

Chapter 5

ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC EMBEDDEDNESS

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The Europeanization of civil society comes in many shapes and forms, as illustrated by Jacobsson and Johansson in chapter 1 of this volume. Accordingly, there are numerous dimensions at play in Europeanization processes that could have implications for civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sweden. In this chapter we focus on capturing the participatory and organizational dimensions of the Europeanization of civil society. Specifically, we consider the conditions for access to the European Union (EU) level and whether successful reach is dependent on a privileged position at the member state level. Consequently, we also consider the transition of the Swedish civil society that has taken place since the 1990s, which is also likely to have influenced positions of domestic embeddedness.

The EU is often framed as an elite project, and it has struggled to overcome this nondemocratic label. One of the strategies for enhancing EU democracy has been to pay more attention to national civil society actors; CSOs from around the member states are encouraged to participate in EU politics through various consultation processes. But who are these organizations, and how have they reached the EU level? Is it possible that despite the ambitions of an open invitation, the EU is creating a VIP lane that is once again reproducing the circle of privilege?

Previous research has both confirmed and opposed the decisive role that domestic embeddedness plays in Europeanization. Some studies have found

access to national political authorities to be crucial for successful EU engagement among CSOs based on the argument that institutionalized relations between state actors and interest associations carry over to the European level (Eising 2007; Pierson 2000). Other findings seem to indicate the opposite. In these studies it is rather those that are marginalized at the national level that are inclined to actively seek leverage with the EU (Fairbrass and Jordan 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Marks and McAdam 1996). Is it thus possible that the EU is an arena that could both reproduce existing hierarchies among CSOs while at the same time allowing for the emergence of new actors and power structures in the field?

In a previous study (Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015) we found that Swedish CSOs in the welfare field that were engaged in a formal agreement with the state had high levels of Europeanization, contradicting previous findings of limited EU influence in the Swedish civil sphere (see Olsson et al. 2009). This study was, however, conducted on a relatively small sample of fifty-six organizations with formalized ties to the Swedish government; this particular group of organizations renders the role of domestic embeddedness relevant. The results stressed the need to return to the ever so relevant discussion of bottom-up versus top-down political processes of European integration (cf. chapter 1). In this chapter we test the hypothesis that national political access increases the likelihood of Europeanization, hence reproducing existing hierarchies, among a broad range of almost three thousand Swedish CSOs, a sample generated through the survey presented in the previous chapters. (For detailed information about the database, see appendix A.)

Elite Access and Domestic Embeddedness

The very idea of an elite within civil society might at a normative level be seen as a contradiction in terms.¹ Civil society is often contrasted with political elites as representing the community of citizens outside the ruling class. In this sense, there is a reluctance to speak of elite CSOs because such a categorization goes against the normative ideals of the democratic public sphere. In reality, there has of course always existed stratifications among civil society, power struggles among organizations, and winners and losers in the quest to obtain political influence. Among other things, aspects of elite access and/or domestic embeddedness might characterize such stratification. Elite access refers to privileged access to sources of political power that can be reached through different forms of capital (Johansson and Kalm 2015). Domestic embeddedness supposes an institutionalized position of privilege and thus influence through established positions and channels.

The idea of a civil society elite is therefore interesting to consider in relation to at least two aspects of democracy.

First, the actual composition of a civil society elite might be far from naturally given. Different forms of capital can be used to reach elite access, and the value of political, economic, social, and symbolic capital might vary across time and space. For instance, the hierarchical structure in the private sector in a given country might not automatically transfer to the civil society sector. Second, an elite group might not only carry political input (such as advocacy and political demands) but might also be the bearer of political output (e.g., legitimizing functions). This is particularly intriguing when considering civil society, which traditionally has been considered a cornerstone of democracy. The privileged position of a civil society elite group might, therefore, not only grant political influence, but might also produce socialization and loyalty to the system.

To arrive at our understanding of what constitutes a national civil society elite we build on two strands of literature: the insider/outsider thesis in public policy research and the idea of access points in interest group research.

Public policy research has repeatedly shown how interest groups' relationships to the state and their subsequent strategies matter in the explanation of the success of some groups and the failure of others in seeking political influence (e.g., Beyers 2002; Grant 1978, 2000; Maloney, Grant, and McLaughlin 1994). These relationships have been explained through a number of theoretical models, all of them concerned with the role of access to power. In public policy literature, this phenomenon is often illustrated through the insider/outsider divide, linking groups' policy influence to their position in the consultative process. The insider/outsider thesis departs from the distinction of an insider group with privileged access to the executive power and direct strategies of pressure in relation to an outsider group that is limited to indirect strategies. These strategies might be more or less constrained or free depending on the context of the groups' positions; while some groups are actively seeking insider status, others might be given privileged positions without even trying to obtain them. Following this reasoning, there have been numerous attempts to expand the insider/outsider divide through subcategorizations in both groups (Grant 1999).

