Analyzing Civil Society Organizations' Changing Structures in the EU. Lessons from the social movement and party politics literature

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Abstract

The question of political participation beyond elections is a recurrent subject in contemporary political life. Since the beginning of the 1990s, official European Union documents stress the participation of a so-called 'organised civil society'[2], thought to lead to increased democratization of the national and international sphere.

The paper starts from the assumption that this discourse has an effect on 'civil society actors' and goes on to study the tools developed to analyze these effects, called institutionalization, bureaucratization or professionalization of the organized civil society. The political party and social movement literature has identified these changes empirically and theoretically already at the beginning of the twentieth century. The aim of this paper is to analyze these approaches and to draw lessons for the study of the transformation of civil society organizations' structures in the EU.

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[2] Without engaging in a large-scale debate about definitions (see amongst a increasingly large number Cohen and Arato 1992), 'organised civil society' can be defined narrowly as collective actors representing interests on behalf of their constituency both in the public sphere and towards political actors (inside at outside lobbying).

Introduction

The mushrooming number of work undertaken in EU studies on the link between interest groups or the 'organised civil society' and democracy insist, usually implicitly, on the fact that groups and collective actors need to represent their interests and claims in an increasingly professional way. Professionalization, bureaucratization or institutionalization have become catchwords, the necessity to provide expertise and information seems to be recognised as a resource for interest groups and the 'organised civil society' in order to gain access to European institution, who, in turn, draw legitimacy from taking eventually into account this information (Marks and McAdam 1996, Bouwen 2002 …). This article starts from the same assumption: due to discourses and the establishment of new participatory structures, EU civil society organizations have transformed their internal organizational structures. They have done so in the same way the requirements of mass democracy and participatory democracy respectively since the beginning of the twentieth century have pushed political parties and social movements to professionalize.

Empirical information gathered randomly illustrates this phenomenon. In the majority of European interest groups working in diverse areas, such as agriculture or electricity providers, less grassroots personnel coming from a national background with training in either agronomics or engineering is recruited, whereas more communication and law professionals (coming i.e. from the College de Bruges or European management schools) can be found in strategic expertise jobs. Thus, the DBV (*Deutscher Bauernverband* – German Farmers' Union) has recruited an Austrian graduate from the College de Bruges. Their French counterpart, the FNSEA's representative in Brussels has studied at the IEP Paris, as has the FNSEA's specialist for European affairs in Paris. Both are specialists in communication and have participated in a large number of simulation games on EU negotiations. All staff members of COPA (Comité des organizations profesionnelles agricoles de l'UE) responsible for lobbying the EU have a university degree. They have never worked for any of the national Farmer's Unions before or had a career in the farming sector (Hrabanski 2004).

Regarding the electricity sector, the staff of the Brussels' offices of the main electricity firms have increasingly often received commercial or communication training. This situation leads the engineers deploring that their Brussels' colleagues follow the commercial rather than the

security strategies in representing the interests of the electricity producers. Technical expertise must be reformulated by professional lobbyists before being represented in negotiations.

This replacement of activists by communication professionals can also be found in other policy areas. The recruitment logic of associations at the European level corresponds more to a career logic than to an activist one. The example of the European Women Lobby shows after the gradual retreat of the founding mothers the emergence of a frontier between elected representatives and staff members. This frontier results of the establishment of a meritocratic recruitment procedure. Associational 'civil servants' seem to emerge (Cavaille 2004:13).

In the field of trade unions, this institutional professionalisation is at the origin of important critiques regarding the 'high level unionism' or the 'elite and expert unionism' (Gobin 1997, Pernot 1998). The European trade unionists are considered to be the new elite, integrated in the universe of European high-ranking civil servants and other professionals. Here we observe clearly a competition between different modes of trade unionism which puts into question the legitimate basis of unionism (Wagner 2004). Thus, interest groups and 'civil society organizations' create in the EU political spaces as "political sites of contestation, in which actors are strategically constructing bounded fields of social power in their own right, at the same time as building successful remunerative careers in these emergent professions" (Favell 2007, 127). In a random analysis of eights CVs of current and former members of the EU's Civil Society Contact Group board members and coordinators, Kohler-Koch et al. (2008, 21) found that only three CVs from eight showed grass-roots level experience, five from eight CVs give evidence of EU non-state actors careers and two of eight show experiences within the European Commission and the European Parliament.

