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"I'm Feeding the World Tonight:"
The Impact of Moral Identity Standards on Mobile Loaves & Fishes Homeless Outreach Ministry

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine what factors motivate volunteers who work at a religiously affiliated homeless outreach organization in Texas. Specifically, the research examines the extent to which Mobile Loaves & Fishes' (MLF) framework influences volunteers' decisions to participate in the organization's mobile food distribution program. Analysis of three different qualitative data sources collected in fall 2012, including organizational materials, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic field notes, suggests that MLF's use of framing conveys a moral identity that encourages volunteers to continue their participation in homeless outreach. This paper adds to the existing social movement literature on faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) by examining how religious ideology is used in tandem with elaborated framing and condensing symbols to reflect moral identity standards which induce people to volunteer.

Keywords: organizational framing, ideology, morality

Picture 1—A partially loaded MLF truck.

I would like to thank Mobile Loaves & Fishes for allowing me to research its organization. I am particularly thankful for the commissary staff and volunteers, especially those who took time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed. I would also like to thank Dr. Maria Lowe, Callie Dyer, Lorenza Cigarroa, Victoria Phillips, and Patrice Morgan for their critiques during the writing process, and my family for their support.

INTRODUCTION

The light is fading from the sky as we arrive at our second stop of the evening, a weekly-rate motel south of downtown. Roofs of a nearby university campus are visible as the driver, our team leader, pulls into the motel's parking lot. Just as I catch a glimpse of the building- yellowed walls, wear and tear so noticeable it can be seen from nearly 100 feet away- the driver realizes that he's made a mistake. He turns to address the team, three men, a woman, and myself. "I've pulled into the wrong driveway," he states, "I overshot it, we want the first one." He carefully maneuvers the truck around the motel's marquee before pulling out of the parking lot, turning into the adjacent driveway, and lightly honking the horn. Rather than one building, this section of the motel consists of multiple small shacks, not visible from the road and all painted a dull blue. The children who had been playing in the driveway cluster around the truck before the driver has even cut the engine. As the volunteers exit the vehicle to begin opening the bay doors, the children's parents and other adult residents join them outside. I watch as the Mobile Loaves & Fishes team distributes the food that they have, smiling the whole time, referring to each client as sir or ma'am. One of the clients objects to this treatment. He tells the man serving him, "don't call somebody like me sir," continuing on to say that he is not worthy of the volunteer's respect. The volunteer is visibly taken aback, and insists, "it doesn't matter if you're homeless or not, you're a sir." As the client rolls his eyes, the volunteer hands him his food, saying, "I've gotta hope." The client scoffs and replies, "keep up the hope, 'cause I lost mine."[1]

The mission of Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) is to provide homeless individuals with not only a meal and basic essentials, but also dignity and social capital- the opportunity to form social relationships with volunteers who are committed to social service.[2] Inspired by the tenets of the Catholic faith, MLF asks its volunteers to pray that God, "…soften the hard edges of [their] heart[s]," so that they may, "…embrace those who are hungry and abandoned."[3] The present study's research questions have been similarly inspired by the concept of morality in faith. As such, how do organizational framing practices influence volunteer participation, and how do framing practices establish or enhance a moral identity standard?

Picture 2—Cross with MLF logo, near entrance of commissary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper relies on three bodies of literature to address faith-based community development organizations (Fitzgerald 2009), organizational framing (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995), and moral schemas and identity (Cnaan 1999; Goodwin et al. 2004; Stets and Carter 2012). Faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) are non-profit or other social action groups inspired by faith (Fitzgerald 2009). Snow and Benford describe framing as an "elaborated code" which comes together to articulate previously inconceivable threads of information (Snow and Benford 1992, 139; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Snow 2004). Moral schemas and identity are based on the ideological values, goals, or social expectations that define a movement (Goodwin et al. 2004; Stets and Carter 2012). Combined, framing and schema help to explain how people are drawn to participate in any given social activist organization.

FBCDOS AND COOPERATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION

Religious tenets tend to be prosocial (Cnaan 1999). For example, Jewish faith tradition defines charity as "a human obligation" to one's community, while the Catholic faith sees charity as an opportunity to recognize "people's brotherhood in Christ" (Cnann 1999, 55). Faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) provide social services beyond the traditional soup kitchen, including: job training, affordable housing, and micro-business loans (Fitzgerald 2009). Though entrenched in religious values, FBCDOs have moved from the church or faith community where the programs were established in order to form nonprofit corporations funded in part by government grants (Monsma 2007; Fitzgerald 2009).

Through missions statements and methods of operation FBCDOs demonstrate that shared religious values serve not only as pre-existing social structures, but also imputes for engaging in activism (Melucci 1996; Cnaan 1999). Thus, movement framing strategies and culturally relevant moral codes are linked, as each helps to develop and maintain the other by attaching actors to the established belief system (Hunt and Benford 2004; Snow 2004). Goals and motives located within a shared moral identity encourage further adherence to the moral code.

FBCDOs are unique in that they practice cooperative collective action (Fitzgerald 2009). Specifically, cooperative collective action is not oriented towards conflict, such as protests or other demonstration activities, and is instead "located entirely within the limits of the current political and economic system" (Melucci 1996; Fitzgerald 2009, 183). Organizations that practice collective action are incited to act when they perceive that societal needs have been insufficiently met by the political system. Thus, cooperative collective action "[redefines] as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable" by constructing a new or alternative method of meeting societal needs (Snow and Benford 1992, 137; Melucci 1996).