Interest group research has been equally intrigued by the success or failure of groups to reach the inner spheres of political authority, but such research has usually focused on access rather than successful influence over policy. While access is considered necessary to have influence on policy, it is not equal to having influence; rather, the focus on access is seen as an attempt or even a strategy in its own right (Beyers 2002).

Interest group research has further applied these ideas of access-seeking strategies on the EU level. The EU is a complex system of multileveled

governance that has received increasing attention from civil society. This is partly a result of the EU's own attempts of including civil society but is likely also a sign of institutional learning and the growing awareness of EU access points among CSOs around Europe. There are different understandings of how to transfer the knowledge of domestic access points to the EU level. As mentioned earlier, some suggest that access to domestic public authorities increases the chances of access to the EU level, while others claim such a relationship would rather hinder the emergence of EU-level access. When the EU level becomes institutionalized in member states' politics, the extension of access points might seem a natural development of the opportunity structure available to privileged interest groups (Eising 2007; Pierson 2000). These organizations might be better prepared for the European level because of their experiences in domestic politics, and they might also enjoy privileged resources (both economic and human capital) in their adaptation to the more complex EU-level politics. This view would thus argue for a tendency toward Europeanization through the reinforcing of domestic patterns of interest representation (Beyers 2002). The opposite view suggests that it is instead domestically marginal groups that would seek access because they are in greater need of the new opportunity structures provided by EU membership (Fairbrass and Jordan 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Marks and McAdam 1996). In cases where specific civil society interests are not given attention at the domestic level, access at the European level could both increase the status at the domestic level and potentially lead to influence in the EU.

In order to allow for empirical exploration, Jan Beyers (2002) suggests four different correlates between domestic interest groups gaining and seeking access at the EU level: (1) The potential correlation of domestic privilege persisting at the EU level is labeled the positive persistence hypothesis. (2) The opposing idea, suggesting that actors stay where they are and would rather be constrained by domestic institutional persistence, is called the negative persistence hypothesis. (3) The belief that actors that are marginalized at the domestic level will seek to compensate through access at the EU level is labeled the compensation hypothesis. (4) No change at all is called the reversed positive persistence hypothesis.

Elite access and domestic embeddedness might have implications for the different patterns of Europeanization we might encounter in different member states. Both the insider/outsider thesis and the access point thesis suggest that interest groups are actively positioning themselves and profiting vis-à-vis national governments. These assumptions stress the need for a contextual understanding in an analysis that combines different types of Europeanization with the specific characteristics and implications of domestic embeddedness, in our case in Sweden.

Participatory and Organizational Europeanization

Participatory Europeanization refers to the ways in which the EU provides new opportunities for civil society to participate in EU politics. The underlying idea is that participation in EU politics will bring effects of Europeanization, which can be understood as changes from a national tradition to EU political socialization. The forms of participation might differ, and we have previously mentioned EU-level consultation procedures and civil dialogues, but EU participation might also take place at national or even local levels in the multileveled EU system (Greenwood 2011). A very common form of participation is, for instance, the projects associated with the large structural funds in the EU, such as the EQUAL Community Initiative (Scaramuzzino et al. 2010). These opportunities are themselves effects of Europeanization, but they might also act as catalysts for increasing Europeanization through mechanisms of adaptation, social learning, professionalization, networking, and access granting (Sánchez-Salgado 2010). These Europeanization effects might transcend from mere participatory experiences into the greater society, potentially making CSOs agents of political socialization (Warleigh 2001). However, due to high demands for professionalization and resources, these opportunities might or might not be available to civil society actors and hence might constrain the participation of certain actors. Another way of participating in EU politics is through the new opportunities for using national political levels as representatives to the EU level. Although organizations might not be active on the EU level, they might still be actively participating in EU politics through the representative channels at the member state level. Civil society actors might thus become both objects and subjects of participatory Europeanization.

Organizational Europeanization is in the context of civil society closely related to participation because of the ambitions of including civil society in the EU, and the opportunities for participation at the EU level have brought about processes of meta-organization in European civil society. The assumption is thus that EU politics bring effects of Europeanization, which are understood as changes from traditional national forms of organization to congruency with EU organizational logics. Civil society interest representation is to a large extent organized by meta-organizations representing clusters of umbrella organizations with links to national levels. The process of inclusion has therefore brought both opportunities and demands for European-level organization. These processes of increasing transnational organizations have also influenced the national, regional, and local levels of civil society in EU member states (Karlberg and Jacobsson 2014). National organizations are invited to join umbrella organizations where engagement with the EU

is collectively coordinated at times through representation in meta-level networks that have privileged access to EU institutions. Organizational Europeanization can also be found in an increasing local interest in the EU political agenda, applications for EU funding, and participation in projects that support not only participation but also organizational adaptation and socialization.