It is however important to note that the career logic does not systematically replace the activist logic in the organized civil society structures at the EU level. In three of the four groups – farmers, the European Women Lobby and Trade unions - activists still represent the majority amongst the elected representatives. It is in the secretariats that we see a professionalisation of the association, where individuals move from association to association in order to pursue their career path. This phenomenon is, however, growing in importance.

At the international level, Martens (2005, 2006) has convincingly argued that the professionalization of Human Rights NGOs has led to their increasing significance in international relations. Others, such as Siméant (2005) or Saurugger (2006) hint on a legitimacy problem: if they have become more influential, they have, at the same time lost

part of the representative character they have claimed to possess in order to gain a legitimate place in transnational governance structures.

These case studies are insofar relevant as they offer a complex view of what professionalisation and institutionalisation could mean. What is missing, however, is a systematic conceptualisation of these phenomena. How can one 'think' professionalization processes of the organised civil society? The aim of this article is to analyse the literature in which these questions have been excessively addressed, that is in the field of party politics, social movements and associations as well as interest groups in order to draw lessons for the study of the transformation of civil society organizations' structures in the EU. The paper is a first step of a systematic effort to isolate some of the basic factors explaining non-state actors' professionalization. Conceptual clarification seems to be needed before we can address this question empirically.

Conceptual approaches

The professionalisation of collective action in politics is not a new phenomenon nor a new research area. From the moment a truly political activity appeared, scholars started to be interested in political staff as research object and to look for a truly political and not economical explanation. Max Weber's, Moisei Ostrogorski's and Robert Michel's work can be established as starting points to systematically study the professionalization of political representation. After a time of relative silence on this matter, Angelo Panebianco's work shed new light on the debate in the 1980, reframed in the 1990 by Cartel Party Model by Richard Katz and Peter Mair.

The social movement literature has used the term of professionalisation in the 1980, insisting that this transformation could help social movements to represent their claims in a more forceful way, and thus become full-fledged members of political systems, developing from outsiders to insiders.

Finally, research on associations and interest groups have developed at the national level, opening up the black box of interest groups and attempting to link internal logics of membership to external logics of influence (Schmitter and Streeck 1999; Skocpol 2003; Greenwood 2002).

Party politics and the professional structuring of political spaces

As has been underlined, the phenomenon of the professionalisation of representation is an old one. From the moment a truly political activity appeared, scholars started to be interested in political staff as research object and to look for a truly political and not economical explanation. Max Weber's, Moisei Ostrogorski's (1912/1993) and Robert Michel's (1914) sociology of organisations can be established as starting points to understand the professionalization of political representation. According to Weber (Weber 1963, 109-110; 1971, 298), the appearance of " a new sort of professional politicians " is correlative of the development of the modern State. In the feudal society, every lord had to face his own expenses regarding administration, justice and war and thus possessed the instruments of political domination. Besides his political activities, the feudal lord had to exercise simultaneously the judicial, economic, and military management of his activities. The monarchy finally managed to expropriate the aristocracy of these means of domination and to assure itself the monopoly of legitimate physical violence. The centralization by the monarchy of the means of political domination as attributes of state power is linked to the disappearance of a type of organization in which all the managerial functions of society were simultaneously exercised by the same individuals. Their replacement leads to the bureaucratic state in which the functions are specialized and exercised by employees. Cut off from the means of management and engaged in a more and more specialized activity, politicians are increasingly obliged to make a living of their activities, to live not only 'for' politics but also 'on' politics and to become professional politicians. The appearance of professionals as politicians also implies the appearance of competition for the conquest and the exercise of political power.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Moisei Ostrogorski (1993 (1912)) reserves the qualification of politician in his seminal work to professional politicians, more specifically for leaders of local party machines. Professionalisation leads to a distinction between professionals and laypeople and the development of new attitudes, beliefs, references and career interest.[3] Michels (1959 [1914]) presents similar arguments. Work division had created specialisation insofar as political actors had to develop specific competencies (social and communications skills). Laypeople in comparison are considered incompetent which legitimates in return the competence of political actors. Every party is destined to transform and to pass from an initial phase in which the organization is entirely dedicated to the

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[3] His proposal to replace parties by ad hoc movements is a rather early normative demand of what some of the most radical associative democracy philosophers request today.

realization of its cause, to a later phase in which the growth of the party's size, its bureaucratisation, the apathy of its supporters after their participatory enthusiasm and the leaders interest in preserving their own power, and thus transforming the party into an organization in which the real end is organizational survival.

