degree of stability and order that is comforting for organizational members that experience anxiety in the face of ambiguity and turbulence, and that can be effective for pursuing successful activities in a consistent manner. March (1991) indicates that exploitation strategies are often more certain in terms of ensuring organizational performance than exploration strategies that have uncertain outcomes. There are also several weaknesses of this model. The very strengths of this approach, the focus on efficiency and stability, downplays the fact that an approach can become too rigidly adhered to (Granovetter 1979) and can become more vulnerable to become misfit with the environment in light of triggers for change (Levinthal and March 1993: 102). Levinthal (1990) argues that resource-rich organizations can become increasingly inefficient and maladaptive to their context and still survive for some time before experiencing a threatening trigger for change that may impact its performance and even its survival. Kraatz and Zajac (2001) argue that this results because "resources tend to become valued as ends in and of themselves, rather than being viewed as mere means that can be used in pursuit of shifting organizational goals" (635). Miles and Snow (1978) emphasize that an organization that adopts a resilience approach to adaptive capacity "runs the risk of fairly rapid extinction" if it is faced with a major shift, because it is "gambling" that its existing competencies and structures are viable in a new context (39). In this way, these organizations may experience their core capabilities as becoming "core rigidities" that do not respond to triggers for change (Leonard-Barton 1992). Levitt and March (1988) and Levinthal and March (1993) make similar arguments about how historically proven competencies can become competency traps in a changed context. Structurally, the dense interconnections between elements in an organization building adaptive capacity as resilience can result in

a "tightly coupled system" (Perrow 1984) that can have "difficulty reaching a stable state, as each disruption tears apart whatever stable form may have been reached" (Staber and Sydow 2002: 418). Staber and Sydow (2002) refer to organizations that "tend to search for solutions to problems in terms of competencies they already possess and can therefore understand" as having "limited adaptive capacity" (410). This weakness of adaptive capacity as resilience suggests that adaptive capacity as agility may be a better approach to responding to change. The third archetypal approach to responding to triggers for change – adaptive capacity as balance – seeks to integrate the best of both of these responses into a hybrid approach.

Adaptive capacity as balance

Organizations that respond to triggers for change by building adaptive capacity as balance set out to minimize the weaknesses of each of the previous approaches while benefiting from their strengths. The core elements of the agility and resilience archetypes are considered to be *forces* that pull and push an organization in different directions, with the challenge being to "manage the dynamic tension between contradictory forces" (Mintzberg 1998c: 393). Agility pulls the organization towards flexibility and innovation, while resilience pulls the organization towards stability and control. This tension forms a central part of the Competing Values Theory (Quinn 1988) in defining the tensions that an organization experiences in seeking effectiveness, including the tension between flexibility and discretion and stability and control. Effectiveness is found in the ability of the organization to strike a balance among the critical challenges in order to fulfill its objectives and survive within its context (Quinn 1988). Staber and Sydow (2002) suggest that the two approaches to adaptive capacity – as agility and as resilience – may actually be interconnected and that resilience is a necessary condition for achieving agility (411). They provide the example that "an organization that is well adapted to its current environment [- resilience -] may earn extra returns on investments that have long-term payoffs for survival in future environments [- agility -]" (Staber and Sydow 2002: 411). This approach also embraces the fact that organizations, including INGOs, can be considered to be many organizations in one, including the subgroups within an organizational staff, the Board, stakeholders, and partners, with each subcomponent developing its own typical approach to responding to change over time (Anheier 2000: 8). The notion of an organization as being composed of multiple sub-organizations and "as complex, internal federations or coalitions requires a multi-faceted, flexible approach" that acknowledges the challenge of "how to manage organizations that are multiples and therefore inherently complex" (Anheier 2000: 8). The adaptive capacity as balance approach is aimed at capturing this holistic conception of an organization as being composed of a diversity of 'organizations' and embedded in larger networks of organizations (Anheier 2000: 8).

In terms of the tempo of change within this archetype, Weick and Quinn (1999) state clearly that episodic and continuous processes can co-exist within the same organization by emphasizing that continuous change corresponds to the "micro, close and local" level of interactions of organizational members, whereas episodic change represents the "macro, distant, global" perspective of change (366). Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al. (1998) suggest that "researchers in strategic management who have come to these different

conclusions have, in fact, focused on different types of organizations and different episodes in their development" (315). For example, whereas the logical incrementalist approach proposed by Quinn and Voyer (1998) was derived from interviews at the micro-level with individual executives, Miller (1982) emphasized the importance of revolutionary change at the macro-level in shaping an organization based on his research on organizational actions, outcomes and behavior. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al. (1998) propose that "the two might in fact have been describing two sequential stages in the same process: strategists may learn incrementally and then drive strategic change in revolutionary fashion" or in other words "organizations may bide their time until they figure out where they have to go, and then, when a strategic window opens, they leap" (315). Cheng and Van de Ven (1996) reached a similar conclusion in their research on biomedical innovation processes, which they found to exhibit both episodic shifts from chaos to greater order and periods of random processes and continuous change in between these nonlinear shifts. Adaptive capacity as balance aligns closely with this perspective of different tempos of change reflecting different perspectives on the same organizational responses to change.

