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“B THE CHANGE”: HYBRID SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY CORRESPONDENCE (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

"B THE CHANGE": HYBRID SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY CORRESPONDENCE

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Principal Topic

The rise of social enterprise as a new class of organization and the basis of emerging hybrid industries has potential implications for the future of both charity and business. However, we know relatively little about the processes or means by which individual actors and organizations become aligned with movements, nor and the mechanisms by which this alignment leads to active participation in collective action and, ultimately, field emergence (Snow & McAdam, 2000). We examine this phenomenon through an inductive study of the B Corp movement in the U.S. and build a process model of identity correspondence spanning the individual and organizational levels.

Method

We take an inductive approach, following the tenants of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001) and Gioia and colleagues methodology for rigorous qualitative data collection and analysis (Corley & Gioia, 2004; M. T. Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Gioia, Price, Hamilton, & Thomas, 2010). We conducted 15 semi-structured, 45-120 minute interviews with B Corp leaders and participants. We also analyzed 77 articles from major news and business publications, 253 pages of documents from B Corp headquarters archives, and over 1000 B Corp company profiles. These analyses were supplemented by 32 hours of field observation at B Corp meetings and events and many informal interactions with B Corp leaders and participants.

Results and Implications

Our findings suggest that individuals become aligned with hybrid social enterprise as a way to extend their values and identity as a socially/environmentally active person into their work life. Organizations become aligned and actively involved with the hybrid social enterprise movement as a way to amplify their existing organizational identity and culture as a social firm, verify that identity by measuring social performance, and communicate that identity more effectively to multiple stakeholder groups. This emerging framework may offer new insights into identity correspondence as a driver of participation emerging movements at both the individual and organization levels. These findings may help spur new theory about hybrid organizations, identity, and collective action and the relationships between them more broadly.

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