Comparisons between firms and political parties are drawn, somehow as a consequence. In the same way an economic company gives a "brandname" to its products to ensure the monopoly of a clientele and to dominate the market, the political principles, doctrines and programs are the brandnames which allow the professional politician to distance himself from competition, to establish and manipulate a clientele and to secure a dominant position in the competitive fight for political power (Schumpeter 1942). This is linked to the principle of political representation: the incapacity of the masses to manage their own interests makes the existence of professionals necessary who take them in charge. However, in the context of interest representation, it is important to ask of which nature is the relation between represented and representatives. Is the professionalisation of interest representation only one step further to efficient policy making?

Both Panebianco (1988) as well as Katz and Mair (1995) see in the transformation of parties not the end of democracy or the failure of political parties. However, Panebianco and Katz and Mair draw different conclusions. While Panebianco's work is deeply rooted in a sociological institutionalist or sociology of organizations approach, offering fine distinctions useful for research on the professionalization of civil society, Katz and Mair concentrate more on the influence of the political environment on internal and external party structures in their theoretical model of the cartel-party.

From an organizational sociology perspective, organizations in general, and parties in particular are in need for a division of labour, for coordination between different offices and for specialization in relations with the external environment (Panebianco 1988). In insisting that parties are organizations that both tend to adapt to its environment and impose themselves to their environment in adapting and transforming it in accordance with their own needs, Panebianco's analysis helps to understand that particular situation civil society organizations are confronted with in the European realm: they are both transforming their organisational structures and participating in the creation of structures which trigger their own transformation.

Similarly, we seem to find in the civil society organizations the same distinction described by Panebianco (1988, p. 18-30) between a 'system of solidarity' and a 'system of interest', leading in the first case to the category of believers and in the second to a type of careerists. The category of believers refers to activists whose participation depends primarily on collective incentives of identity, careerists on the other hand indicate activists whose participation depends primarily on selective, material or status oriented incentives. This differentiation must, however, be seen on a continuum and not as opposite poles. During the organization's, in this case the party's institutionalization, participation seems to decline, leading to the passage from a social movement type of participation (referring to a system of solidarity) to a professional type of participation, which illustrates a system of interest.

While the distinction between careerists and believers can be heuristically useful, if understood as a continuum, it its dichotomy does not allow to develop a more nuanced understanding of the professionalization process of organizations as such. Are these roles the same person can play at different times?

Another distinction is offered by differentiating between the notions of bureaucratization and professionalization. The distinction between professionals and bureaucrats seems to be a clear-cut one: while they both require spezialised knowledge, the professionals training takes generally longer than that of bureaucrats. The control systems to which both professionals and bureaucrats are submitted are different: while the bureaucrats control system is hierarchy, the professionals' is peer review (Jackson 1970; Sarfaty Larson 1977). Heuristically, however, the concept of roles has reater explanatory power. According to Panebianco, party personnel plays different roles. To structure this nuanced approach, he offers a seven fold classification: managers (or political entrepreneurs), notables, representative bureaucrats, executive bureaucrats, staff professionals, hidden professionals, semi-professionals.

This development, nevertheless, is not seen as normatively problematic by some observers. As Manin (1995) underlines, it is certainly true that the personnel that tends to dominate contemporary public and political scenes is not a reflection of the society's social structures. The political personnel is an elite possessing characteristics of which the majority of the population is devoid.

The central question is, however, whether it is possible or even useful to look for guidance in party politics research when analysing the transformation of 'civil society organizations'. The main difference between civil society organisation, interest groups or NGOs what ever term is

adopted here, and political parties is just the main *raison d'être* of the latter: competing for political office[4]. Interest groups or 'civil society organizations' represent interest or operate on the ground and do not search to participate in electoral campaigns in order to win office.

Still, the lesson drawing exercise can be useful if one concedes that both collective actors have in common to be representatives of citizens, one through elections, the other through membership. Hence, taking stock of the development in party politics helps us to conceptualise the transformation of organized civil society.

Social movements and NGOs

A number of studies on "new social movements" (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Imig and Tarrow 2001) have addressed a similar question. Social movements can be defined as collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. David Meyer and Sidney Tarrow underline in their study (1998) that professionalisation and institutionalization may be changing the major vehicle of contentious claims – the social movements- into an instrument within the realm of conventional politics.

