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National Linkages and Ambiguous EU Approaches among European Civil Society Organizations

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Abstract

During the last decade, the EU has had an explicit strategy to include civil society organizations (CSOs) in European public policy. However, the extent to which domestic CSOs are oriented towards the EU in their policy interests and strategies is influenced by various factors. This article examines to what extent and in what ways CSOs acknowledge the impact of the EU on their substantive policy agenda and under what conditions they would prioritise EU-level contacts and/or lobbying in their strategies. We are particularly interested in finding out which institutional linkages – if any – determine the extent to which domestic CSOs direct their policy activity towards the EU level. The article is based on a survey of 880 Swedish CSO's as well as qualitative interviews with 17 CSOs within the policy areas of anti-discrimination, immigration and asylum in Sweden, United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The results show that although CSOs recognise the importance of the EU-level and also try to influence EU policy, their priorities and orientation are primarily directed towards the domestic level. From our empirical findings, we argue that in order to understand the limited Europeanization of CSOs, national dependency on financial support and to some extent formal embedding in national welfare systems are key factors. The findings indicate some differences between the organizations' approaches, which to some extent can be attributed to policy area and organizational character. Policy areas with strong EU legislation implemented at national levels such as anti-discrimination seemingly underpins stronger linkages to local and national governments and thus less EU orientation.

Keywords

Civil society; Civil Society Organizations; EU; Europeanization; Institutions; Linkages

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During the last decade, the European Union (EU) has had an explicit strategy to include civil society organizations (CSOs) in several aspects of European public policy. The White Paper on European Governance (European Commission 2001) serves as the most comprehensive attempt to define the overall principles, rules and norms on how to include civil society participation in the European decision-making process. Since launching this strategy in 2001, the ambition to intensify this work has been developed further in order to include a wide range of CSOs in the policy process (Kohler-Koch and Finke 2007). While the White Paper on European governance stressed the role of CSOs on the input side of the policy process, there has recently been a slight change in the discourse towards increasing attention on the role of CSOs in implementing European policies (Borragán and Smismans 2010; Freise 2008).

Comprehensive policy efforts at the EU level, however, do not necessarily translate into rapid implementation at the national and local levels. Researchers analysing the Europeanization of civil society have argued that the immediate environment in general, and the relationship to local and national governments in particular, set the overall conditions for CSO approaches towards the EU (Krasner 1995; Della Porta and Kriesi 1999; Risse-Kappen 1995; Della Porta and Caiani 2009; Cram 2001; Beyers 2002). The restructuring of the European welfare states is often acknowledged as one of the most profound factors influencing the role of civil society (Amnå 2006;Kendall and Anheier 2001; Lewis 2004; Wijkström 2004). Faced by significant challenges from a variety of sources such as fiscal competition, growing ethnic diversity, aging populations and decreasing trust in public officials and institutions, local and national governments have turned to civil society to inject effectiveness,

resources and trust in the social welfare delivery. Partnerships between CSOs and local and national governments have been established. One example is the "compact culture", introduced in Britain in the late 1990s, that found its way into state–civil society relations e.g. in Sweden, recognising the role of civil society as a public service provider (Kendall 2000). In addition, scholars have argued that financial support from local and national governments have made parts of civil society financially dependent on the state (Kendall 2003; Johansson 2005).

Why then would domestic CSOs at all direct themselves toward the EU-level? Considering that leading European policy organizations and lobbying networks – already embedded in the EU institutional structure – dominate on the EU-level this is indeed a relevant question. Still, the expanding scope and deepening role of EU and its institutions provide a powerful incentive for domestic CSOs to take EU dimensions into account in their strategies and activities. There is not only the possibility of policy influence at stake but also new channels for resources, such as access to EU funding and expertise. The aim of this article is to analyse to what extent and in what ways CSOs acknowledge the impact of EU on their substantive policy agenda and under what conditions they would prioritise EU-level contacts and/or lobbying in their strategies. We are particularly interested in finding out which institutional linkages – if any – determine the extent to which domestic CSOs in Sweden, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, direct their policy activity towards the EU level. The article is structured into five parts. The second part, following this introduction, presents the theoretical framework and explains some of the institutional linkages at play. The third part outlines the research design, which is followed by a report of the empirical results in the subsequent fourth part. The conclusions are finally presented in the fifth part.

INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES AND RESOURCE DEPENDENCY

The concept of Europeanization has been used by scholars to denote the process under which political actors, such as political parties, governments and CSOs adapt to the impact of European integration. Claudio Radaelli (2000) has defined Europeanization as the 'Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.' (2000: 4). Similarly, Robert Ladrech (1994) emphasises the adaptive processes of organizations due to a changing environment. As such, Europeanization can be considered as the process where the impact of the EU becomes incorporated into the "organizational logic" or political activity of individual organizations (Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Coen 1997; Ladrech 2002). In this paper, we are particularly interested in factors that influence the extent to which national CSOs have "Europeanized" in response to European integration (see Beyers and Kerremans 2007).

A basic incentive for a CSO to turn to EU is that it is perceived as a relevant actor in relation to the policy area under which the organization operate. From a rational perspective, organizations will turn to the political level where the greatest influence can be attained. Emily Gray and Paul Statham (2005), who studied CSOs operating in the immigration area, found that they remained relatively inactive at the EU level. The main reason was that domestic institutions were perceived as more important in terms of influence and resources. However, researchers studying the relationship between CSOs and local and national governments, have emphasised the importance of different kinds of institutional linkages. Following new institutional theory, organizations are embedded in an environment highly regulated by institutionalised rules, norms and taken-for-granted ideas (Granovetter 1985; Meyer and Rowan 1977). As a result, individual organizations are under constant influence by other organizations, which may enable and restrict their behaviour and orientation (March and Olsen 1989).

Legal rules and regulation

The existence of a common legal environment affects many aspects of organizational behaviour and have a tendency to constrain and regularise behaviour and thereby shape the actions and behaviour of organizations (Scott 2008). Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powel (1983) have referred to the institutional pressure exerted on organizations as coercive isomorphism. They argue that external actors can exert pressure that influence organizations both formally and informally. Influence often occurs in situations in which organizations are 'dependent on other organisations by cultural expectations in society within which the organisation operates' (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 151) These pressures may be perceived as force, persuasions or as an invitation to join in agreement or as a direct response to a government mandate. Sebastiaan Princen and Bart Kerremans (2008) have pointed out that regulation and legal aspects on the national level influence the extent to which CSOs turn to the EU. They refer to national labour policies and wage negotiations, which have made labour unions predominantly active on the domestic arena because rules and regulation in these sectors are lacking at the EU level.

Resource dependency

Moreover, scholars have stressed the importance of financial resources since acting towards the EU is a demanding task (Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Trenz 2007). Organizations are not self-sufficient but depend on resources from its environment for their continuance and for accomplishing their goals (see Pfeffer and Salanick 1978). In order to acquire resources, organizations need to interact with their environment. Jan Beyers and Bart Kerremans (2007) have demonstrated that dependency on government subsidies determine the extent to which CSOs are integrated in the decision-making process at the EU-level. Hence, receiving or applying for funds require an interaction with the actors controlling the resources. The resource dependency theory therefore implies that the actions of organizations are due to responses to their environment where resources occupy a key role. However, the assumption inherited in the resource dependency theory can also be criticised for underestimating the ability of individual organizations to be independent and act strategically, by for example receiving resources from different actors (see Brown and Kalegaonkar 2002). Still, the dependency theory remains powerful in explaining how organizations act and behave in relation to their environment (Fraussen 2013).

Different organizations, different institutional linkages

Unfortunately, the literature provides little guidance on the extent to which differences between organizations in terms of policy area and organizational character, affect their approaches toward the EU. Clearly, organizations differ in the extent to which external factors influence their actions and behaviour (Scott 2008). For instance, organizations with clear and critical ideologies, active members, and strong internal ideology, are generally more resistant to pressure from other actors than are organizations demonstrating reverse characteristics (Johansson 2003). Moreover, civil society organizations are embedded in the national political context in which they have emerged. Culture, policy and traditions thus have implications on the behaviour of civil societies.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Our empirical analysis is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to analyse to what extent and in what ways CSOs acknowledge the impact of EU on their substantive policy agenda, we