The structural configuration of an organization that responds to triggers for change through building adaptive capacity as balance is not as clear-cut as the adhocracy, organic, decentralized structure that aligns with adaptive capacity as agility nor the more centralized, mechanistic, hierarchical structure that is typical of adaptive capacity as resilience. Anheier (2000) highlights the fact that nongovernmental organizations are made up of various component parts, which require different choices as to their structural configuration, particularly in terms of their centralization and decentralization. Anheier writes "some parts of the organizational task environment are best centralized, such as controlling or fund-raising; other parts of the organizational environment could be either centralized or decentralized, depending on managerial preferences or the prevailing organizational culture; other parts, typically those involving greater uncertainty and ambiguity are best organized in a decentralized way" (2000: 9). The decision as to how to structure an organization is, in part, determined by the demands of stakeholders and internal organizational subgroups as to their preferred way of organizing. Smilie and Hailey (2001) argue that most organizations embody both structural configurations and that the choice of structural configuration is influenced by the task that the organization is performing. "For routine activities and programs, where the emphasis is on replication, mechanistic structures are most appropriate, as they are in areas where accountability and control are important: the management of money, for example, personnel matters and logistics" (Smilie and Hailey 2001: 130). Organic structures are more likely "where programmers are under experimentation or are changing, or where the programming environment is uncertain" (130). These different tasks can also be structurally integrated through a matrix structure that combines "experts [that] are grouped in functional units for specialized housekeeping purposes – hiring, training, professional communication, and the like – but are then deployed in the project teams to carry out the basic work of innovation" (Mintzberg 1998c: 310). Through a "multiple command structure," systems of information exchange and authority over decision-making operate across vertical and lateral lines in the organization (Scott 2003: 242). Anheier (2000) characterizes the decisions about structural configuration as a balance of various dimensions including the

decision as to whether to adopt a 'palace' or 'tent' structure (10). Similar to an organization that approaches adaptive capacity as resilience, a palace structure "values predictability over improvisation, dwells on constraints rather than opportunities, borrow solutions rather than inventing them, defends past action rather than devising new ones, favors accounting over goal flexibility, searches for "final" solutions, and discourages contradictions and experiments" (Anheier 2000: 10). The tent structure is more closely aligned to adaptive capacity as agility as it "places emphasis on creativity, immediacy and initiative, rather than authority, clarity and decisiveness; the organization emphasizes neither harmony nor durability of solutions, and asks 'Why be more consistent than the world around us?" (Anheier 2000: 10). Anheier argues that organizations are rarely one structure or another but are "frequently both" so that "multiple components of nonprofit organizations tend to be more tent-like, while others resemble palaces" (2000, 10).

Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) suggest that the combination of building adaptive capacity for agility and for resilience is the hallmark of the most successful firms in the computer industry. By combining the processes and structures of each end of the spectrum, these firms "had well-defined managerial responsibilities and clear project priorities while also allowing the design processes to be highly flexible, improvisational and continuously changing" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 371). Through processes of "bounded instability" these firms are able to combine the benefits of order and disorder and be flexible in fast-paced environments and contain "pockets of innovation that may prove appropriate in future environments" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 375). Staber and Sydow (2002). This depiction of organizations containing both processes of stability and instability is linked to the idea of organizations operating at "the edge of chaos" (McDaniel 1997; Stacey 1995). The image of the "edge of chaos" is drawn from research in biology and complex systems, and, when applied to organizations, refers to an organization as a set of simple elements interconnected by complex relationships that involve nonlinear feedback (Arthur 1995), structured as feedback loops (Sterman 2000). Feedback loops refer to those behaviors, actions or decisions in a system that influence the state of the system and, in turn, change the conditions and information that affects future behavior, actions and decisions and in organizations can have the effect of moving the organization "autonomously back and forth between stability and instability" (Weick and Quinn 1999: 368).

Rather than focus primarily on exploration or exploitation, Miles and Snow (1978) depict organizations that seek a "balanced approach" (555) as striving to benefit from both of these two strategies. March (1991) similarly even suggests that a combined strategy is essential for accruing the benefits of exploration and exploitation.

> If the systems [i.e. organization] engage in exploitation alone, it will find itself trapped in some sub-optimal state, failing to discover new directions or to develop competence in them. If the system engages in exploration alone, it never secures the advantages of its discoveries, never becomes good enough at them to make them worthwhile (March 1992-93: 31 as quoted in Ebrahim 2003: 108).