Here, references to classical social movement literature offer a certain amount of guidance.

McCarthy and Zald ((1987)1994, 375) define professionalized associations – or non-state actors more generally as entities characterized by (a) a leadership that devotes full time to the association with a large proportion of resources originating outside the constituency the group claims to represent, (b) a very small or nonexistent membership base or paper membership where membership implies little more than allowing the use of one's name upon membership rolls, (c) an attempt to represent or to speak in the name of a potential constituency and (d) attempts to influence policy toward that same constituency.

Instead of putting forward utopian visions as demands or calling for comprehensive reforms in the ways political decisions are made, bringing "participatory democracy", "power to the people", or "grassroots democracy", these professionalised social movements are less interested in changing the rules of institutional politics than in exercising greater influence within it – they wish to represent their interests.

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[4] Although Panebianco questions this because this differentiation does not explain why parties frequently adopt positions which have proven counterproductive to their goal to win elections – such as the French Communist Party being in permanent opposition without any chance of building a greater consensus (Panebianco, 1988, 6)

Thus, this phenomenon leads to a reorganization of organizational structures. Increasingly, core activists today support themselves through social change efforts, as organization becomes a career option and social movements related organizations differentiate. Hereby we observe a similar transformation to that of political parties. Activists may move from movement to movement for both political action and employment. Professionalisation in this context is also about drawing boundaries between accredited persons and others (Moore 1996).

The social movement literature also looks at the political consequences of this professionalisation. Although the fuzzy boundaries between professional activists and their constituencies may support the ethos of democracy, they may also undermine the prospects of sustained and effective mobilization (See March and Olsen 1998). Ironically, a movement organization concerned with effecting democratic reforms in the polity may be most effective by abandoning certain democratic and amateurish political practices (see also McCarthy and Zald 1987/1994).

Different studies on the professionalisation of social movements however show that the professionalisation of these movements must be understood as a larger phenomenon than solely the bureaucratisation of the group. Linked to the formula of the network, professionalisation also means the establishment of different networks at different times. They have greater discretionary resources, enjoy easier access to the media and have cheaper and faster geographic mobility and cultural interaction. These features seemed to have made permanent, centralized, and bureaucratic organizations less important than they once were in attempts to advance effective challenges to elites or authorities (Kriesi et al. 1995).

These network structures are managed by professionals; a long experience in organizing events, demonstrations or connections to the media are required in order to gain access to the highest positions. In the 1990s, the social movement literature have transferred their interest from informal movements on to well structured and transnational non-state actors, commonly called NGOs. In this context studies on humanitarian aid (Siméant and Dauvin 2002; Siméant 2005, see also Collovald et al. 2002) argue that the growing competition between NGOs encourages them to turn global in order to adapt and expand their abilities to obtenain financial and human resources. In the European Union realm, the internationalization of NGOs began in the 1980 and was hastened by the founding of the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) as well as the transfer of important financial means from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund towards humanitarian NGOs. This lead to a situation where the competition for obtaining these funds increased, which lead to a rather

sudden rationalization of the sector. This rationalization entailed the professionalization of NGOs and the adaptation of the internationalized agency model perceived as capable of acting on a large scale (Siméant 2005, 855).

Associations

An entirely different socio-historical work analysis the transformation of American Civic life (Skocpol 2003, Skocpol and Fiorina). Americans have long been pre-eminent organizers and joiners of volutary associations that shape and supplement the activities of government. But late-twentieth century Americans have ceased to be such avid joiners (Putnam 2000). Skocpol shows that today, nationally ambitious civic entrepreneurs do not recruit activists and members in every state and across many towns and cities as possible, but turn to private foundations for funding and then recruit an expert staff of researchers and lobbyists. She also shows the influence of the political and administrative environment on the transformation of group structure. Ever since the Ford Foundation launched the trend in the late 1950s, foundation grants have been especially important to the funding of US public interest associations, encouraging their professionalization and allowing many of them to avoid reliance on membership dues. But not only the emergence of private funding structures have changed the internal functioning of groups and associations,. Changes in the structures and activities of the federal government also encouraged the professionalization of associations. Thus, the openness of the federal courts to class action suits encouraged the formation of public law firms and stimulated many other advocacy groups to add lawyers to their staff.

As a consequence, avenues for citizen's participation have become more constricted. The social capital argument is central in this respect: individuals from privileged families have advantages of income and education.