use a quantitative dataset including 880 Swedish interest organizations measuring the extent to which Swedish CSOs use various arenas for political participation. These data are part of a larger survey conducted within the research project EUROCIV[1] and collected between December 2012 and March 2013. The survey includes a random sample of 12 per cent of all active Swedish interest organizations recorded by the government agency Statistics Sweden (SNI 94). In this case, "active" means that the organizations have been subject to tax in recent years. The overall rate of return of the survey was 50 per cent. The qualitative data are collected from semi-structured telephone interviews with 17[2] CSOs active in Sweden, Great Britain and the Netherlands. These interviews captured the orientation of CSOs and provided illustrations and insight into which institutional linkages determine the extent to which domestic CSOs in Sweden, United Kingdom and the Netherlands, direct their policy activity towards the EU level. Representatives from the CSOs – both men and women with leading positions within their respective organizations – were gathered according to a snowball strategy. They were selected on the basis of their insights on the practices and orientation of their respective organization. The interviews covered issues related to general programmatic orientation, practices, and activities of the organization. We further explored their current relations to other actors, in particular to local and national governments and to the EU institutions. The interviews were conducted in January and February 2008, and each interview lasted for approximately one hour.

The CSOs included in the interview study are active in two policy areas prioritized by the EU and in which CSOs are considered to play an important role: the anti-discrimination and the immigration and asylum sector. Racism and discrimination are often considered among the most fundamental barriers to integration in European societies and immigration brings challenges of integration, occupation, physical and psychological health care. Measures by the EU to prevent discrimination and to adopt a common European policy on immigration and asylum have been substantial. The Racial Equality Directive (Directive 2000/43/EC) and the Employment Equality Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC), adopted in 2001 – now implemented in the member states – represent the most comprehensive EU efforts to prevent racism and discrimination. Similarly, but less advanced, the European Commission reached an important step towards a coherent asylum policy at the Tampere European Council in 1999, identifying the harmonisation of the asylum policy as one of the most prioritised political issues of the EU.

CSOs within these policy fields have been officially acknowledged by the EU to have a key role in the formation, implementation and evaluation of the European policies (European Commission 2003a; Directive 2000/43/EC; Directive 2000/78/EC; Guiraudon 2001). The implementation of the two anti-discrimination directives were preceded by a range of action plans, projects and a vigorous consultation process in order to include the viewpoints of civil society organizations (Greenwood 2007: 145). Further, the European Commission has in its communication set out principles for a more "accessible, equitable and managed" asylum system and encouraged CSOs to take part in this policy-formation (European Commission 2003a; European Commission 2007), such as identifying and analysing challenges in integration immigration and asylum policies, and to spread best practices and achieve better convergence (European Commission 2003b).

The CSOs interviewed are active in Sweden (6) Great Britain (5) and the Netherlands (6): three EU countries with similar welfare states challenges such as fiscal competition, growing ethnic diversity and an aging population. However, they differ with respect to the state-civil society relation. Sweden is often recognized as the archetypical example of a social-democratic welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen 1990). The relationship between civil society and the state has been described as one of "trust-based mutual dependency" promoting a shared and consensus oriented political culture. Significant for the Swedish civil society is a high degree of formal membership and engagement (Olson et al. 2005). CSOs in Sweden have had an important impact on the Swedish democracy and welfare in general but do not traditionally stand as providers of social and welfare services. Rather

they have functioned as mediators of interests between citizens and the state, and as caters for the arrangements of leisure or recreational activities for and through the population (Pestoff 2000; Wijkström 2004). This characterisation of Swedish civil society is about to become somewhat obsolete in relation to recent decades, however. Some scholars argue that there are several indications of a shift where CSOs are changing focus from "voice to service", while others are acting on a more international level (Amnå 2006; Wijkström 2004).

Great Britain has a long tradition of an active civil society with overlapping historical traditions of welfare and policies directed towards the civil society. The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a move towards more liberal values and towards the use of market mechanisms in welfare. An important change in the relationship between the British central government and the civil society was the "Compact", declared between the government and the civil society in 1998. Key elements in this agreement were a commitment to partnership in order to establish a proactive and "horizontal" policy position towards civil society (Kendall 2003; Kendall 2004; Taylor 2004). The British civil society is a major part of the economy and has - in a comparative European perspective - grown significantly. A driving force in this development is financial support from the central and local governments. From the 1990s and onward, the voluntary sector is considered to be financially dependent on the state in most areas where voluntary organisations operate - most notably in social care and social housing (Kendall 2003). The often cited shift "from government to governance" gives the civil society a somewhat different role putting emphasis on the policy making and implementation side of the political system. (Deakin 2001; Taylor 2004).