Whereas previous research has used frame analysis to determine how FBCDOs align with government expectations of their outreach, this paper examines how an FBCDO's unique frame may be used to evoke moral emotions in volunteers that function, in turn, to encourage participation in their various ministries. The present research will also expand upon how organization staff and volunteers navigate the political environment at the local level. Additionally, the current study broadens the definition of FBCDOs to include like-organizations that do not accept government grants or other such funding.

IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND FRAMING PROCESSES

Social movement organizations (SMOs) engage in framing, the process by which organizers and movement leaders manipulate existing ideologies to better fit organizational structure and appeal to potential recruits (Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994). Successful frames are situation-relevant (Snow 2004). That is, the organization's frame is an easy marriage of cognition and culture, one in which "individual beliefs about the social world and cultural belief systems and ideologies" are cohesive (Gamson 1992, 55; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005). Formulating frames allows SMOs to propose solutions to problems that resonate with actors within the given ideological system by, "determining appropriate roles and behaviors to be enacted" (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Fitzgerald 2009; Stets and Carter 2012, 121).

One such ideological system is religion (Jasper 1998; McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). Religious ideals or tenets have the potential to exist as "symbolic foundations of frames" which, in their non-specificity, have a broad appeal (Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 497). Vague or broad appeals reflect an elaborated master frame, which is a highly interpretive, inclusive system composed of a wide range of ideas (Snow and Benford 1992). For some, participating in religion and religious activities increases their proximity to social movement activists and recruiters (McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). As such, religious congregations act as recruitment networks, wherein an expressed desire to be involved signifies, "cognitive shifts" and an emergent "clarity of vision and purpose" that gives direction to the movement (Eyerman 2005, 45). However, recruitment to a movement is unlikely without an existing structure, or ideologically based frame, in place (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). SMOs must first formulate diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational frames that are not only credible, but also fit in with a central belief or several interrelated beliefs of the targeted audience (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).[4] The present study focuses on motivational framing.

Motivational framing generates rationale for action by articulating motivating vocabulary and thereby encouraging indi-

Date	Time	Event	Total Hours
8/24/12	11:30 p.m.-1:00 p.m.	Free Food Friday	1:30
9/4/12	3:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Truck Run	1:45
9/9/12	2:50 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	2:40
9/13/12	3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.	Commissary Visit	0:45
9/16/12	3:50 p.m.-4:50 p.m.	Make Ready	1:00
9/20/12	3:40 p.m.-5:35 p.m.	Make Ready	2:55
9/27/12	4:45 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	3:15
9/30/12	3:30 p.m.-5:20 p.m.	Make Ready	1:50
10/4/12	4:05 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Make Ready	1:25
10/15/12	4:00 p.m.-7:10 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	3:10
10/21/12	3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Make Ready	1:30
10/25/12	4:35 p.m.-5:35 p.m.	Make Ready	1:00
11/6/12	4:45 p.m.-5:20 p.m.	Make Ready	0:35
11/11/12	3:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	2:45
		Total Hours in Field: 26:05	

TABLE 1. DATES AND TIMES OF FIELD OBSERVATIONS

viduals to become involved with movement activities (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). Rationale for action can be evoked via two processes. The first, frame alignment, is the process during which an organization attempts to forge an agreement between its own goals and the goals of potential recruits (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Frame bridging is the second process, during which organizations present themselves as a means of pursuing like interests in order to recruit both strangers and individuals already affiliated with the existing ideological network (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). For SMOs whose elaborated master frames are ideologically based, frame alignment may be heavily situated in value and belief amplification. For the purpose of the present study, values refer to goals, or "end-states," and beliefs are defined as any ideational relationship between an individual and something or between an individual and a characteristic of something (Snow et al. 1986). As an example, previous studies have shown that people who identify as being religious or as affiliated with "religious traditions" are more apt to engage in volunteerism than those who are not, citing that participating in community service or activism helps them to, "[live] up to their religious ideals" and "practice [their] faith to its fullest" (Cnaan 1999, 26; Monsma 2007, 18; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011). An organization whose frame fits well within the values and beliefs of potential recruits is more likely to be viewed as a viable service opportunity than an organization that does not resonate (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).

The extant literature on organizational framing holds that successful frames merely emphasize elements of existing ideologies that appeal to people with similar values or beliefs (Snow and Benford 2000). The present study addresses a gap in the existing literature by exploring the possibilities of a marriage between organizational framing and ideology, thus creating a relationship where the frame is the ideology. By doing so, this research examines how ideological frames can serve to influence volunteer participation via an organization's representation of morally significant value and belief systems.