While Skocpol's work shows that the times of learning through associational participation are over and millions of Americans are not longer cycled through official responsibilities where they were taught how to run meetings, handle money, keep records and participate in group discussions, this account of public life never applied to the European Union level. Here, the main idea was to associate groups – public as well as private to decision making processes first with the idea to improve the efficiency of decision making, and then, from the beginning of the 1990 onwards to decrease the legitimacy deficit by improved association what was now called 'civil society organizations'. This work nevertheless generates tools which are useful to address the questions of professionalization systematically.

Public and private interest groups

At the European level, the hypothesis that European public and private interest groups model their behavior around the techniques of interest representation that are accepted by European officials – they lobby them instead of engaging in more contentious behavior, or at least they must use these action repertoires in order to gain influence seems to have gained large acceptance (Marks and MacAdam 1996). Brussels based groups represent their interests through lobbying, organize conferences and carry out expert studies for the Commission, while country-based groups rather engage in more contentious forms of politics (Guiraudon 2001).

The collective action of non-state actors in this context is qualified as professionalisation. By studying NGOs in the development policy domain at the EU level, Alex Warleigh found (2001, 623) that the secretariats of these organizations dominated the agenda setting processes. They made "little or no efforts to educate their supporters about the need for engagement with EU decision makers". This is a contradiction of social capital claims and more particularly the fact that the participation of the "civil society organizations" would lead to an increase of democratic legitimacy of the decision-making processes (Castiglione, van Deth, Wolleb 2008, part II). The social capital expectation is that groups should be open with transparent decision making processes and an accountable and responsive leadership in order to promote democracy itself. In the British context, Maloney (2007, 80), referring to Berry's analysis in the 1970 (Berry 1977) notes that "the most interesting aspect about many public interest groups is not that they are oligarchic in nature, but that there are not even symbolic concessions to a democratic structure". William Maloney (Maloney 2007, Jordan and Maloney 1997, 2007), has underlined the fact that the professionalization of representations leads to biased participation. As Skocpol (2003) in the American case, Maloney and Jordan have show for Great Britain that professionalized and bureaucratized interest groups staffed by communications experts, lawyers and lobbyists are increasingly supported by sophisticated fund-raising departments and management structures. Grass roots members in public interest groups, or the so-called 'civil society organisations' have become check-book participants. The number of members has also increased dramatically over the last 20 years, and it is these numbers which are used by professional groups in their argumentation about participation. These numbers are used to compare the number of members of political parties and those of large 'civil society organization', leading to the idea of the decline of the party and the creation of alternative modes of participation.

Maloney (2007, 77) rightly states that while democratic jurists judge participation by the degree of personal involvement, much group participation is chosen because it is undemanding in terms of personal effort.

Finally, the subject of professionalisation is touched upon by a number of publications centered on business interests in globalized politics and the European Union. The many similarities between public and private interest organizations make the analogies between public and private interest groups, business interest and NGOs, tempting, as these private organizations have a number of points in common at the international level (Streeck and Schmitter 1981, 1999; Ronit and Schneider 2000, Lahusen 2004, Streeck et al. 2006). This work centers implicitly or explicitly on the 'two logics' concept of Schmitter and Streeck (1999) who theorize the intermediary position of interest associations between membership and influence environments. The accent is put on the transformation of national systems of interest associations. The profound social change triggered in past decades by economic and political internationalization raises the question of how interest associations cope with an increasingly complex environment, in terms both of membership and political decision-making institutions. Justin Greenwood (2002) more precisely questioned the degree of governability of EU associations appreciating the influences exerted by the institutional environment they act. Greenwood comes to the conclusion that associations need to have autonomy from its members in order to bring value to them. Those that are too closely controlled by their members become a mouthpiece for their short-term demands, while those who have acquired some autonomy from their members' demands have the flexibility to participate n policy-making with EU institutions. However, these studies have concentrated rather on the institutional environments and less on the individual backgrounds of the people representing the members' interest at the EU level.

With regard to European institutions and their desire to link 'organized civil society' actors to decision-making processes, however, the fundamental assumption is that it matters who participates. For this reason, it is central to understand who represents the actors included in the civil society definition given by the European institutions. The concept of professionalization, more than that of bureaucratization or institutionalization, allows for the two dimensional analysis Nanz and Steffek (2005) call for: on the one hand an analysis of the political interactions between the centre of the political system and the organized civil society,

and on the other the interaction between the citizens or demos and the civil society organizations.