At first glance participatory and organizational Europeanization might come across foremost as structural results of the new EU channels of influence, engagement, and networking. Interest in or adaptation to these forms of institutional logics might, however, bring with them the cognitive and social influence of discursive or identity Europeanization (cf. chapter 1). Although we do not investigate these forms of Europeanization directly, they are implicitly related.

A Swedish Civil Society in Transition

The role of civil society in Sweden has undergone changes since the 1990s; those changes have implications both for the understanding of elites within civil society and for the conditions for participation at the EU level. The Scandinavian and Swedish model of civil society is often depicted as different from other models (Selle and Wollebaek 2010), and it is commonly held that Scandinavian countries rest on a long tradition of large popular movements such as the women's, temperance, and labor movements. An important feature of the Swedish model has traditionally also been neo-corporatism such as an unusually close collaboration between the state and major interest organizations in the preparation and implementation of public policies (Rothstein 2001). The popular movements eventually became closely interwoven with the state apparatus, described as their institutional embedding in Swedish society (Amnå 2008). The popular movements and the welfare state institutions grew up side by side in a kind of symbiosis and interdependence where they both inspired and came to define each other.

Some also maintain that Swedish civil society actors have primarily fulfilled an expressive function and represented members and beneficiaries vis-à-vis the state; to a lesser extent they also have been engaged in service production. Unlike many other countries, the absolute majority of all welfare services in Sweden have been provided by the public sector, and the affinity between the popular movements and the state has instead been founded on the ideological proximity between the social-democratic welfare regime and the political values and goals of many of the popular movements (Wijkström 2011).² Last but not least, it has generally been held that Swedish civil society rests more on its members' unpaid work than on

professional engagements. Historically, the members, who in their layman's capacity provide both the unpaid work and also contribute much of the funding for their organizations, dominate the popular movement organizations (Lundström and Wijkström 1997). However, many of these organizations continued to grow in size and importance in the second half of the twentieth century and were then often led and staffed by paid professionals and were also partly publicly funded (Einarsson and Hvenmark 2012). The funding was often tightly coupled with the number or share of members, and the membership cadres of the organizations hence became important as revenue generators for governmental and municipal financial support.

During the past few decades, a series of social, political, and technological changes have altered the conditions under which Swedish CSOs operate (Amnå 2006). Research regularly points at an increasing NGO-ization, bureaucratization, and professionalization among civil society actors that directly challenge Swedish CSOs as membership-based organizations (Papakostas 2004, 2011). Professional activists, campaign experts, sponsor consultants, project managers, directors, and movement entrepreneurs have to some degree replaced the elected leaders. CSOs, particularly in the welfare area, increasingly recruit staff selected on the basis of their professional skills and tend to adapt to market and public sector management models, such as when it comes to quality assurance and monitoring (Linde 2010). In addition to the expansion of paid staff, there has been an increase in the time provided by volunteers (Wijkström 2011). Meanwhile, the popular movement organizations are often claimed to be experiencing a crisis, with symptoms such as decreasing membership, active members turning passive, and reduced political influence (Amnå 2007). More-fluid forms of mobilizing and organizing complement such internal changes, and processes of individualization have made individuals less inclined to participate in formal associations and have instead fostered orientation toward short-term engagements.

At the same time, studies demonstrate a growing and more diverse array of organizations involved in Swedish civil society, and calculations estimate a total of approximately 210,000 formal CSOs in Sweden (Statistics Sweden 2010). New actors have entered the civil society field, such as service providers in the form of social cooperatives or social enterprises trying to combine business models with social missions (Wijkström 2012). The long-marginalized charity tradition of the nineteenth century has also been brought back to life and regained legitimacy. Such internal changes to civil society itself take place against the backdrop of changing expectations from the Swedish state and public agencies with regard to civil society. Research shows that the Swedish government over time has encouraged an increasing number and diversity of CSOs to take part in the policy process, but that access is slightly skewed in favor of organizations with an insider position at the national government

level (Lundberg 2014). Public agencies increasingly seek to engage civil society actors as experts, advisers, or partners in policymaking processes (Johansson, Kassman, and Scaramuzzino 2011; Johansson and Johansson 2012). The traditional popular movements have met competition from other civil society actors regarding relations and access to the government, and the dialogue between civil society and the state is now played out in partly different forms and in new arenas. Many of these activities take place in committees and through consultation processes and partnership arrangements. Such institutionalized participatory arrangements potentially challenge established orders in the field because participation can give privileged access to resources by some, while others are excluded. It also leads to questions regarding civil society representatives' independence from the state.

Furthermore, the EU has become a new political level that the organizations somehow have to relate to. As mentioned in the introduction to this volume, the EU offers new opportunities but has also been thought to represent values that are contrary to the open, democratic, and social citizenship-oriented Swedish welfare model (Olsson et al. 2009, 178). It is against this background of altered conditions for CSOs that we investigate the hypothesis that domestic political access increases the likelihood of Europeanization.