In the Netherlands, the "private non-profit organization" has a strong economic and cultural position and represents the typical Dutch tradition of private responsibility for common interest, religious pluralism and a partnership-seeking state. Subsidiary and "The pillars" are important features for understanding the Dutch civil society: a small role for the government and strong public responsibilities for private actors. During the 2000s, regulation and public funding have made public organisations and different CSOs to look and function in very similar ways. They often have similar targets, legal framework and financial structures and the differences between private actors and non-profit organizations are often small. The Dutch civil society is large in comparison to other European countries. The non-profit organizations stand for approximately 13 per cent of all paid non-agriculture employment in the Netherlands (Dekker 2004). The selected CSOs differ in size, professionalization, methods and specific domains of specialisation. They share a common interest in preventing social exclusion and several of the organizations have close connections to a number of other organizations in these fields. A few of the organisations originate from more peripheral organizations committing themselves to anti-racism or immigration and asylum in order to promote other related interests.

Table 1: Number of organizations from each policy field and type represented in the interview study

	Advocacy-oriented	Service-oriented	Protest-oriented
Anti-discrimination field	7	2	0
Immigration and asylum field	3	3	2

Note: The distinction between different types of organizations is based upon the respondents' description of the organizations they represents and the official web pages of the organizations.

Ten of the 17 organizations are described predominantly as *advocacy-oriented* with a general aim of lobbying or by different means influencing the policy agenda. Five of the organizations represent *service-oriented* organizations and have the provision of different services to target groups as their main objective. The remaining two organizations are *protest-oriented* striving to influence public policy by means of protest activities (see Table 1). Thus, from the interview study, we have a limited but varied sample of organizations from three different countries enabling us to elucidate the linkages among different types of organisations in different country contexts and analyse their approaches towards the EU.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

In the following sections, we present the empirical results of the study. Based on the survey data from EUROCIV 2013, we start by addressing the CSOs' perceived relevance in attempting to influence the EU and on what level they mainly address their activity. This is followed by an analysis of our interview data structured according to the presented theoretical propositions regarding key institutional linkages, i.e. national rules and regulations, and resources. To the extent that we have found noteworthy variations between different types of CSOs, this is addressed along the way.

EU approaches

In the survey among CSOs in Sweden, we asked to what extent they have used different channels for influencing policy-making. As reported in Table 2 the CSOs are turning to local and national politicians and civil servants to a much larger extent than to the EU-level. Fifty per cent of the CSOs report that they use direct contacts with politicians and civil servants at the local level whereas the corresponding figure for the national level is 27 per cent for civil servant contacts, and 31 per cent for politician contacts. However, about 82 per cent of the CSOs state that they never turn to the EU. Only 7 per cent of the CSOs declare that they use European institutions to influence policy making "to a large extent", while another 11 per cent use it "to a small extent". The table also shows that the organizations prioritise several of the other channels – e.g. media, and members – more often than the EU. These data only reports on the Swedish context and one should be careful with generalisations to other EU countries. The tradition of strong local self-governments in Sweden may produce a bias towards a strong presence at local level. However, the data indicate that CSOs are first and foremost oriented towards the local level for influencing policy-making.

Our interviews with the British, Dutch and Swedish CSOs confirm to this pattern and their representatives underline that organizations are first and foremost oriented toward the national level. However, EU connections are not ruled out as an option or for that matter totally absent from the action repertoire of the CSOs. About half of the interviewed CSOs are members of European networks such as ENAR (European Network against Racism), ECRE (European Councils of Refugees and Exiles) and PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants). Nevertheless, their affiliation appears to play a modest role. Most organizations regard themselves as passive members and seldom utilise the channels to act on the EU-level. British and Dutch CSOs generally appear to be more active in European networks than their Swedish counterparts.