From what precedes, a minimal definition of professionalization could refer to increasing performance and efficiency[5]. Performance seems to be a straightforward concept. It could be defined as an activity based on professional standards. Professional standards are derived from the "state of the art", that is to say standards that are based on experience and (scientific) knowledge. Knowledge and experience have a desirable consequence: increasing professionalization. The greater the accumulated knowledge is the greater the specialization. Specialization implies increasing fragmentation of the various individuals active in a particular issue area by the breakdown into different specialties

We also deduce that professionalization takes place both at the intra-organizational (internal) level and the inter-organizational (external) level. Professionalization at the *intra-organizational level* can be conceptualized as the proper coordination of the various professionals in order to guarantee the overall performance of a given agency. This includes management (of the various departments, the coordination between the strategic arena and the implementing arena (Dijkzeul/Gordenker, 2003), resource allocation etc. to guarantee optimal service, and product delivery. Increasing professionalization also refers to the transformation of power relations between elected members and grassroots activists and the secretariat, and increasing external – public as well as private – funding.

At the *inter-organizational* level the problem of performance shows up in still different form. This time the issue is the performance of a whole group of actors. It means differentiation amongst diverse civil society organizations and their increasing competition for resources. To clarify the issue we can use the analogy of the market. If the number of actors is growing this will necessarily lead to two related effects of competition and complementarity. In contrast however to the economic system, as far as competition among the actors is concerned, not the consumers (respectively the beneficiaries) decide which good or service they prefer and therefore buy but rather the public and/or private donors.

Factor analysis

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[5] This part relies heavily on Eberwein and Saurugger (2009)

We have seen to what extent organizational sociology approaches allow for opening up the black boxes that are 'European civil society organizations". Classical and contemporary sociological research on parties, social movements and social movement organizations as well as business interest groups put the accent on two parameters: the *organizational structure* on the one hand, and the *sociographical* structure of groups on the other to understand the tension between democratic polity and decision-making processes.

The central hypothesis is that the more efficient groups are at representing their interests in a constructive, precise and coherent manner, the more influence they exert. These activities, however, require major expertise on the group's and movement's side which contributes to modeling the style of militancy and leads to greater internal professionalization. Thus the organizational structures of civil society have reformed to match better the perceived access structure of the European political system. Organized civil society – organized as groups or social movements – has a tendency to become increasingly professionalized to represent the interests of their constituency in an efficient way (Saurugger 2007).

Organizational structure

The majority of analysis discussed above aim to analyze the day to day working of European civil society actors. It is central to understand to what degree these organizational structures are staffed with professionals and/or activists. From preliminary and small scale research projects, it stems that there is less staff coming from the grassroots level than being employed after training in law or communication.

In order to analyse the organisational structure of groups, two parameters have to be taken into account: on the one hand (a) the power relations between elected members or grassroots activists and the secretariat, and on the other (b) the influence of the institutional environment, in particular funding of the so called 'civil society organizations'.

(a) Power relations between elected members or grassroots activists and the secretariat

At the organizational level, professionalisation leads to an internal adpatation problem. On the one hand, within the organization this leads to a potential conflict between the headquarter (strategic level) and the field. On the other, professionalization entails a potential

conflict among the professionals and the militants/membership leading to the professionalization paradox. This means that in order to be efficient and successful on the market going hand in hand with the ambition to participate and influence the political decision-making process this may lead to the increasing distance between the members/militants and the professionals within the organization. The process of professionalisation implies a « conversion process » where, as in the transformation process of political parties, professionals and bureaucrats increasingly occupy the secretariat of civil society organisations. Grassroots members are either represented through a chequebook activism (Maloney and Jordan 1997) or through elected assemblies. However, even elected assemblies cannot react rapidly to demands of expertise necessary to participate in day-to-day decision-making processes at the European level. The assumption in this context is that the operational organization structure active both in advocacy and lobbying activities as well as in fields activities is increasingly staffed with professionals in Panbianco's sense (executive bureaucracies, in opposition to representative bureaucracies) (Panebianco 1988, 224).