Characteristics and Implications of Embeddedness in the Swedish Case

Our previous study (Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015) largely supports the positive persistence hypothesis indicating that in Sweden a group of CSOs that enjoyed close relationships to the Swedish government signaled high levels of Europeanization. In order to further explore this intriguing possibility of a domestically embedded correlation, we revisit the positive persistence hypothesis, but this time in a large N investigation. If the hypothesis finds support it would mean that EU engagement is reproducing certain patterns of influence in Swedish civil society. After having identified an elite group through three criteria outlined below, we engaged with both quantitative and qualitative material produced through the survey. We further complemented the material with information from the organizations' websites.

The Three P's of Embeddedness Criteria

The discussions on insider/outsider positions and access points indicate that the relationships between national governments and interest groups seem

to be an important part of understanding civil society strategies as well as determining the success of these organizations in influencing policy. How these ideas translate to the European level is less clear, and there are valid arguments both in favor of and opposed to the positive persistence theory. In order to investigate this, we first turn to the recognition of these supposed elite groups of embeddedness. What are the characteristics by which these insiders or groups with privileged access can be identified? Two common ways of identifying these groups are through their status in relation to the state and through their strategies vis-à-vis the state (Beyers 2002; Grant 1978; Maloney, Jordan, and McLaughlin 1994). In our selection of criteria, we lean on the former understanding of embeddedness as foremost a question of status that in turn has implications for the strategies used by these groups.

Privilege

Insiders, or those with access, are privileged in relation to outsiders, or those without access. This privilege might be a question of institutionalized consultative relationships (e.g., access to governmental commissions and the Swedish government consultation), favored political topics (agenda setting, what issues are considered important and valid), or economic support. These are all benefits of a valued relationship that grants these groups the access and political legitimacy of a favorable status position (Grant 1978).

Proximity

Privilege also assumes actors to be situated close to the center of authority, to have proximity. Proximity can be understood in terms of ideology, geography, or frequency of contact. Ideological proximity might constitute a relationship between a specific government and organizations with shared political values. Geographical proximity might seem irrelevant, but organizations with geographical access might have more opportunities for fostering relationships through both formal and informal personal contacts. For instance, centralized political systems might favor consultations with organizations based in national capitals. On the other hand, while national organizations are often based in capitals, the distinction between local and national is less evident in capital-based groups of organizations. A sense of proximity can also be developed through frequency of contact. When organizations are engaged in consultative processes on a regular basis, the

relationship to the state might grow closer as a result of habitual and institutionalized behavior.

Professionalization

Finally, in order to maintain a privileged position in proximity to domestic governments it is reasonable to assume that these actors maintain a certain level of professionalism. While Swedish civil society still to a large extent functions without employed staff (cf. chapter 3), an international trend of professionalization has been documented (Wijkström and Einarsson 2006; Åberg 2013). It has become more common for CSOs to employ administrators or communicators, especially if the organizations are engaged in high-stakes consultations and are active in the media. Furthermore, the complexity in applying and managing time-limited projects (among them EU projects) paired with their potential economic opportunity has led to the need for organizations to search for new competences (Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015).

A Domestically Embedded Elite

In this study, we test the hypothesis that a privileged position in relation to the Swedish state increases the chances of Europeanization among Swedish CSOs. We do this by comparing patterns of EU engagement among an elite group with the whole sample of organizations in our survey (N = 2,971).

In order to distinguish an elite group, we have considered three main criteria: privilege, proximity, and professionalization. We considered privilege as a question of public funding opportunities, and organizations that met the privilege criterion stated that they received more than 50 percent of their funding from the Swedish state. This criterion has certain consequences for our study. While popular movements have been known to be embedded in the Swedish corporatist model, some of them will not qualify for our selection because they remain largely membership funded. Our aim in this selection is to reflect the changing conditions of Swedish civil society and to capture potential new actors of domestic embeddedness. We treated proximity as a close connection to the Swedish state, and organizations that met the proximity criterion stated that they often or sometimes participated in the Swedish government's consultation procedures (also known as remiss procedures) in official reports of the Swedish government (SOU) or in government-assigned working committees. Finally, we considered professionalization as the shift from strictly voluntary engagement to professional resources, and organizations that met the professionalization

Table 5.1. The Three P's of Elite Criteria

	Percent	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Privilege	15	2,509
Proximity	19	2,255
Professionalization	18	2,649

Source: EUROCIIV survey.

criterion stated that they had employed at least one person (any position equaling more than 0 percent). With these selection criteria, we were able to identify the group illustrated in table 5.1.

