

# PREFACE

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The field of civil society, and particularly civil society in the context of international governance, has attracted significant attention in recent years and has produced a host of studies on the structure, strategies, and network connections of civil society organizations (CSOs). These studies have generated a body of literature that has acted as a catalyst for more general reflections on a range of related issues such as issues of political legitimacy, the normative role of associational representation, and the linkage between the state and society in different contexts. This book provides an updated reflection on several key issues initially tackled by this literature, but which are in need of a substantial update in view of the broader research agenda and the theoretical changes that have occurred in recent years. This book thus provides a novel look at processes such as the Europeanization of civil society in terms of its normative, financial, organizational, and political aspects.

Civil society-related themes have acquired a different character in the years since their prominent appearance in the literature more than two decades ago. For example, issues such as distrust of supranational bodies have become more salient, welfare states have shrunk, New Public Management approaches have expanded and changed, modifying the way CSOs are framed and funded, and the project of European integration has been undermined by a long financial and social crisis, which has questioned the legitimacy of EU-level funding. This book tackles these and several connected issues in the context of processes of Europeanization of civil society in Sweden.

The book takes its point of departure in the original literature on democracy and associational representation, and it integrates these early insights with the necessary awareness of recent changes in the socio-political situation in several EU countries and Sweden in particular. The book's specific emphasis is on the multifarious dimensions of Europeanization, which guides the study of the relations between civil society associations and governance bodies at different levels of government. This is particularly relevant given the historical reliance of Nordic countries on civil society associations

and their inclusion in several functions of the state, such as the state's implementative, service provision, monitoring, agenda setting, and policy evaluation roles. The volume presents a set of interlinked chapters that all together provide a broad study of organized civil society conceptualized in an encompassing way and document the various ways in which Swedish civil society becomes Europeanized or fails to do so. Europeanization is understood not as an inescapable and benevolent process, as was sometimes the case in the early literature on multilevel governance, but as a complex actor-driven set of social dynamics in which a key role is played by the agency of private and collective actors, by sometimes fragmented and competing elites, and by their interactions in complex social fields. This is an important and distinctive contribution of this volume and approaching the field from this perspective allows the contributors to identify complex configurations of conflict and cooperation among different types of actors within and outside civil society. They are able to disentangle various dimensions of Europeanization and to document the different mixes of actors and issues that characterize each sector.

The contributors thus distance themselves from the early glorification of transnational spaces as integrative hubs of harmoniously nested territorial identities; instead, they frame Europeanization as a set of distinctive processes to be examined through a set of precise hypotheses that are then empirically addressed. This approach leads to some interesting counterintuitive findings and to a more accurate and realistic description of the scope and function of organized civil society. For instance, the contributors are able to document the internal tensions between competing territorial identities or between different framings of issues by different organized civil society communities. They note how localist views of participatory democracy are often in conflict with the previously dominant image of a trans-national EU, enriched by cultural diversity and cosmopolitan conceptions of citizenship. They point out that localism, in fact, often simply reframes the EU as a space of conflict among states and social organizations rather than as an alternative source of identities. Thus, this volume can be read as a reassessment of a previous and often almost utopian understanding of international civil society, and it enriches and qualifies civil society's characterization as an instrument for participative and deliberative democracy.

This volume retains a clear understanding and appreciation of the many virtues of organized civil society in complex chains of governance relations. For instance, it notes civil society's role in creating spaces of deliberation, preference formation, preference aggregation, and evaluation that supplement, integrate, and in some cases replace the spaces offered by representative democratic institutions. The contributors are aware of the limitations that hinder relations across levels of governance. The wide literature on

governance and civil society is then summarized and integrated into comprehensive schemes, such as the typology presented in chapter 1 by Kerstin Jacobsson and Håkan Johansson.

Chapter 2, by Håkan Johansson and Sara Kalm, focuses on the central issue of Europeanization in terms of its organizational, financial, and regulatory aspects. It clearly describes the multiple flows of information, resources, and policy frames and pinpoints their targets and intermediaries, thereby identifying and analyzing bottom-up and top-down dynamics among CSOs at different levels of governance. This chapter is important because it provides needed factual information on both the financial and regulatory aspects of organized civil society and its inter-organizational relations, which are too often neglected by the literature on Europeanization.