MORALITY, RESONANCE, AND CONDENSING SYMBOLS

Prosocial religious principles construct schemas- "structures of knowledge about particular domains on life and of the self"-that reflect moral understanding (Cnaan 1999; Myyry et al. 2010, 214). An activist's moral understanding is represented, in part, by a commitment or investment to an SMO that shares a moral schema similar to his or her own (Goodwin et al. 2004). Moral schemas are formed around moral rules, "cultural codes that specify what is right or wrong, good or bad, or acceptable or unacceptable in a society" (Stets and Carter 2012, 121). Culturally specific moral codes serve in turn to, "control and integrate members of a society," thus creating an overarching moral identity standard, or, "the meaning an individual associates with being a moral person" (Stets and Carter 2012, 121, 124). As with ideologically-based frames, an organization's moral identity must follow relevant cultural rules in order to resonate with movement actors and encourage participation (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Goodwin et al. 2004; Robnett 2004; Yang 2005).

An aspect of resonance is awareness, which helps to reflect not only an understanding of the world, but to cue appropriate emotional responses induced "when we follow what we take to be sound moral rules" (Goodwin et al. 2004, 422). Awareness can be generated via moral shocks which, when properly utilized, trigger empathetic-role taking and motivate people to become involved in "prosocial behavior" as an attempt to alleviate their own feelings of sympathy or "vicarious distress" (Thoits 1989, 328; Batson 2002). Moral shocks include god terms, or, "moral [absolutes] that [appear] to be unquestionable" and, when sufficiently threatened, spark an individual's involvement in a movement (Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 498).

Condensing symbols have traditionally been thought of as cognitively significant images or objects that threaten individuals' moral identities and, while doing so, articulate structures of social understanding (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Melucci 1996; Eyerman 2005). Condensing symbols are designed to be emotionally charged and highly resonant (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Like morals, condensing symbols must be relevant to the culture and society in which they are situated, thus indicating that the corresponding emotions they evoke are culturally and socially constructed (Jasper 1997; Thoits 1989; Robnett 2004; Summers-Effler 2005). In order to retain recruits, an organization's leaders must maintain their own social relevancy by embodying the group's moral identity, thereby inspiring trust, loyalty, and lending credibility to the group's activism (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Goodwin et al. 2004).

Previous literature regarding morality in relation to volun-

Respondent	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Religious Affiliation	Length of Time with MLF	Role in MLF
Susan	Woman	White	51	Roman Catholic	8 years	Volunteer
Kelli	Woman	White	47	Unaffiliated	2 months	Volunteer
Nick	Man	White	48	Catholic	5 years	Volunteer
Bob	Man	White	66	Jewish	10 years	Volunteer
Travis	Man	White	36	Protestant	5 years	Staff/Client
David	Man	White	60	Roman Catholic	3 years	Staff: COO

TABLE 2. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

teerism suggests that, while questioning an individual's moral identity could motivate involvement, it is not enough incentive to actually inspire activism. This study fills a gap in the extant literature by approaching the concept of morality qualitatively, with the understanding that the actors are rational and emotional people (Goodwin et al. 2000). The present research asserts that threats to morality are sufficient motivation for some individuals to participate in movements with a moral identity similar to their own. Additionally, this paper contributes to literature on condensing symbols by broadening the term to include experiences incurred while volunteering.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) was founded by a group of six male parishioners from a Catholic church in a large metropolitan area in Texas following a weekend church-sponsored retreat. At the organization's founding, the men drafted a mission statement promising to "provide uncompromising love and hospitality to our brothers and sisters in need," by supplying them with food, "promoting dignity," and cultivating, "a community life of stability and purpose."[5] Although food distribution officially began in September of 1998, the first MLF catering truck was not purchased until December of that same year. After debuting the aptly named Truck One to their parish, an influx of volunteers from the church community allowed MLF to do a previously unprecedented 15 food distribution runs per month.[6] In 2000, MLF applied for and was granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. In 2002, MLF began expanding its food distribution program, one city at a time.[7] In addition to the food distribution program, MLF has started its own sustainable affordable housing program called Community First!, as well as a series of community gardens and a micro-business loans program, called ROADS (Relationships and Opportunities Allowing for Dignity and Security). For the purpose of the present study, the focus of analysis will be on the volunteers of the mobile food distribution program at the original metropolitan location.

Today, MLF operates a total of 16 food distribution trucks in four separate states. Surprisingly, MLF employs only 11 paid staff to supervise its entire operation.[8] In total, Mobile Loaves & Fishes has served over three million meals to the homeless and indigent working poor, a feat made possible by a veritable army of over 17,000 volunteers who donate their time, money and other resources.[9] The majority of volunteers at the commissary where this research took place was white, middle or upper-middle class, and religiously affiliated.[10] The original MLF commissary has secured several partnerships with local businesses that donate food, encourage employee volunteerism, and, in some cases, sponsor a truck for six months at a time. Despite these partnerships, the food distribution program must still be allocated a large portion of MLF's annual budget of around $2.5 million in order to sustain itself.[11]

METHODS

Analysis is based on data from three qualitative research methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and textual analysis of organizational materials. Between August and November of 2012, I conducted over 26 hours of participant observation at multiple make readies[12] and truck runs[13]. During my participant observations I helped volunteers upon their request, but walked around the commissary space recording in my field notebook if they indicated that they did not require my help. I took note of conversations taking place amongst volunteers, between volunteers and clients, and between volunteers and myself, and also recorded non-verbal interactions, my location, and physical surroundings. Due to the limited seating in each truck, I was only able to observe truck runs when there was a spot available for me, which were five out of 14 observations. At the end of each observation I typed detailed descriptions of what I had seen in the field that day, including my own reflections on volunteer actions and conversations. This process generally took three to four hours to complete. The average length of each field journal entry was eight pages, with entries ranging from half a page to 16.5 pages.

