

Title: Beyond the Welfare State: the Europeanization of Swedish Civil Society Organizations

Much attention has been devoted to understanding the process of Europeanization, but little has been done to identify its implications for Swedish civil society organizations (CSOs) within the welfare area. The aim of this research proposal is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how processes of Europeanization affect Swedish CSOs working with welfare policy and how they, strategically, make use of the EU as a new political opportunity structure. The research group is made up of scholars from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University (sociology, social work, and political science) and Södertörn University College (sociology).

Europeanization, civil society and welfare policies

CSOs play a key role in the Swedish society as they represent groups of citizens, provide them with a collective identity, make their ‘voice’ heard by decision-makers and influence societal norms. Historically, they have challenged – and still challenge – the Swedish government regarding welfare rights for marginalized groups, and have been influential in pushing for workers’ rights, women’s rights, the rights of migrants, older and disabled people etcetera (e.g. Micheletti 1995; Lundström & Wijkström 1997). Present disputes, however, are taking place in a transformed political environment as processes of European integration demonstrate that the national setting is one among many in a complex and multi-layered political context (Marks *et al* 1996; Kohler-Koch & Larat 2009; Kendall 2009).

Since the turn of the century, the European Union (EU) has developed a strategy *to encourage the Europeanization of civil society* (EC 2001; Smismans 2006; Sanchez-Salgado 2007). New ideas have been explored on how citizens can become more active in decision-making as a means to revitalize democracy, and even to create a ‘European civil society’. The new Lisbon Treaty promotes ideas about participatory democracy, e.g. through the Citizens' Initiative. The European Parliament recently installed a Citizen’s Agora, meant to bring citizens, CSOs and elected politicians together. The European Commission has created formal consultation procedures with CSOs under the heading ‘the Civil Dialogue’, and institutionalized consultations with networks of organizations representing a variety of citizens in Europe.

These changes in EU governance draw attention to key questions on how to understand the role of CSOs at EU *and* national levels: Will the EU be able to overcome the label of being a project for ‘the elite’ and not for the citizens of Europe? Can CSOs become a bridge between policy-making in Brussels and the views and perceptions of citizens at national and local levels? Will CSOs representing ‘marginalised groups’ be included, or are the new participatory methods mainly a tool for those already included?

Questions of this kind are of even greater importance considering the recent EU inroads into *policy areas of traditional welfare state competency* (e.g. Hvinden & Johansson 2007; Kvist & Saari 2007; Heidenreich & Zeitlin 2009). The Amsterdam treaty of 1997 gave the EU power to combat discrimination on a number of different grounds, which later resulted in legally binding directives on equal treatment irrespective of racial and ethnic origin, religious beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation (Council Directive 2000/78/EC). By the means of so-called open methods of coordination, the EU has stepped up its aim to regulate member states’ welfare policies in areas such as pensions and social protection, poverty and social exclusion as well as health care services (Jacobsson & Johansson 2009). Even though many of these policies and programs are vague, modest and generally not legally binding, they

illustrate a potential conflict between the EU and member states regarding who sets the agenda for welfare policies across Europe, *and* hence a new arena for CSOs trying to strengthen the rights of their members.

This research program (hereafter ‘the program’) aims to analyse how these changing structural conditions affect Swedish CSOs working with welfare policies, and especially organizations representing groups such as ‘poor’, ‘homeless’, ‘irregular migrants’, ‘immigrant women’ and ‘disabled people’. Even though there is a growing literature on the role of CSOs on the EU-level (e.g. Jobert & Kohler-Koch 2008; Ruzza & Della Salla 2007), limited attention has been paid to how changes of this kind affect CSOs working with welfare issues. We know even less about whether CSOs representing ‘marginal groups’ can make their voice heard in a complex political system such as the EU: Will they be able to go beyond the control of the national government and take part in political debate and policy-making on the EU-level? Can participation in EU-related networks, projects and programmes also strengthen their voice on the national level? Or are the newly adopted strategies mainly a means for EU institutions to ‘tame’ CSOs and turn them into effective partners in the EU’s attempt to put pressure on national governments? Issues of this kind are marginalized both in the international research debate on EU civil society (Greenwood 2007), Europeanization and the role of CSOs in EU governance (e.g. Balme & Chanet 2008), as well as in research on the role and status of CSOs in the Swedish welfare state (e.g. Lundström 2004; Scaramuzzino 2010).