We found that 15 percent (381 organizations) of the total population met the privilege criteria, 19 percent (428 organizations) met the proximity criteria, and 18 percent (477 organizations) met the professionalization criteria. In a second step we were interested in the distribution of these elite characteristics among the organizations, as shown in table 5.2. We found that 63 percent of our population had none of the elite characteristics, while 25 percent had one of them and about 10 percent had two. Only 2 percent met all three criteria, amounting to 125 organizations.

The group of 125 seemingly embedded and favored organizations was hence of particular interest in testing the positive persistence hypothesis—in other words, the assumption that access at the domestic level increases organizational and participatory Europeanization.

A New Model of Swedish Corporatism?

Against the background of a Swedish civil society in transition, it is interesting to consider the organizations that enjoyed what we have called embedded positions, especially in comparison to traditional Swedish corporatism. Table 5.3 presents the different types of organizations and their representation in our elite group (N = 125) compared to the general sample (N = 2,971).

Table 5.2. Distribution of Elite Criteria

Number of characteristics	Percent	Total (non-weighted)
0	63	899
1	25	710
2	9	408
3	2	125

Source: EUROCIIV survey.

Table 5.3. Types of Organizations

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Interest organization	53	40	41
Lifestyle organization	15	35	34
Political organization	21	6	6
Solidarity organization	4	7	7
Religious organization	2	11	11
Service organization	4	1	1

Source: EUROCIV survey.

We can see that interest organization is the major type in our group and slightly overrepresented compared to the nonelite and the general sample. Among interest organizations, trade unions do not meet all three of our criteria. In fact, they are almost entirely funded by membership fees even though they might be considered to be domestically embedded in many other aspects, and they are thus excluded here due to not meeting the funding criterion. Political organizations and service organizations are much more prominent in our elite group compared to the general sample whereas lifestyle organizations and religious organizations are represented to a much smaller degree. The large representation of interest organizations and political organizations is perhaps not surprising considering the traditional ties due to Swedish corporatism.

A closer look at the types of interest organizations, however, revealed another understanding of this group. Within the group of interest organizations, women's shelters and victim support organizations were the most prominent. Although characterized as interest organizations, they were to a large extent occupied with providing a service. Most of these organizations were founded in the 1980s, 1990s, or 2000s and are thus relatively new additions to Swedish civil society (Svensson 2007; Eriksson 2010). It could be argued that these organizations complement and strengthen the public sector in a weakening welfare state. In 2001 the Social Service Act was changed so that it states that the social services should provide help for victims of crime, especially for women and children who are victims of violence (Social Services Act 2001). A widespread solution for the social services to provide this help has been to refer these victims to women's shelters and victim support organizations that they support financially. The tendency to combine new models for help and support with lobbying is particularly apparent for women's shelters/crisis centers. This combination could also form a basis for claims of special knowledge and could be strategically used

Table 5.4. Organizational Level

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Total (N of analyzed cases)
National	30	10	10
Regional	28	6	7
Local	43	83	82

Source: EUROCIV survey.

by these actors in policy change processes and for political demands (Eriksson 2010). The other groups of organizations represented within the interest type were more familiar and fairly well-established disability organizations, immigrant organizations, substance abuse organizations, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations.

Furthermore, the organizations in the elite group were found at all levels of activity but were to a larger extent national and regional organizations compared to the general sample (see table 5.4). This result is not surprising considering the criteria of proximity and professionalization. In line with the popular movement tradition, many Swedish interest organizations in the welfare area are organized at the national, regional, and local levels. Local organizations often rely on voluntary work, and political and administrative tasks are usually referred to the national associations that to an increasing degree employ professionals (Papakostas 2012).

Positive Persistent Europeanization Patterns?

In order to test the positive persistence hypothesis, we compared patterns of participatory and organizational Europeanization among our elite group with the general sample. In line with the understanding of participatory and organizational Europeanization, we focus on participation through membership in EU-level networks, participation through various activities at the EU level, and participation through different channels of EU political influence.

Activity at the EU Level

At first glance it certainly appears that the embedded elite group is Europeanized to a greater degree than the rest of our sample. When asked

Table 5.5. Activity at Different Political Decision-Making Levels

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Cramer's V	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Local	96	89	n.s.	2,622
Regional	89	46	.123***	2,612
National	72	26	.151***	2,603
Nordic	36	10	.126***	2,561
European	28	9	.098***	2,555
International	27	14	.052***	2,564

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5 percent, ** = 1 percent, and *** = 0.1 percent significance. n.s. = not significant.

Source: EUROCIV survey.

about the extent of the organization's activity at the European level, the elite group was seen to have three times higher levels of Europeanization.³ A similar pattern arises in relation to Nordic cooperation and internationalization. In fact, it appears that these organizations are overall more active than the general sample because they report higher frequencies of engagement at all political decision-making levels (the results in chapter 3 indicate a similar pattern). Only at the local/municipal level was the pattern nonsignificant because the numbers were just marginally higher for the elite group. This of course is a result that correlates with the distribution of organizational levels found in table 5.5, but it is intriguing that the elite group reports such widespread, flexible activity across all levels. It is notable, however, that even among the elite group the preferred transnational venue is still Nordic cooperation.