CSOs clearly acknowledge the importance of addressing the EU to achieve policy change. Respondents place the impact of decisions made on the EU level to have a similar or even greater effect on their activity than decisions made by local and national governments. CSOs in the field of anti-discrimination unanimously declares that the implementation of the anti-discrimination directives have had a positive impact on their substantive policy agenda. As a result, the significance

of the EU is particularly emphasised by organizations in the anti-discrimination field, while organizations in the immigration and asylum field first and foremost emphasise the impact of local and national governments.

Table 2: Alternative channels for influencing politics among Swedish CSOs, percentages (N=880)

		REGULARLY	RARELY	NEVER	TOTAL
European arena	EU institutions	7 (53)	11 (83)	82 (613)	100 (758)
	International networks	11 (83)	14 (106)	75 (565)	100 (754)
National arena	Politicians at national level	31 (247)	15 (119)	54 (429)	100 (795)
	Civil servants at national	27 (212)	15 (118)	58 (456)	100 (786)
Local arena	Politicians at local level	50 (407)	18 (147)	32 (260)	100 (814)
	Civil servants at local level	50 (405)	18 (146)	32 (259)	100 (810)
Media arena	Traditional media	7 (53)	11 (83)	82 (622)	100 (758)
	Social media	31 (246)	16 (127)	53 (421)	100 (794)
	Consultants	4 (31)	11 (86)	85 (660)	100 (777)
Mobilization arena	Demonstrations	13 (102)	17 (134)	70 (551)	100 (787)
	Petitions	20 (157)	20 (157)	60 (471)	100 (785)

Note: The table reports answers in percentages on the question: *How often do you use the following arenas in order to influence Swedish policy making*? [Regularly, Rarely, Never]. Absolute numbers are reported in brackets. *Source*: EUROCIV 2013

Although the relevance and influence of the EU is accentuated by several organizations, their activity (as individual organizations) towards the EU-level is rather limited. The interviews disclose that local and national governments are the most important relational structures. The included advocacy- and service-oriented organizations in Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden denote themselves as "partners" and stress the importance of "working together" and in "cooperation with", rather than "in opposition to" local and national governments. Local and national governments are regarded as having equal or even greater influence on the strategies and goals of the organizations than partner organisations and professional actors with whom they regularly interact. In contrast, and quite expectedly, the protest-oriented organizations in the immigration and asylum field articulate more of a confrontational attitude and emphasise their role as opponent and watchdog towards local and national governments.

National rules and legislation

Considering that the EU level to some extent is part of the action repertoire of the CSOs, what institutional linkages matter to the Europeanization of CSOs? How do these institutional linkages differ depending on policy field and the character of the organization? Overall, the results of the

qualitative interviews indicate that government legislation on local and national levels have a tendency to downgrade the priority of EU-level contacts (Della Porta and Caiani 2009; Krasner 1995; Beyers and Kerremans 2007). For example, interviews with the anti-discrimination organizations suggest that their activities correspond to a large extent to the national anti-discrimination legislation. Several of these organizations, particularly those operating as anti-discrimination bureaus, are acting in order to assist discriminated persons, by disseminating information, and by advise, education, and mediation between the contending parties. A majority of these functions are announced in the national anti-discrimination law implemented as a result of the European anti-discrimination directives. Swedish national legislation in anti-discrimination, for example, facilitates CSOs support to victims of discrimination and to take legal action on their behalf. From the interviews it appears that national anti-discrimination legislation tends to influence the overall goals and behaviour of the organizations thereby making their activities more tied to the legislation. A respondent representing an advocacy-oriented organization operating as an anti-discrimination bureau states:

> Of course, the law is important; it constitutes the basis of our organization. We work preventive with all types of discrimination and cover up for the government. That is the instruction of the government. I can see that there are many other things to do in order to fight discrimination. We are free, have great opportunities to do projects, and do our own investigations and so forth, we are a non-governmental organisation. But, we need to stick to our main tasks, also the resources are limited.[3]

Furthermore, the national anti-discrimination legislation appears to have moderated the organizations' incentives for turning directly to the EU. One respondent articulates that the anti-discrimination legislation has steered activities toward service functions rather than advocacy strategies directed towards the EU.