Questions related to the complex ways in which different types of Europeanization interact, which are raised in the introduction and first two chapters, are again addressed in chapters 3 and 4—with particular reference to Swedish civil society—based on a large dataset that allows the authors to address these questions in empirical terms. Roberto Scaramuzzino and Magnus Wennerhag examine responses to a survey involving 2,791 organizations of several different kinds, and thanks to such a large number of cases they are able to compare organizations that perform rather different functions, but also some similar ones, and are therefore able to examine key issues such as perceptions of representational effectiveness, organizational aggregative functions, and institutional interactions. They document the centrality of the grassroots level for several organizations, and in some cases they note these organizations' difficulties in connecting to other levels of government and they note the relevance of international cooperation beyond the EU, including regional Nordic organizations and international organizations such as the UN. This approach is important because it rebalances a literature that is too often largely theoretical with only limited or even anecdotal empirical evidence. The authors' broad sectoral selection is particularly interesting because it allows them to examine how institutional bodies relate to different mixes of organizations with different levels of legitimacy, acceptability across the left-right axis, resource bases, and the centrality of the advocacy or service delivery function. Thus, their sample includes Disability organizations, Temperance and drug users' organizations, Trade unions, Victim support organizations, Women's organizations, and other interest organizations. They also include more diffused interests, such as humanitarian and religious groups. Among the organizations that are rarely compared to interest groups of different kinds, this survey interestingly includes political parties, thereby offering the opportunity to address key issues of representation and legitimacy that are rarely debated across such different kinds of actors. In several contexts, recent debates have identified

one of the roots of the expansion of the voluntary sector in the crisis of political formations, and of political parties in particular. The possibility to compare perceptions of these two kinds of political participation is therefore of particular value.

Another example of an empirically based examination of the contributions of civil society to national and international governance is Elsa Hedling and Anna Meeuwisse's chapter on embeddedness, which touches on the long-standing debate on the advantages and limitations of institutionalization. They address key issues, such as whether domestic embeddedness in national institutional realms translates into EU-level embeddedness and more generally into the ability to relocate to the supranational level and gain relevant access. As the two contributors point out, this is an issue that has been conceptualized differently within the literature, with some authors arguing that the lack of a solid basis in national institutional realms stimulates Europeanization and others arguing the opposite, that is, that national embeddedness facilitates transnational institutionalization. Their analysis offers the possibility to settle this long-standing dispute and to provide needed additional details about mechanisms of associational embedding in different realms. As in other chapters, their examination of Europeanization is nuanced, distinguishing participatory aspects from financial and organizational aspects. They show how embeddedness is mediated by key variables such as ideological proximity of CSOs and institutional domains, by levels of professionalization, and by path-dependent variables such as previous high levels of access and a related insider status. Through this lens, they show the relative marginalization of religious and lifestyle groups and the elite status of political and service organizations. They then show how national embeddedness translates more easily into Europeanization, but not for local organizations. More generally, they frame issues of embeddedness in terms of what these issues tell us about the evolution of the Swedish model of state–civil society relations and the related changes in the nature of the embedded elites that characterize this model. That is, they document how the advantage of learning strategies for embeddedness at the national level translates into similar skills being more easily developed at the supranational level.

Chapters 6 and 7 document and discuss aspects of Europeanization that have only recently been explored. Chapter 6 by Matteo DiPlacido and Roberto Scaramuzzino focuses on funding dynamics. It investigates five organizations that have been granted funding through the European Social Fund (ESF) and analyzes both the selection mechanisms that facilitate access to ESF funding and the outcomes of such funding. Like other recent studies, it documents the 'projectification' of organized civil society's activities and explores the distinct impact that this has for Swedish civil society. It documents the diverse set of motives that lead CSOs to seek EU funding and the

factors that determine which applications are selected for funding, including personal acquaintances with EU officials and an in-depth understanding of the political realm in which funding decisions are taken. In other words, it illustrates the type and scope of the cultural and social capital necessary to be a successful player in EU competitions for funding. As in other chapters, the specificity of the Swedish model, and in particular the relative ease of access to national funding opportunities, emerges as a powerful filter that shapes the structure of Swedish civil society by limiting its dependency on financial Europeanization.