Europeanization through EU-level Memberships

The EU's attempts at institutionalizing civil society have led to the creation and development of numerous EU-level networks and umbrella organizations. These networks and organizations engage in both transnational cooperation in the member states and in exerting political influence aimed at EU decision-making. Some have become important links between EU institutions and civil society and derive legitimacy for their advocacy and lobbying activities by claiming broad representativeness (Johansson and Lee 2012). In the welfare area, these organizations often cluster in the Social Platform, the largest platform of European rights and value-based Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the social sector (see chapter 2). It consists of forty-eight umbrella organizations representing more than 2,800

Table 5.6. Memberships at the EU Level

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Cramer's V	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Membership in network/ federation/umbrella organization at the European level	25	9	.082***	2,406

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5 percent, ** = 1 percent, and *** = 0.1 percent significance. n.s. = not significant.

Source: EUROCIV survey.

national organizations and associations at local, regional, and national levels in the EU member states (Lee 2012). There are also a number of international organizations that have created sublevels specifically targeting EU politics. Participation in these organizations can be viewed as instances of Europeanization by association, but participation might also lead to cognitive processes of influence, framing, and sense of collectivity. The results in our study concerning membership at the EU level are presented in table 5.6.

Participation in EU-level networks and organizations was not widespread among the Swedish CSOs in our sample. Only 9 percent in the nonelite group stated that they held such memberships. However, such memberships were much more common among our domestically embedded elite organizations, of which 25 percent held an EU-level membership. (It was also rather common to hold memberships in international organizations.) The European NGO confederation for relief and development (CONCORD), the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European Women's Lobby (EWL), and Caritas Europe are examples of European networks that were often mentioned. These organizations are all well established in the EU civil dialogue and are recognized as channels of influence in EU politics. However, as Johansson and Lee (2012) have demonstrated, these organizations rest on multilayered membership structures based on factors such as organizational types (service vs. advocacy organizations), geographical basis (European, national, regional, and local levels), and in some cases the degree of self-representation, thus making it hard to determine who they actually represent. Johansson and Lee (2012) unraveled long chains of representation and representational gaps between the European branches of EU-based CSOs and their national members and their wider constituencies. Even if they claim to represent a wide number of organizations and groups of individuals, a limited number of members might in practice exercise full participatory rights.

Europeanization through Participatory Activities

While membership in EU-level networks provides for certain stability in EU engagement, membership can in reality entail different types and degrees of participation. To some organizations only a newsletter from the European umbrella organization demonstrates the membership. To others it has led to participation in transnational activities. These activities might not be restricted to members, but it is often through European membership that domestic organizations are invited to participate. When looking at the results of different types of participatory activities in table 5.7, the pattern of embedded privilege persists, and the elite group reports higher levels of participation in all types of EU-level activities.

Most common is participation in meetings and conferences organized by EU-level organizations, which was reported by more than a third of the domestically embedded CSOs compared to fewer than 10 percent in the rest of our sample. Furthermore, most Swedish CSOs seem to participate rather seldom in EU-funded transnational projects or campaigns led by organizations based in Brussels, but participation happens much more often among our domestically embedded elite (cf. chapter 3).

A closer look at the domestically embedded organizations that reported that they do indeed participate at the EU level indicates differences between different types of organizations and provides more-concrete information about the nature of the engagement. The CSOs that stand out by reporting strong participation at the European level are not the previously mentioned

Table 5.7. Types of Participatory Activities

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Cramer's V	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Meetings and conferences organized by EU-level organizations	38	8	.148***	2,437
EU-funded projects in cooperation with other European organizations	16	4	.092***	2,363
Campaigns led by organizations based in Brussels	9	2	.084***	2,353

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5 percent, ** = 1 percent, and *** = 0.1 percent significance. n.s. = not significant.

Source: EUROCIV survey.

service-providing women's shelters and victim-support organizations that have come to complement and strengthen the withdrawing Swedish welfare state. It is rather certain religious and humanitarian organizations, and some interest and cultural organizations—and to some degree also political parties—that were Europeanized in this sense. Most of them—but not all—operated at the national level, and many had appointed specific EU coordinators.

An organization that perhaps more than others signals Europeanization is The Way Out! (Vägen ut!), a set of cooperatives founded in 2002 as a result of an EQUAL Community Initiative project with the goal of introducing so-called social enterprises. The organizations that established themselves in the new social economy sector that emerged in Sweden beginning in the 1990s used the European concept to persuade actors and to gain influence in Swedish politics (see chapter 7 and Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015). It is thus hardly surprising that this cooperative reported frequent and various activities at the EU level.