(b) Influence of Funding

The EU has provided significant levels of funding to many civil society organizations. Sanchez-Salgado has analyzed the influence of European funding to NGOs' accounting structures (Sanchez-Salgado 2007). Here the question is to what extent external funding structures, in particular those of the European Commission transform the internal structures and make them more professionalized. With regard to public interest groups, or NGOs, the European Commission, in particular after the 1999 step-down of the Santer Commission due to internal fraud, requires specific managerial and organizational abilities of groups it is funding. Thus funded groups had to adapt rapidly based on functional requirements. These transformations are, however, value loaded. New instruments carry new normative contents, as Lascoumes and Le Galès (2007) have shown, and lead to the recruitment of new professionals into the organizational structure. An indepth research must allow to appreciate the percentage of these newly recruited professionals compared to former staff. What precisely does this transformation mean for the link between the representatives and the constituency?

A recent study shows, more generally that the Commission's funding decisions reflect its goals of supporting supranational EU 'civil society organizations': in particular EU integration groups European youth, education and intercultural exchange groups as well as

citizenship, democracy promotion and education groups. The findings also show, however, that when it comes to societal cohesion, the Commission's funding practices are not in line with its rhetoric. Rather than equal funding across members states, or extra support for the organized civil society in the new member states, it is the oldest and wealthiest members that are receiving the largest numbers of grants and the largest amounts of funding (Mahoney and Beckstrand, 2008).

Sociographical analysis of social actors.

The analysis of career patterns reflects an other aspect of the professionalisation of 'civil society organizations' in the European Union. Organizations that rely heavily on public funds may not require grassroots membership. McCarthy and Zald (1987) establish a significant correlation between institutional and financial support for social movement organizations and the emergence of life careers in movements. As a result of the massive growth in funding it has become possible for a larger number of professionals to earn a respectable income committing themselves full time to activities related to social movements. Outside financial support means that a membership in the classical sense is almost dispensible as it allows a leadership to replace volunteer manpower drawn from the base with paid staff members chosen upon criteria of skills and experience. The authors show that in the US American case program professionals have been able to pursue successfully such careers for some time, moving in and out of governmental agencies, private agencies, community organizations, foundations and universities. However, they argue that these new professionals in social movement organizations are distinguished from their colleagues in the classical professions such as public relations directors, membership and development specialists, lawyers and engineers by their rejection of traditional institutional roles, careers and reward structures. They define their opportunities less in terms of the use of professional skills and more in terms of social change objectives. While both, in the US and the European Union, professional competence rather than broad citizen action seems to characterize these organizations, the heavy use of the media as a lever for social change prominent in the US is absent in the EU given its poorly developed public space.

Thus, information about gender, age, geographical or national origin, social origin as well as the level and type of diploma the individuals have earned allow to study the European interest representation as a market place. Variables such as the type of employment and patterns of recruitment can be decisive. Do volunteers or activists and delegated personnel identify more

or less with the group than permanent full time staff who has chosen the workplace as a career move (Kohler-Koch et al 2008)?

Two hypotheses are possible. On the one hand, volunteers or activist working at the Brussels bureau can establish a tighter link between the constituency and the representation in Brussels (or Strasbourg). Or, on the opposite, the fact that volunteers or activists without precise knowledge of the interest representation business represent the interest of the constituency can lead to a decrease in its efficiency. As a consequence, the constituency feels less well represented.

It also becomes clear that a clear-cut distinction between activists and professionals is a complex undertaking. The possibility exists that activists are also professionals. It is necessary, in this context, to think more of a continuum on which these distinctions are based.

Conclusion

This attempt for conceptual clarification what precisely should be looked at when speaking about the professionalization of 'civil society organizations' is a first step in developing a conceptual framework based on diverse tools offered by the party, social movement and interest group literature.

One of the lessons to be drawn is, however banal this seems, that the transformation processes are not new phenomena. Political parties and social movements have undergone changes in their internal organizational structures as well as in their relationship with their multiple environments. It seems central to anchor research on the professionalization of the European civil society organizations in this literature which allows for developing comparisons and avoid that research on EU governance processes remains a n=1 research design.

Given that the "European civil society" has become a crucial element to enhance the EU's democratic credentials, we could actually suspect the democratic deficit literature to provide some insights as to how precisely "civil society" should help to overcome this democratic deficit. While this has been done with regard to the study of participatory structures the European institutions have created, and a number of important normative work on what forms of participatory structures should be established[6], very little work has been done relating to

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[6] See the impressive work undertaken by the CONNEX network http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/connex/

the question of who participates and who represents this civil society in civil society organizations.

In this sense, and normatively speaking, the professionlization processes, as complex as they may be, may be nothing more than a step further into the 'normalisation' of new forms of democratic governance.

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