Purpose, research questions and research strategy

This program is guided by the overarching research question of *how processes of Europeanization affect the possibilities of Swedish CSOs to engage in welfare politics and to protect the ‘social rights’ of their members*. In other words: to what extent are the new opportunities offered by the EU realized to their full potential, and to what extent are they undermined by unintended consequences?

Our empirical focus is Swedish CSOs working with welfare policies, and above all those that could be depicted as representing ‘marginal groups’ in society. Based on this research strategy, we aim to answer a set of questions that move beyond much existing research. Each question will be analysed by the means of a set of comparative studies that will be conducted on a national level and the EU-level, as well as in a multi-level governance perspective.

First, the CSOs we will compare could be portrayed as lacking conventional organizational resources (finances, administrative structures, legal expertise, contacts and lobbying skills, a large membership base etcetera). This might be due to their representation of ‘marginal groups’ and therefore difficulties in attracting resources from members or external funders. Such organizations stand in sharp contrast to much common understanding of what it takes for domestic organizations (profit and non-profit) to successfully ‘mobilize’ on the EU level. One aim for this program is hence *to analyze if and how organizations lacking conventional resources can Europeanize, what strategies they adopt and develop to compensate for resource shortages, and whether they manage to achieve political leverage*.

Second, taking part in EU policies is truly challenging for CSOs representing ‘marginal groups’. EU institutions need allies in policy innovation and implementation. CSOs representing ‘marginal groups’ could thus in theory gain a strong position, since they have exclusive information, knowledge and contacts at the grass roots level to bargain with. Nonetheless, the relationships between EU institutions and CSOs quite probably also entail elements of incorporation, control and co-optation. *One key question is therefore to analyze*

the direct and/or indirect forms of governing, steering and control that domestic CSOs experience as they are 'socialized' into a European polity.

Third, issues of European integration might be controversial for domestic organizations and cause internal turbulence. Entering into EU-related partnerships and networks may create tensions and cause intra- and inter-organisational conflicts regarding aims and resources, as well as with regard to the ideological profile of the EU programs. One key question is thus *to analyze how domestic CSOs' strategies, organizing and aims are transformed during the Europeanization process and how domestic CSOs deal with pressures of institutionalization, professionalization and elitism as they enter into EU public-policy processes.*

Fourth, CSOs representing 'marginal groups' have rarely played a key role in Swedish policy-making. They have seldom reached consultative status and been included in formal government committees. Social partner organizations have had a much more prominent role in the corporative structure. A key research question in this program is *to investigate whether processes of Europeanization might provide CSOs representing 'marginal groups' with the power to contest the dominance of national corporative structures and actors. To what extent do they question established policy-making procedures and other organisations' privileges?*

Identifying and reviewing theoretical themes

The program's theoretical framework draws attention to the dynamic interaction between institutions and collective actors (e.g. Coleman 1994). We treat structures as both enabling and constraining action: under certain conditions seeing actors as capable of changing or transcending given structures, yet being dependent on power relations between actors. How this interaction works must be studied in specific contexts and situations considering both the kind of collective actors that are analyzed and under what institutional conditions. This theoretical approach is explored in relation to three ongoing theoretical discussions within political science, sociology and social work, regarding (1) political opportunity structures and theories on multi-level governance, (2) Europeanization and international institutions, and (3) theories on social movements, movement advocacy coalitions and trans-national advocacy networks. These deliberations will be presented in *theoretical reports at the start of the program*, to be discussed and updated throughout the program.