> Paradoxically the connections to the EU are rather few. Previously, we worked more structured, we were a strong advocator for the need of an anti-discrimination legislation. Today we are running two anti-discrimination bureaus, the work is more operative and practical, and individual oriented than before. [Interviewer: Why is that?] There are different reasons for this. It is due to the national legislation on anti-discrimination that we supported. It benefits our members too. But it's also due to the funds, simply because it is for this type of work we can get government funds.[4]

Yet another organization reveals that its activities has taken a slight turn since the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation by providing "opportunities to work more operative"[5] in order to prevent discrimination thereby also downgrading other efforts of policy change.

In sum, our interviews with CSO representatives from different country contexts and policy sectors, confirm that CSOs are generally very adaptive to the formal structures of the nation state in which they operate, which also shape and limit the extent to which the organizations make use of available channels to the EU (Krasner 1995). This indicates that European legislation may have a tendency to standardise the activities of civil society organizations. Albeit the respondent refers to its non-governmental status, national legislation along with limited resources appear to determine the "boundaries of the possible" (Cram 2001) and may restrict the opportunities to take actions in other areas. As such, the results confirm an "appropriate behaviour" (March and Olsen 1989) which may have a negative effect on Europeanization of CSOs. Interestingly, formal institutional ties are not found among the organizations in the immigration and asylum field. As indicated above, this policy field lack a comparable European legislation. Several of these organizations note that national governments are the most important actors to improve legislation, which may explain their rather moderate political orientation towards the EU.

Resources

As confirmed by the quotes above, financial resources are important for the political orientation of CSOs. The organizations included in the three-country interview study, have their financial resources from a range of actors such as local and national governments, the EU, donators, charities, members, as well as partner organizations. However, funding from local and national governments are regarded by the organizations as most important as it often constitutes the lion part of total income and often play a key role for long-term organizational stability. With the logical exception of protest-oriented organizations, which normally prefer to operate without government funding, several of the advocacy- and service-oriented organizations in both policy fields acknowledge more or less dependency on government funds. Also quite expectedly, considering country differences in state-civil society relations, charity appears to play a more prominent role for the British organizations than for their Dutch and Swedish counterparts. Overall, the findings point to a resource dependency among organizations that influence Europeanization of CSOs in three diverse ways.

First, insufficient funding is emphasised as a main weakness of many organizations and securing funds occupies considerable time and efforts. Directing strategies and applications towards the EU is indeed demanding and scarce economic resources in that sense countervail Europeanization of CSOs. This is particularly apparent for smaller and less resourceful organizations (Bouwen 2002; McAdam et al. 1996; Trenz 2007). A few respondents state that their organization has applied for EU funds and many are aware of the possibilities of receiving such funding. However, applying for EU funding is often perceived as overly bureaucratic, complicated and protracted (Della Porta and Caiani 2009; Trenz 2007), and it requires skills not always accessible to the organization. It is primarily the larger and resourceful organizations that have the necessary means for EU oriented efforts (Bouwen 2002; McAdam et al. 1996; Trenz 2007).

Second, local and national governments often provide ear marked funding, which direct CSOs to adapt more to the means and needs defined by local and national governments, rather than to their own agenda. One of the respondents representing an advocacy-oriented organization in the anti-discrimination field explains:

> Government funds are often oriented towards running projects and that is excellent when you want to try something new or temporarily. But there is rarely any sequel to the projects and that´s frustrating in the long run. This opens the potential for the government to steer the organization and we believe that this has been more common lately. Funds are easier to receive for certain specified issues such as honour related violence. Of course, that is important but we rather carry on in another direction but the funding makes that difficult. Improving our contacts to the EU is one area.[6]

As such, ear marked funding tends to tie the organizations closer to local and national governments and make the organizations act on behalf of or as complements to the local and national governments. However, some of the larger organizations in the immigration and asylum field have managed to establish funding from diversified resources thereby also reducing dependence on the government. These organizations also have more incentives and opportunities to turn to the EU. This is due to several factors such as a more sophisticated internal organisation for attracting new funds and often an overall stronger organisational capacity.