These types of participatory activities also engaged organizations with much longer histories. The Swedish branch of the Pentecostal revival is an example of an embedded nonconformist religious organization with considerable EU engagement. As stated on their website, since the early 1900s Pentecostal churches have “worked together to build the kingdom of God—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally” (The Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches 2015). The church has a clear international profile (not least through missionary work in ninety countries, but also through membership in global organizations) and also appears to be an active member of CONCORD, The European Cooperative for Rural Development (EUCORD), and Voice (a European project for the sustainable development and innovation of choral singing) at the EU level. Furthermore, it had been engaged in EU-funded projects and it had its own professional EU coordinators.

IM (Individuell Människohjälp), a humanitarian organization founded in 1938, is another Swedish CSO with a religious background and international prospects. It aims at fighting poverty and exclusion and operates in ten countries worldwide (IM 2015). As was the case with the Pentecostal revival, it was a member of both global networks (e.g., the World Fair Trade Organization) and EU-level umbrella organizations (e.g., CONCORD, EAPN), had hired people with the task of managing the organization's relationship with the EU, and had on occasion been engaged in EU-funded projects. It also stated that it sometimes participated in campaigns led by organizations based in Brussels.

Among the domestically embedded interest organizations, participation at the EU level was mostly reported from some of the patient and

disability organizations. For example, DHR (Delaktighet, Handlingskraft, Rörelsefrihet; an organization for people with impaired mobility) and the National Leukemia Association (Blodcancerförbundet) were both members of EU-level networks within their respective areas and stated that they from time to time took active part in conferences and campaigns. The same applied to a few stray cultural organizations, including the Swedish Workers' Theater Association (Sveriges Arbetarteaterförbund), which was an active member of both the international and the North European Amateur Theater Association, had participated in EU-funded projects, and had appointed EU coordinators.

Several of the political parties stated that they had participated in conferences organized by EU-level organizations and/or in campaigns led by organizations based in Brussels. Some also had EU coordinators. A common feature was that they stressed the political importance of knowing what is going on in the EU.

Activities and Strategies of Policy Influence

The positive persistence hypothesis also rests on the assumption that special access to domestic channels of influence plays an important role for the prospects of Europeanization. According to the literature on interest group insiders and outsiders, insiders are more likely to seek direct strategies such as contact with bureaucrats and politicians. Outsiders lack the privileged access to such direct political channels and are therefore more inclined to use indirect strategies such as mobilization or media campaigns (Maloney, Jordan, and McLaughlin 1994). There are numerous direct strategies through which Swedish CSOs could potentially have influence in matters of EU policy. Addressing the Swedish authorities, members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and the formal decision-making institutions are perhaps the most direct channels of political representation in the EU.

In order to consider strategies of influence at the EU level, it is first relevant to investigate if and how the organizations actually engage in policy-influencing activities (domestically as well as internationally). Table 5.8 presents the organizations' overall engagement in activities of policy influence. Advocacy and lobbying are activities that can be pursued through both direct and indirect strategies, while demonstrations are an indirect strategy. Again, we observe that the elite group organizations are more active in all types of activities. A large majority of the domestically embedded CSOs reported that they were engaged in advocacy and lobbying activities compared to fewer than half of the organizations in the nonelite group. It

Table 5.8. Activities of Policy Influence

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Cramer's V	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Advocacy	86	46	.118***	2,424
Lobbying	89	38	.154***	2,390
Demonstrations	28	13	.065**	2,363

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5 percent, ** = 1 percent, and *** = 0.1 percent significance. n.s. = not significant.

Source: EUROCIV survey.

was less common to use demonstrations among the elite group, but it was still a more common activity among that group than among the nonelite organizations. It is also worth noting that lobbying was the most often mentioned activity in the elite group, while advocacy was the most often mentioned activity in the nonelite group (although they do not use advocacy to the same degree as the elite group).

Moving to the European level, it is interesting to see how the high engagement in advocacy and lobbying activities among the domestically embedded CSOs is transformed into strategies of policy influence aimed at the EU. A common critique regarding the usefulness of the insider/outsider dichotomy and the conceptualization of direct/indirect strategies is the argument that most organizations have both insider and outsider characteristics and use multiple strategies to influence policy (Binderkrantz 2005; Maloney, Jordan, and Mclaughlin 1994; Page 1999). In the case of the EU, it is also at times difficult to distinguish direct strategies from indirect strategies. Transnational mobilization of organizations associated with the Social Platform is an example of an indirect strategy that can be further pursued through the privileged partnership with the European Commission (EC). Furthermore, our previous study of EU engagement among Swedish civil society in the welfare area revealed that it was common to use key persons—influential and well-connected individuals who often had previous experience from representative roles in the EU (for instance, in the European Economic and Social Committee [EESC])—to obtain influence at the European level (Hedling and Meeuwisse 2015). These strategies could therefore be understood as semi-direct because they build on access to official channels, which in social movement research are often referred to as elite allies (cf. Tarrow 1994), compared to indirect strategies that are confined to an outside arena.⁴