Although Mobile Loaves & Fishes has eight commissaries in the metropolitan area, I focused on the original commissary for two reasons: 1) As the home of three MLF food distribution trucks, it is the largest commissary with the most volunteer traffic; and 2.) Two other commissaries are located within a five- or six-mile radius in the same neighborhood community, which suggests that volunteers would be demographically similar among those three commissaries.[14]

In addition to observations I conducted six interviews, four face-to-face and two over the phone. Respondents were chosen in such a way as to: 1.) Obtain a sample of both volunteers and staff; 2.) Reflect the demographics of each population as closely as possible; and 3.) Reflect the wide range of time that participants have spent with the organization. All respondents were white, had at least some college education, and had been with MLF between two months and 10 years. Ages ranged from 36-66. Five out of six respondents identified as being religiously affiliated. Questions ranged from introspective reflections of the respondents' involvement with MLF to inquiries about the organization's religious foundation. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary for clarification. Interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed by the author. Interviews averaged 41 minutes in length, ranging from 23.59 to 59.48 minutes.

Lastly, I examined a variety of organizational materials, including MLF's official website, informative organizational pamphlets and handouts, and signage posted throughout the commissary space. Data culled from these materials were used to supplement my own findings. Pamphlets, handouts, and commissary signage, specifically, were fundamental in my discussion of organizational framing and condensing symbols.

Thematic categories were chosen based on prominent themes found in previous social movement research and developed over time following the analysis of field notes and interviews. Data were initially coded in an open coding process, and then later coded analytically. During the analytic coding process, thematic categories were added, refined, or discarded.

The current study benefits from my own Catholic upbringing in that it enabled me to easily recognize religious references or behaviors attributed to religion. Additionally, my position as a young, white, female student researcher was beneficial in that observation subjects responded well to my presence, thus allowing open dialogue and discussion among them even as I looked on. Weaknesses of this study include the amount of time spent in the field and the small interview sample size. Given these limitations, the findings of the present study are still significant in that they explore the limitations of FBCDOs, contribute to existing literature regarding the relationship between ideology and fram-

ing practices, and identify moral codes as incentive to volunteer.

FINDINGS

FBCDOs and Cooperative Collective Action

Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of FBCDOs is limited to faith-based organizations that have achieved nonprofit status, autonomy from the church where they were founded, and which partner with government agencies in order to implement social services programs (Monsma 2007). Most notably, Fitzgerald's (2009) FBCDOs receive government grants as their primary source of funding. Mobile Loaves & Fishes offers numerous services in addition to their mobile food distribution ministry, including affordable housing, micro-business loans, and community gardens. Despite being funded completely by "private individuals" and other non-governmental "nonprofit entities," the extent of programs offered by MLF's outreach ministry classifies the organization as an FBCDO, as characterized by its movement away from "traditional forms of charity" to community development (Fitzgerald 2009, 181).[15]

MLF's private funding not only allows it the freedom of moving forward with its ministry on its own terms, but also provides its donors with "reliable accountability."[16] In the process of obtaining private funds, MLF assumes that its goal of serving homeless individuals within the metropolitan community is shared in equal measure by those who are donating towards the cause. Therefore, unlike FBCDOs who obtain government funding, MLF does not risk compromising its philosophy or restructuring its services in order to maintain constituent support (Fitzgerald 2009). However, MLF is similar to other FBCDOs in that they, too, are compelled by cooperative collective action. As such, they are bound by local limitations, do not engage in demonstration activity, and remain largely a-political, thus further fitting Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of an FBCDO (Melucci 1996).

An example of MLF's cooperative collective action is the 2012 election season, when the organization abstained from publically supporting a proposition allocating $78 million to improve and expand affordable housing in Central Texas. Bob, a 10-year volunteer with MLF, speculated that the lack of public support was indicative of MLF's struggle with the local government to obtain a land grant for its own affordable housing village:

1.) How did you first hear about MLF? What made you want to be involved? How long have you been working with them?
2.) What motivates you to continue to volunteer?
3.) Do you prefer truck runs or make readies? Why?
4.) I've been told that MLF doesn't just hand out food, but also hope. How do you feel about that statement?
5.) Do you consider yourself religious? How have your beliefs influenced your decision to be involved with MLF?
6.) How does MLF integrate religion into their volunteerism?
7.) Do you think that MLF's religious basis could deter people from volunteering with them? How so?
8.) Does MLF foster a community between the clients and volunteers? How do you relate to the people that you serve?
9.) How has working with MLF influenced you to make changes in your own lifestyle?
10.) What is the most rewarding thing about working with MLF?
11.) What is the most challenging thing about working with MLF?
12.) If there was anything you could do differently, what would it be?
13.) What is your hometown?
14.) What is your educational background? Include up to last degree completed or last grade level completed. If including last degree completed, in what field?
15.) In what year were you born?
16.) How old are you?
17.) During what year did you first start volunteering or become involved with activism in general, with any organization or as an individual?
18.) During what year did you first start volunteering or become involved with MLF?
19.) How many hours do you spend volunteering with MLF per month? How many hours do you spend volunteering in general per month?
20.) What is your gender?
21.) What is your race?
22.) What, if any, is your religious affiliation?
23.) What is your socioeconomic class?