Mintzberg (1998c) makes a similar point in discussing strategy formation processes. Organizational members engaged in strategy formation processes should not only formulate deliberate pre-determined strategies but also create an organizational space

within which innovative bottom-up emergent strategies can grow. Mintzberg argues that this requires the balancing between emergent and planned strategy formation processes (1998c: 320). This argument aligns with Anheier (2000) who characterizes the key challenge of organizational members engaged in strategy formation is "to balance different, often contradictory elements" by locating and positioning an organization "in the complex push-and-pull of divergent models and underlying dilemmas and choices" and be "creative and enabling" in managing the strategic decisions involved (12). As Mintzberg writes, the strategy formation process is meant to guide members as to when "to resist change for the sake of internal efficiency and when to promote it for the sake of external adaptation. In other words, it must sense when to exploit an established crop of strategies and when to encourage new strains to displace them. It is the excesses of either – failure to focus (running blind) or failure to change (bureaucratic momentum) – that most harms organizations" (1998c: 320).

Rather than focus on one strategic approach or another, organizations that build adaptive capacity for balance focus on creating unique hybrid blends that combine the most useful aspects of agile and resilient responses to change. The strength of this approach lies in the fact that the organization can focus on creating its own unique balanced approach that is built on understanding the organization's unique nature and to "keep inventing novel approaches that solve festering problems" and create "new ways" of organizing (Mintzberg 1998d: 394). The potential weakness of this approach can be in its inconsistency. By trying to incorporate the best aspects of an organization built for constant change and flux and of an organization structured for stability, an organization that builds adaptive capacity for balance can be pulled apart by the tensions that exist between these two approaches. Chakravarthy (1982) notes that this tension between adapting to existing conditions through resilience and organizing for agility in order to manage future unpredictable conditions is often downplayed in academic writing and requires more attention. Those parts of the organization that focus on innovation and continuous change can become deeply frustrated by the rules and regulations for control that are established by those parts of the organization that focus on stability and convergence. The potential strength is that these two different approaches to responding to change enhance one another by providing the organization with different ways to adapt; however, the danger is that the dynamic tension that exists between these unique ways of responding can lead to political strife and ineffectiveness. In other words, balancing exploration and exploitation, agility and resilience can be a very complex process. Minimizing this weakness requires a high level of dialogue and understanding amongst different components of the organization in order to engage all organizational members and supporting external actors in embracing different approaches to change and negotiating the conflicts that will inevitably emerge.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical construct developed above raises serious questions as to whether there is one best way for INGOs to adapt to this environment, and suggests that searching for 'the most effective strategy for responding to change' suppresses the examination of important differences amongst organizational approaches and, leads to inappropriate predictions of organizational behavior or recommendations for organizational

improvements. All three approaches represent patterned responses to a dynamic environment and to shifting internal triggers for change, and for each adaptive capacity approach there are theorists that suggest that agility or resilience or balance are the most effective for creating a successful organizations in a dynamic context. Each archetype has a unique approach to structure, strategy and processes that link together to form a consistent pattern. How does this typology contribute to further understanding and why is it important to understand the unique strategies for building adaptive capacity? Miles and Snow (1978) provide an appropriate answer to this question in the context of their assessment of the worth of their typology on strategic product-market orientations in firms. Similar to the adaptive capacity typology developed for this dissertation, Miles and Snow (1978)'s typology portrays organizations "as integrated wholes in dynamic interaction with the environment" (30).

> Any typology, of course, is unlikely to encompass every form of organizational behavior – the world of organizations is much too changeable and complex to permit such a claim. Nevertheless, the behavior of organizations as total systems cannot be fully understood and predicted without concepts appropriate for this level of analysis. Typologies provide an excellent vehicle in this regard since their primary strengths are codification and prediction. Codification refers to the ordering of heterogeneous elements into distinct groupings; prediction is made possible when these groupings are composed of elements, which do in reality "hang together" (Tiryakian 1968). The typology…appears, at least tentatively to allow both codification and prediction. Each organization that we have observed appears to fit predominately into one of the four categories, and its behavior also appears to be generally predictable given its typological classification (Miles and Snow 1978: 30).

It is the aim of creating the typology described above to provide the ability for codification and prediction; however, this requires a series of empirical tests that can assess the usefulness of the typology for analyzing international nongovernmental organizations and their response to change. The methodology for this test is being developed as part of an empirical investigation of the INGOs that motivated the development of the typology, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace (Timmer 2006). Initial results from this analysis reveal that Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have adopted hybrid approaches to responding to change, which correspond with adaptive capacity as balance; however, this balance is manifested in very different ways within each organization. The strategy formation process and structures of Friends of the Earth align its adaptive capacity to the agility archetype, while Greenpeace aligns more closely with adaptive capacity as resilience. This supports the hypothesis that although these organizations can be categorized as building adaptive capacity as balance, it is equally interesting to understand how this balance expresses itself in each of the organizations. This study is currently in progress, and it is the aim of this paper to encourage further investigations into the validity of the typology, into other possible archetypes for building adaptive capacity, and into the expression of these archetypes within international nongovernmental organizations.

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