The following chapter, by Ulrika Levander, reflects on the implication of a relatively recent development in the structure and function of civil society whereby its traditional reliance on volunteering is increasingly being integrated with the acceptance and pursuit of market efficiency and for-profit organizational models. The rapidly diffusing model of social entrepreneurship has become institutionalized at the EU level because it is a model that is better connected with the dominant neoliberal ethos of EU policymaking. More broadly, this model legitimizes private market actors and their role in functions that were previously often left to volunteering, and it encourages the formation of private–public networks of providers and envisages a system of multiactor consultations and coregulation of public services. These approaches are often justified in terms of increased efficiency and increased representation of broader societal sectors. This chapter describes the impact of this emerging ethos on Swedish civil society, and in particular it focuses on its discursive impact, that is, the ways in which the framing of issues in Sweden has changed in accord with changing EU models. The emerging ethos consists of a redefinition of the contents and policy style of the welfare state, which is now seen as being based on civil society actors as socially legitimized entrepreneurial welfare providers. Ulrika Levander—the chapter’s author—makes use of the theoretical framework of sociological neo-institutionalism, through which she identifies isomorphic pressures on Swedish organized civil society but also possibly a characteristic disconnect between discourses and practices.

The chapter by Ylva Stubbergaard continues the review of styles and sources of Europeanization with attention to a field in which national preferences have often been successfully uploaded to the EU level. This chapter is important because it provides needed information not only on which organizations are Europeanized, but also on which ones are not. And for those that are not, it describes the mix of ideological and organizational reasons that prevent these organizations from relocating at least part of their activities to the supranational level. The field of civil society and governance generally focuses on successful examples of Europeanization, which provides important research findings. However, studying negative

examples is equally crucial and possibly even more relevant in the current period of crisis in the process of European construction and the consequent reluctance of some organizations to consider the EU as a source of funding and legitimacy.

In the following chapter, which focuses on the controversial topic of which legal framework is to be advocated for the regulation of prostitution, Roberto Scaramuzzino and Gabriella Scaramuzzino study the relation between the feminist EU-level umbrella group “Women’s lobby” and the Swedish-level member group, which unlike other member groups believes that prostitutes’ clients should be prosecuted. The authors show that specific variables are key to the successful uploading of preferences, including the centrality of a specific issue for a member group, the status of that group in the umbrella organization, and the desire of the umbrella group not to escalate tensions with prominent member groups. This research is important because it indicates the complex mix of cooperation and conflict that exists among and between organized civil society groups, a topic that was only occasionally considered in the previous literature.

The crucial theme of the constraints that vested interests impose on the activities of organized civil society is taken up again in the following chapter by Anna Meeuwisse and Andreas Vilhelmsson. Using a joint political opportunities and framing perspective, these authors investigate the impact of the pharmaceutical industry and the medical profession on setting and maintaining norms in the face of challengers from organized civil society. This case study focuses on advocacy attempts by patients’ organizations that are concerned about the side effects of a class of drugs called serotonin-reuptake inhibitors. The chapter demonstrates how organized institutional actors have been able to defeat attempts at normative redefinitions and therefore dismiss the advocacy efforts of organized civil society. The authors point to the dissuasive impact of the Swedish welfare state tradition on the individual rights espoused by organizations such as the one examined in this chapter. An unsuccessful outcome is also linked to the types of grievances that emerge in the health-care field within which powerful epistemic communities emerge and are cemented by a strong resource base and shared expertise.

The chapter by Lars Trägårdh brings the volume to a close with some more general reflections on organized civil society in the Swedish context and a reassessment of its role in the current period of crisis. It interprets current developments as challenging for supporters of a stronger role of civil society. This interpretation can only be shared in a period of reemerging nationalism in many national contexts and mounting skepticism of the role of international institutions in general and of the role of organized civil society within such institutions.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume give us a very clear picture of the evolution of state-society relations, focusing on the changing role of civil society as a set of organizations, as a complex body of intermediary institutions, and as an evolving contribution to democratic governance. It provides a rich analysis of the differentiated sectoral role of organized civil society in the specific national context of Sweden. Several chapters discuss the changes that have occurred in recent years in our framing of the political and policy role of civil society. The book is both theoretically ambitious and empirically rich, using different methodologies and contributing rich research outcomes that will be essential to further advance our understanding of the governance role of organized civil society.

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