Table 5.9 presents the use of direct or semi-direct strategies of EU influence among the organizations. The use of Swedish authorities to seek

Table 5.9. Use of Direct or Semi-direct Strategies of EU Policy Influence

	Elite (percent of total)	Nonelite (percent of total)	Cramer's V	Total (N of analyzed cases)
Use of Swedish authorities	57	13	.180***	2,352
Use of EP	30	5	.158***	2,334
Use of other EU institutions	14	2	.121***	2,319
Use of EU organizations	16	4	.092***	2,305
Use of international organizations	19	6	.079***	2,327
Use of key persons	17	5	.080***	2,319

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5 percent, ** = 1 percent, and *** = 0.1 percent significance. n.s. = not significant.

Source: EUROCIV survey.

influence in EU policy was the most common strategy among all the organizations but was a clearly preferred strategy in the elite group. A majority of the elite group organizations reported that they used the Swedish political channel as a means of having influence in the EU compared to just above a tenth of the organizations in the nonelite group. The pattern persists among other direct or semi-direct strategies of influence, including the use of European Parliament (contacts with MEPs), the use of other EU institutions (i.e., the EESC), the use of European-level organizations, the use of international organizations, and the use of key persons. Despite the clear indication that the elite group is a more frequent user of the direct and semi-direct channels of influence, apart from the use of Swedish authorities the engagement in EU policy influence is not very high. Most organizations did not use these strategies at all, and some indicated in the open questions of the survey that the EU was not perceived as a prioritized political level and was only remotely relevant to the organizations' activities.

Although these results largely support the belief that insider groups are more frequent users of direct strategies of influence, we also know from previous results that the organizations in our elite group are generally more active than the nonelite (see table 5.5). However, the preferred and frequent use of Swedish authorities as a means of influence compared to other strategies offers clear support to the positive persistence hypothesis and shows how Swedish CSOs are indeed actively using access granted through domestic embeddedness as a channel to EU politics.

Conclusions

This chapter has discussed conditions for access to the EU level in a Swedish civil society in transition. The embedded elite that we have studied here represents a new group of insiders compared to the traditional Swedish corporatist model. Although women's shelters and victim support organizations stood out in our elite sample, they had relatively little EU engagement. It was instead certain religious and humanitarian organizations, some interest and cultural organizations, and to some degree some political parties that reported high levels of Europeanization. In this group it was more common to engage in European transnational activities and to seek influence at the European level. These attempts to have influence on European activities were foremost pursued through already established access points at the domestic level. The positive persistence hypothesis is hence supported in the context of Swedish CSOs in our sample.

Still, overall, the EU level is generating limited interest in Sweden. The Swedish level remains prioritized, and very few organizations reported high activity at the European level. In this sense, the Europeanization effects are still relatively low in Sweden compared to countries where civil society is largely directed toward EU funding opportunities (e.g., Eastern Europe). Sweden seems to remain a rather reluctant EU member state. Despite the decline in corporatism, there is still a privileged elite (although differently composed), and this elite expresses mixed feelings toward the EU. It is, however, possible that the Europeanization effects that we have witnessed here, although limited, are the first signs of a gradual adaptation to the new political reality among those with resources and access and that this trend will eventually follow in society at large.

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Notes

1. This contradiction is perhaps especially true for Sweden, a country that has often been characterized as a political system charged with fewer elite mechanisms than many of its European neighbors. The lower level of elitism has, among other explanatory factors, been linked to the absence of a strong aristocracy, to Lutheran Protestantism, and to the prominence of popular movements (Berggren and Trägårdh 2015). The very existence of Swedish civil society is hence considered a counterforce to political elitism. To this day Sweden has maintained a political culture that often favors experience over competence, and the Swedish Parliament seats fewer elite politicians than most EU member states, although this is certainly an area undergoing significant changes (Dahl 2011).
2. People's involvement in civil society has been seen as a fundamental component of, and as essential for, democracy in Sweden (Jeppsson-Grassman 2004). Through civil society associations, individuals have a channel to exercise their political citizenship. Meanwhile, those associations serve as democracy schools where democratic values and ways of working are learned and reproduced (Amnå 2006).
3. In tables 5.5, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 our numbers refer to positive responses of "often" or "sometimes" in the survey results.
4. This access is of course a sign of privilege in itself. One could therefore argue that it is a cause rather than a result of domestic embeddedness, but since we have operationalized the term "privilege" with regard to funding rather than access in this study, the idea that elite privilege leads to elite access is not a logical fallacy.

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