TABLE 3. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

> There's a lot of history there. Awful lot of it involves the trailer park. But Mobile Loaves has worked very, very, closely with the city trying to get affordable, permanent, supportive housing for the chronically homeless-the biggest problem areas-and the city has been not overly helpful…I think it's pretty understandable that Mobile Loaves wouldn't be particularly excited to support [Proposition 15] because [MLF has] to do fundraising to overcome the fact that the city didn't give them the land.[18]

When asked, MLF's Chief Operating Officer David referred to the tenuous process of obtaining land as simply a "learning opportunity," and cited the organization's faith and "glass half full" attitude as a means of getting through the disappointment (Cnaan 1999).[19] However, later in his interview David indicated that MLF's community-based affordable housing village was the best possible solution to Austin's affordable housing problem, thus inferring that MLF's program was better than what the city had proposed. By circumnavigating a critique of the local government and its suggested affordable housing solution, David maintained an open channel of diplomacy. MLF further demonstrated a key aspect of cooperative collective action- an unresolved feeling of a need to act- by identifying the city's proposal as insufficient, continuing to work towards obtaining land outside the city limits, and thereby constructing their own system of action (Snow and Benford 1992; Melucci 1996).

The present study expands upon Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of FBCDOs to include like-organizations that do not accept government grants or partner with government programs in order to provide social services. Because Mobile Loaves & Fishes is privately funded, the organization is allowed more regulatory freedom in terms of the allocation of funds and services than the similar, but government funded organizations profiled in Fitzgerald's (2009) study. However, even without funding restrictions, the data suggest that MLF's cooperative collective action does, at times, limit the organization. Specifically, MLF has been careful not to publically criticize the local government's approach to homeless outreach, as doing so may further delay the development of MLF's long-anticipated affordable housing village.

IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND FRAMING PROCESSES

Mobile Loaves & Fishes' elaborated master frame is a direct reflection of the religious ideology that inspired the ministry. MLF's name is derived from the gospel Sermon on the Mount, which holds that following His deliverance of the Beatitudes Jesus fed the masses with only five loaves of bread and two small fish. That same number of loaves and fish comprises MLF's logo.[20] The organization's mission statement, that MLF will strive to give "uncompromising love and hospitality to our brothers and sisters in need" by "providing food, clothing, and promoting dignity" is a reflection of the Roman Catholic Catechism, which indicates that all people should have access to "what is needed to lead a truly human life" (Cnaan 1999, 103).[21]

Although MLF positions itself as "all-inclusive," its dedication to its religious frame is evident throughout the commissary space, which is decorated with Christian religious symbols including crosses, a book of proverbs, and a crucifix.[22] The repurposing of the phrase, "brothers and sisters in Christ" to "brothers and sisters in need" also indicates religious commitment.[23] By altering a common and familiar phrase, MLF has engaged in restructuring religious ideology and religiously significant vocabulary to clearly convey an organizational purpose to groups or individuals with whom the phrase may resonate (Snow and Benford 1988; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). The phrase is also an example of motivational framing, as it represents what David refers to as the biblical philosophy of:

> …loving one another, [the] philosophy of always serving those in need. Serving our homeless brothers kind of follows in line with that. [I] think that there always will be homelessness. Our opportunity is to benefit from them by serving them. The more we serve them, I think, the more we are brought closer to God. [24]

David articulates a rationale for action- service to others- that reflects the religious ideology of MLF's elaborated master frame. By explaining that serving the homeless is an opportunity to become closer to God, he provides a succinct, biblically enforced motive for volunteering (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009).

Religious motivators also serve as basis for frame alignment. Like the organization's founders, volunteer and team lead-

er Susan, who has been with the group for eight years, sees MLF as an opportunity that enables her to "live her faith more fully" (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).[25] She explains:

> My faith has always been a very important aspect [of] who I am as a person, so I guess that whenever I do something that requires a good bit of time, there's gotta be a higher power in it… I could tie in that mission [that] Mobile Loaves & Fishes has with what I personally believe as far as what our responsibility is to…others that you encounter on a day-to-day basis. [26]

Susan's statement indicates cohesion between the founders' ideological religious system and her own understanding of the social world (Gamson 1992; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005).[27] It also implies that, if MLF had been structured in such a way that did not befit Susan's commitment to her own faith, she would not have become such a long-standing volunteer. By calling people to "serve wholeheartedly,"[28] and providing them with what one make ready volunteer described as, "space to help our brothers and sisters in need,"[29] MLF engages in frame bridging by enabling volunteers to pursue service-based interests (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

MLF also attracts volunteers from outside the Catholic faith community. Nick, who volunteers as team leader for his Methodist church's youth group, explained that it was MLF's "vision of help," which extends beyond "just feeding people, but helping them other ways, to get out of being homeless," that adhered him to the program.[30] For Kelli, a new volunteer who feeds homeless individuals on her own time but "[doesn't] want to get real involved with [MLF's religious practices],"[31] it was not the ideological framework that attracted her to MLF, but rather the opportunity to serve. Having had a desire to help homeless individuals on a larger scale, it was, "…the opportunity to go and see how an organization was formed on that level, and how they're feeding people" that eventually persuaded Kelli to participate in MLF's program.[32] In this instance, MLF has aligned specifically with Kelli's goal of feeding the homeless (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