The first theoretical perspective we draw upon concerns *the theory of political opportunity structure* and its potential to explain the timing and fate of social movements (McAdam et al 1996). An 'opportunity structure' refers to dimensions of the institutional, political and legal environment that stimulate individual and collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure. Changes in the social and political environment may bring about not only improved access to material resources, but also political and administrative elites' recognition as legitimate participants, and improved scope for political representation. Complementary analytical tools are needed, however, to analyze how opportunities and/or constraints are dispersed at different political levels. The *multi-level governance perspective* will be explored to analyze how different decision-making levels interact (Kohler-Koch & Larat 2009). The program hence aims to combine theories on political opportunity structures with theories on multi-level governance, for the purpose of analyzing both vertical and horizontal relations in decision-making processes and how these affect the dispersion of opportunities and/or constraints for collective action.

The second theoretical perspective we draw upon concerns *theories on 'institutional openings', 'access points' and 'windows of opportunity' in international/EU institutions*

(Tallberg 2010). These theories aim to explain why certain institutions open up to CSOs at various stages of the policy-making process. The patterns of access granted are crucial in our context, since they shape the political opportunity structures of CSOs (Reiman 2006). This might be due to processes of norm diffusion between institutions, i.e. how they adopt and adjust to change. However, these ‘openings’ might also be due to more strategic considerations. CSOs are included and selected on terms that are determined by how political institutions can achieve functional gains from their participation (Tallberg 2010). This program aims to contrast this burgeoning literature with another theoretical perspective, which claims that international institutions – such as the EU – mainly seek to involve CSOs in public policy-making as a way to neutralize, tame, domesticate and take the edge off CSOs’ criticisms (Kaldor 2003). Insights from each theoretical perspective will be of great importance for exploring tensions and conflicts in current discourses and practices regarding CSOs’ access to public policy-making processes.

The third theoretical perspective concerns the literature on *social movements in a trans-national perspective* (Imig & Tarrow 2001). Recently there has been growing academic interest in global social movements and trans-national activism, and scholars have also explored the ways in which social movements try to mobilize on the European level, e.g. by forming European social movements (della Porta & Caiani 2009). Even if one finds protest organizing also at EU level, concepts such as *movement advocacy coalitions* or *trans-national advocacy networks* appear to better address the new type of organizing taking place at EU level (Ruzza 2004; Keck & Sikkink 1998). CSOs working on the EU level share several features with conventional interest organisations. They use lobbying rather than protest strategies to gain political leverage, seek alliances with other CSOs and take on a role as a translator, innovator and transformer of trans-national ideas. Despite these more conventional strategies, they have a basis in a movement’s political commitment to social change, democratic renewal and capacity promotion. Such themes will be explored within the program, above all with regard to processes of professionalization, institutionalization and elite orientation that might take place as CSOs enter into a European polity.

Planned research activities

The following section presents planned thematic studies within the program. The first and second of these focus on structural conditions and pan-European CSOs’ activities on the EU level. The following three studies investigate Swedish CSOs’ activities and strategies in a multi-level context. Most time and resources will be placed on the last of the above-mentioned three, as this study will analyse CSOs’ activities and strategies at all levels (EU and national, and to a certain extent regional and local). Studies within the program adopt a multi-method design combining quantitative and qualitative methods and drawing on comparative case studies as a key methodological approach, since this is an ideal methodology when holistic, in-depth investigations are needed.

Thematic study 1: In this thematic study we *analyze institutional openings for CSOs at EU-level*, and above all those working with welfare policies. Based on a detailed comparison of institutional openings across earlier mentioned policy areas (e.g. poverty and social exclusion, anti-discrimination, migration and immigration policies) and between EU institutions, the theme will observe to what extent, when and why EU institutions open up to non-state actors. We aim to analyze *at what stage* in the policy-making process openings occur; *with what status* CSOs enter into discussions; *what kind of methods* EU institutions use to involve CSOs in policy-making procedures; and if and how different EU institutions *rank and create hierarchies* between CSOs with regard to their potential role as a ‘partner’.

These – and other potential themes – will be brought together in a comparison of the formal regulations by which the European Court of Justice, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council grant CSOs access to the policy-making process. Primary data mainly include documents of EU institutions. However, to discern if and how formal regulations are complemented by informal routines, members of the research group will conduct a series of interviews with officials from EU institutions and a selection of CSOs. This strand starts at year 1 and will be completed within 12 months. The study involves *Sara Kalm*, *Håkan Johansson*, *Ylva Stubbergaard* and *Kerstin Jacobsson*, all of whom have done research on EU policies and governance methods (Kalm 2008; Jacobsson 2004).