Third, local and national government funds is important for legitimizing the organization in the eyes of the public and other organizations in the local and national context (Koopmans 1999). A respondent representing an advocacy-oriented organization states:

> Receiving public funds recognizes the organization. It has to do with the authorization of the organization. So if government funds are reduced or ceased, our work is not considered legitimate.[7]

In contrast, the protest-oriented organizations give voice to the opposite attitude arguing that financial grants from local and national government de-legitimizes the organization by putting into question its independence with regard to freedom of choice around its activities. Although they are attached to the EU through European networks, the lack of a "European press"[8] and sparse citizen interest in EU issues makes it difficult to use other channels of influence, such as media and mobilizing support for EU issues.

CONCLUSION

In this study we have analyzed to what extent a number of CSOs in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK acknowledge the impact of EU on their policy agenda, and under what conditions they would prioritise EU contacts and lobbying in their strategies. We were particularly interested in institutional linkages that determine the extent to which domestic CSOs direct their policy activity toward the EU level. Our findings suggest that although CSOs recognize the importance of the EU-level, their priorities and general orientation are first and foremost directed toward the domestic level. We have reported that diverse institutional linkages to local and national governments are important for understanding the level of Europeanization of CSOs (i.e. the extent to which individual organizations address their activities directly towards the EU). Our results suggest that dependency on national funds and formal linkages to nation states, counteract Europeanization of individual CSOs. Given that the organizations in our study operate within two prioritised issues – anti-discrimination and immigration and asylum – where the EU has been determined on creating new and stronger pathways to civil society, it is somewhat surprising to find that the EU-level is still considerably less prioritised than the institutional linkages at local and national levels.

In addition, our findings indicate that institutional linkages may differ depending on the policy fields in which the organizations operate, as well as on the character of the organizations themselves. Advocacy-oriented organizations active in the anti-discrimination field were more clearly linked to local and national governments than others. These organizations appear to have adapted most closely to the national anti-discrimination legislation - which in turn have limited their activities towards the EU. Considering that this legislation emanate from the two European anti-discrimination directives that are now implemented at national levels, the EU policy may possibly underpin stronger linkages to local and national governments and by these means contribute to moderate Europeanization of CSOs.

With regards to advocacy- and service-oriented organizations in the immigration and asylum field, dependency on national funding appear to be of some importance although they did not emphasise national rules in this respect. However, the protest-oriented organizations stand out in the study demonstrating weak or non-existent institutional linkages to local and national governments. Thereby, protest-oriented organizations appear to have the greatest potential as individual organizations to act directly towards the EU level. Yet, they find other obstacles approaching the EU such as lack of a European press and difficulties of mobilizing support on EU policy issues. Dependency on local and national government funding is acknowledged as an important factor influencing the extent to which CSOs put their efforts towards the EU in both policy fields. Scarce funding and ear-marked funding do hardly foster Europeanization of CSOs. Turning to the EU is often perceived as a demanding task requiring significant financial resources and expertise (Beyers and Kerremans 2007). Local and national government funds are apparently more important for the

Dutch and Swedish organizations than for the British ones. In the latter cases, donations play a more prominent role.

Finally, the results may have implications for the attempts by the EU institutions to include CSOs in the European policy making process. It is reasonable to expect that many of the domestic CSOs are indirectly approaching EU institutions through larger international network organizations. But our study suggests that national institutions and national resources rather than institutional factors at the EU level, are often most crucial factors in relation to Europeanization of CSOs. Thus, more focus is needed on the institutional factors pertaining to the relationship between CSOs and local and national government in general and on the institutionalisation of CSOs in the welfare state arrangements in particular. Moreover, further studies should address more elaborately the relationship between civil society and member states and particularly the institutional linkages that encourage and impede Europeanization of different organizations.

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[2] Respondents from the following organizations have been interviewed: Amsterdams Solidariteits Komitee Vluchtelingen, Bureau Discriminatiezaken Hollands Midden en Haaglanden, Ethiopian Community Center, Foundation for Refugee Students, Humanitas, Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, Mira Media, Newham Monitor Project, North of England Refugee Service, Pharos, Race Equality Foundation, Red Cross program for refugees and asylum seekers, Roma support group, Rosengrenska, Simba center, The Cooperation Group for Ethnic Associations in Sweden, Youth against racism.

3. Interviewee 5, The Netherlands

4. Interviewee 3, Sweden

5. Interviewee 4, Great Britain

6. Interviewee 3, Sweden

7. Interviewee 6, Great Britain

8. Interviewee 2, The Netherlands

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