Frame alignment and bridging are heavily oriented in value and belief amplification. Participation in MLF's mobile food distribution ministry denotes a desire to become involved in community based volunteerism-thereby indicating shared interests and an agreement with at least one of the organization's goals; namely providing food, clothing, and other basic essentials to those who are going without (Cnaan 1999; Monsma 2007; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011). MLF has used religious ideology to construct a volunteer opportunity that resonates with the pre-existing values and beliefs of its volunteers (Gamson 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998). For some, like Nick and Kelli, MLF aligned with an end-state value represented by the belief that everybody deserves "access to opportunity"[33] or "a second chance"[34] (Snow et al. 1986; McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). Others' values are more religiously oriented. Susan expressed a belief that her faith, in relation to volunteering, "convicts [her] of the need to reach out and to give back."[35] Bob introduced MLF's ministry to his temple after another Jewish congregation rejected MLF's participatory offer, stating that he was, "concerned that [the founder would blow] off the entire [city's] Jewish community," thus indicating a desire for his own faith to viewed positively by others.[36] Fifty percent of respondents also expressed that volunteering with MLF aligned more closely to their value and belief systems than their previous line of work, as David describes:

> The sense of providing service to others and the realization that providing service to others was just so much more [an] important aspect of living life than sitting in a corporate conference room someplace.[37]

MLF has aligned so closely with David's value and belief system that it sparked a career and lifestyle change, manifested here as a move from corporate to non-profit work, and the decision to pursue further service by becoming a Deacon of the Catholic Church.

Mobile Loaves & Fishes is representative of an organization whose elaborated master frame is pervaded by religious ideology. By articulating themselves as an opportunity for volunteers to "put feet on [their] faith," MLF has created a motivational frame that, through frame alignment and bridging, recruits individuals with like value and belief systems into service with the organization (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009).[38] The present study fills a gap in the existing literature on framing processes by examining an organization in which the elaborated master frame and the foundational ideology are one in the same. This is signifi-

cant in that it is contradictory to recent literature, which posits that ideology and frame cannot be cohesive without corroding each other. Additionally, this study adds to previous research by suggesting that MLF's religiously based elaborated master frame works in tandem with motivational framing, frame alignment, and frame bridging to amplify the values and beliefs of potential participants and therefore encourage prosocial volunteerism.

MORALITY, RESONANCE, AND CONDENSING SYMBOLS

The values and beliefs present in the religious ideology that frames the Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) organization are representative of the "good or bad, right or wrong, or acceptable or unacceptable" behavior that forms MLF's culturally specific moral identity standard (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972; Cnaan 1999; Stets and Carter 2012, 121). Prosocial religious principles like those expressed in the Catechism or, as David says, the biblical "philosophy of always serving those in need," generate the moral code which religious congregations encourage their members to adopt (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972).[39] MLF encourages adherence to a moral identity standard in a similar way by increasing volunteers' awareness of the social world via moral shocks. Moral shocks have the capacity to be incredibly basic, such as:

> One of the women in the kitchen says, 'they do not have functioning can openers. Maybe that's something we can do, next time? Maybe each of our families can donate one. I'll even try to donate an electric one.' One of the teen girls has a look of shock on her face, like she can't believe that MLF doesn't have something as standard as a can opener.[40]

Though seemingly infinitesimal on the broad scale of homeless outreach, the above serves as an example of increasing volunteer awareness by, as Susan says, "[snapping the] perspective back."[41] Awareness, as well as god terms like "everybody deserves to eat,"[42] motivates prosocial behavior (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). Kelli, a new volunteer who grew up in a small town, recalled that prior to moving to the metropolitan area she "had never seen a homeless person."[43] Seeing someone "with a sign" who, "didn't have a place to live, or food to eat," was a "very big shock" that not only made her aware of homelessness, but also acted as a moral shock that spurred her involvement in social outreach (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002).[44]

Volunteers who reflect on their actions demonstrate an awareness of the importance of their volunteerism with the mobile food distribution program (Goodwin et al. 2004).

> A lot of people that are homeless, they spend most of their day looking for a place to eat. Or something to wear. Or something they can salvage and buy. That's the focus of their day. . . .Their whole focus is on survival. If you feed them and they know they can go to this place at this time to get lunch or dinner, then they don't worry about that and they can do something else.[45]

By reflecting on a potential outcome of his monthly three hours of service and by accepting that homeless individuals lead a challenging life, Nick indicates that he understands and shares MLF's religiously informed, prosocial moral identity, and, as such, remains motivated to participate in its cause (Goodwin et al. 2004).

Condensing symbols are also motivational. Signage around the commissary space bears phrases such as, "Together, we offer more than just a meal," and ask volunteers to provide both food and compassion during the holiday season.[46] A large wooden donation bin is located prominently at the entrance to the commissary, and laminated cards on the walls inform volunteers of the expenses MLF incurs: "Did you know it costs MLF $129,050 a year for food and food supplies?"[47] These posters use relevant phrases, such as "together," "compassion," and "holiday season" to resonate with volunteers and encourage participation (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Being involved in MLF's food distribution program-or bringing donations for their bin- alleviates volunteers of feelings of guilt; "[volunteering with MLF] lets me have a clear conscious, at least" -or other "vicarious distress" while simultaneously reaffirming the importance of their activism (Thoits 1989; Batson 2002; Rodgers 2010).[48]

MLF's most powerful condensing symbols are its clients (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Melucci 1996; Eyerman 2005). Throughout the study, several volunteers commented that weekly-rate motels are often the most "heartbreaking" places to distribute food.[49] Five out of six respondents mentioned feeling compelled to continue volunteering with MLF after seeing first hand the realities of life for some of the people they serve at

those and similar locations. Bob, whose first truck run took him to a half-way house only a street away from a housing project, recalled that:

> …lots of little kids came on their bikes and running and they weren't dressed real well and they were just thrilled to get food. It just was one of those things that tugs on your heart. So after that, we decided to include Mobile Loaves as a project…[50]

Seeing the living conditions of the indigent working poor, particularly children, inspired Bob to approve MLF as a viable service project for his wife's Methodist church and, later, his own Jewish synagogue. For Susan, it was the clients' positive outlook and faith that inspired her to remain active in the food distribution program:

> …it's very difficult to be in the position where you are the one that' receiving something from somebody else and not able to pay [it] back. And just the graciousness that you encounter. Sometimes you run across people that are just so humble and so faith filled and so simple, and I am always inspired by some of the people that I encounter and I do see Christ there.[51]

Clients, via their age or their attitude, create emotionally charged scenarios that threaten volunteers' moral identities and motivate participation in MLF's prosocial outreach ministry (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). By creating situations in which volunteers are made emotionally vulnerable, clients become the condensing symbols that construct legitimating frames which function to overcome pre-conceived notions that may affect potential volunteers' desires to become involved in MLF's homeless outreach (Gamson 1992; Eyerman 2005).

> The tall male volunteer walks up to me, says that someone should interview these people [the homeless]. Says, "They have a good attitude. They wanna work, they're not lazy. A lot of society has an upside down view of these folks." [52]

Positive and personal interactions with clients lead to cognitive shifts among volunteers, most notably a movement away from stereotypical views of homeless individuals. Indeed, all six respondents and numerous other volunteers were quick to mention that it was clients' circumstances, such as a work-interrupting injury or other financial hardship that contributed to their loss of housing.[53]

In order to maintain relevancy and retain volunteers, MLF's leaders must position themselves as embodying the group's moral identity (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Goodwin et al. 2004). Throughout the study, volunteers frequently commented on what a "great man" the president and co-founder of the organization, Alan Graham, is and cited his "spiritual conviction" of service to the homeless as an inspiration.[54] All six respondents exhibited trust in the ability of MLF's social outreach programs to adequately address issues threatening their moral identity. As Nick states:

> If I could change something what I'd like to see is the government get rid of all these wasteful programs they spend millions of dollars on, trying to help people, and give it to someone like Alan. You give Alan $10 million, he'd probably build condos and house 100 people in [them]![55]

By exhibiting more trust in Alan and the MLF outreach programs to "help people" and solve housing problems than in government programs, Nick makes it clear that he considers MLF to be a worthy investment of his time. Trust in the organization also denotes that volunteers have faith in the ability of MLF's programs and leaders to sufficiently address those situations that have threatened their moral identity, i.e. homelessness.

MLF's moral identity standard is grounded in the Christian faith, as evidenced by their Catechism-inspired approach to service. MLF generates participation in homeless outreach via moral shocks and god terms that question volunteers' moral identity standard and raises their awareness regarding homelessness (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002; Goodwin et al. 2004). Condensing symbols, particularly clients, create emotionally charged scenarios that threaten volunteers' understanding of the social world and motivate their participation in Mobile Loaves & Fishes ministry (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). The present study contributes to existing literature on morality in volunteerism by approaching the subject qualitatively. This paper adds to previous literature by identifying ways in which organizations induce motivational threats to moral identity via moral shocks and condensing symbols. This research also adds to the extant literature on condensing symbols by broadening the definition to include condensing symbols as legitimating and lived experiences.

"...lots of little kids came on their bikes and running and they weren't dressed real well and they were just thrilled to get food. It just was one of those things that tugs on your heart. So after that, we decided to include Mobile Loaves as a project..." – Bob

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on a thorough analysis of three different qualitative data sources collected in fall 2012, including interviews, participant observation, and organizational materials, the current study has examined the implications of ideology on organizational framing practices and motivations for volunteering. Specifically, this research has identified how a homeless outreach ministry uses religious ideology as an elaborated master frame to articulate an organizationally relevant moral identity standard and provide sufficient motive to volunteer (Hunt and Benford 2004; Snow 2004).

Previous literature suggests that aspects of religious ideology, rather than the ideology in its entirety, are often used to aid in the creation of a social movement organization's master frame (Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). This paper finds that Mobile Loaves & Fishes does not simply borrow from religious ideology, but rather uses it as its elaborated master frame. In doing so, MLF has created a frame that marries individual and cultural beliefs, thus allowing the organization to remain accessible to individuals outside of the specific ideological system (Gamson 1992; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005).

MLF positions itself as a viable service opportunity to all those with whom the organizational values and beliefs align. The organization's motivational frame highlights prosocial faith-based tenets that attract religiously affiliated participants by articulating a rationale for action that is entrenched in the same philosophy of love and service to others alluded to throughout the Bible (Snow and Benford 1988; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). Volunteers are also recruited through frame alignment and bridging, which amplify pre-existing values or beliefs and position MLF as an organization that will enable participants to pursue their service-based interests (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

MLF's elaborated master frame represents the organization's moral identity standard by encompassing the prosocial religious principles that generate the moral code with which volunteers' values and beliefs align (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972). Moral shocks question the organizational moral identity and therefore spur continued outreach. Given that the majority of MLF's volunteers are middle to upper-middle class, the organization's real-world condensing symbols are particularly powerful in that volunteer interactions with clients offer first-hand exposure to the realities of homelessness and poverty (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). Emotionally charged encounters with clients resonate with volunteers to such a degree that they create legitimating frames that supersede stereotypes and encourage continued involvement in the ministry (Gamson 1992; Eyerman 2005).

Although this study is limited in terms of hours spent in the field and number of interviews conducted, the contributions to the existing social movement literature are still significant. The findings suggest that Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of an FBCDO may be too restrictive in its specificity, and future scholars should consider expanding it to include faith-based nonprofits that are funded by non-government entities and private individuals. Despite having more freedom in its programs than traditional FBCDOs, MLF still faces restrictions at the local level. Notable limitations due to cooperative collective practices included difficulty in securing land for the MLF affordable housing village.

This paper finds that ideology and framing can function as parts of the same successful whole. MLF's entire value system and, consequently, moral identity standard is based off of the religious ideology that composes the organization's elaborated master frame (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). By clearly articulating religiously inspired service oriented goals, MLF has been able to successfully recruit those who may feel religiously obligated to participate in a cause that enables them not only to practice their faiths, but to live their faiths (Cnaan 1999).

Unlike previous studies, which maintain that morality is not enough incentive to participate in a movement, the present research suggests that moral obligation is, in fact, significant motivation to become involved in volunteerism (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). However, there is a stipulation in that such obligations be presented in applicable ways via the articulation of motivating ideals, the alignment of goals which counter moral threats induced by god terms, and experienced, lived condensing symbols that raise awareness of the impact participants can have.

Though significant, the current study does not address how the perceptions of others may influence volunteers' decisions to be involved. As such, future research should examine the effect of feeling rules and reflected appraisal on organization participants. However, regardless of outsider perception, accessibility limitations, and moral obligations, it is evident that Mobile Loaves & Fishes food distribution volunteers truly believe that they are, as one excitedly told me, "feeding the world."[56]

1. Observed during fieldwork, October 15, 2012.
2. "About MLF: Our Ministry" section of the MLF website, http://mlf.org. [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
3. Observed during fieldwork, September 13, 2012.
4. Diagnostic frames persuade potential recruits that a problem must be addressed, whereas prognostic frames provide proposed solutions and strategies for dealing with the problem (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Although these framing practices were evident in MLF, motivational framing was most prominent and therefore became the focus of study.
5. "About MLF: Our Ministry" section of the MLF website, http://mlf.org [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
6. "About MLF" section of the MLF website, http://mlf.org [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
7. "About MLF" section of the MLF website, http://mlf.org [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
8. Conversation during fieldwork, August 24, 2012.
9. MLF website, http://mlf.org [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
10. Observed throughout fieldwork.
11. E-mail exchange with MLF's Chief Operating Officer, October 22-23, 2012.
12. In this context, a make-ready is the process during which volunteers prepare the food that is going to be distributed that night and load it onto the catering truck.
In this context, a truck run is the food distribution process, during which volunteers travel to different locations in Austin and hand out the prepared food.
13. "MLF Trucks" section of the Mobile Loaves & Fishes website, http://mlf.org [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
14. Interview with David, October 30 2012.
15. Interview with David, October 20, 2012.
16. Source: http://www.AustinTexas.gov, 2012 Bond Program. [Date accessed November 1, 2012.]
17. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
18. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
19. MLF printed materials.
20. MLF printed materials.
21. Observed throughout fieldwork.
22. MLF printed materials.
23. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
24. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
25. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
26. MLF "Plant a Seed" pamphlet. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
27. Observed throughout fieldwork.
28. Conversation during fieldwork, October 4, 2012.
29. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
30. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
31. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
32. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
33. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
34. Interview with Susan, September 30, 2012.
35. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
36. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
37. Interview with Susan, September 30, 2012.
38. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.

39. Excerpt from field notes, September 30, 2012.
40. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
41. Conversation during fieldwork, September 4, 2012.
42. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
43. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
44. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
45. Observed throughout fieldwork.
46. Observed throughout fieldwork. Interestingly, on my last day visiting the commissary, November 25, 2012 these cards had been taken down. However, stone versions of the cards form a pathway around the commissary and were still present.
47. Conversation during fieldwork, September 30, 2012.
48. Conversations observed throughout fieldwork.
49. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
50. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
51. Excerpt from field notes, October 15, 2012.
52. Observed throughout fieldwork.
53. Observed throughout ieldwork.
54. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
55. Conversation during fieldwork, October 15, 2012.

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