Thematic study 2: This theme *compares networks/federations of CSOs at EU level* working with welfare policies, regarding patterns of civil society representation, networks' organizational structures, their main type of activities, their type of relations to the Commission and their support structures for national CSOs. The aim of the study is to compare the ways in which CSOs representing marginal groups have a 'voice in Brussels' either directly or indirectly via their membership or affiliation to networks and/or federations of CSOs. We will analyze how and why these networks differ and how this might have consequences for domestic CSOs' possibilities develop more EU-oriented activities.

In some of the policy areas addressed in this program one finds large and well-established networks of interest representation, e.g. a European anti-poverty network, the European Disability Forum and the European Network Against Racism. We also find networks such as the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants and the European Women's lobby. Such networks tend to have formal statutes, membership criteria and an office in Brussels, and constitute the main cases in this study. However, we will also include less stable networks of trans-national cooperation to uncover the dynamics of cooperation and competition that exist between different networks, working either with similar topics or in different areas. We aim to analyze the networks' organizational structures, campaigns, lobbying activities and how they provide national members with support. Data include organizational documents and interviews with network representatives and officials from EU institutions. The study starts at the second half of Year 1 and will be completed within 18 months. The team working with this study is *Johansson*, *Frank* and *Jacobsson*, all of whom have established contacts with several EU networks, including those mentioned above.

Thematic study 3: This thematic study *investigates and analyzes EU collaboration among Swedish CSOs working with welfare policies*. We plan to carry out a survey of national CSOs in this specific field. We expect the sample to be fairly limited (approx. 150-200 CSOs) as we only include national organisations working with welfare policies, and hence neither local nor regional ones (Svedberg 2011). The survey will be constructed to provide data about the degree and type of European collaboration, and information about organizational experiences regarding goals, activities, resources, patterns of co-operation, power structures and assessed effects of collaboration. Our study will provide a broad picture of features, patterns and experiences of EU collaboration from the actors' point of view for descriptive and explanatory purposes. The study will serve as a starting point for analyses of networks and intra- and inter-organisational change, i.e. questions related to changed positions within organisational fields in a Swedish context. A survey of this kind provides a basis for theorizing about different *institutional* explanations (e.g. degree of institutional access at national level, match/mismatch between EU policies and domestic policies etcetera) and

organizational explanations (e.g. organizational resources) for how and why different domestic CSOs Europeanize.

A purposeful sample of national CSOs working with welfare policies will be drawn from registers prepared by Statistics Sweden, previously conducted national surveys and relevant EU databases such as the EU 'Register of Interest representatives'. Our intention is to repeat the survey on a regular basis and construct a database on EU collaboration among Swedish CSOs in the welfare sector, accessible for interested researchers (funding will be applied for elsewhere). This study starts at the first half of Year 2 and will be completed within 12 months. *Wennerhag* and *Scaramuzzino* will take the lead for this study; both have experience of conducting surveys of CSOs (e.g. *Wennerhag* 2008, *Scaramuzzino et al.* 2010).

Thematic study 4: This study aims to *analyze the historical evolution of international and European cooperation among Swedish CSOs working with welfare policies and how patterns of trans-national cooperation changed as Sweden joined the EU*. Here we deliberately take a long historical perspective to analyse the interaction of ideology, organizational structure, context and history in the organizations' formation of national and international strategies. Members of the research group will complete a number of case studies of organizations, of varying times and representing different groups. At this initial stage, we particularly focus on organizations within the disability movement, the immigrant movement and the street paper movement (for homeless people). These movements embody organizations sometimes established already at the beginning of the 20th century, while others relatively recently appeared on the Swedish organizational landscape. In some of these movements we also find organizations with direct links to international organizations. Hence, the sample aims to represent different types and incentives for international cooperation. We intend to select a few organizations (6-8) and analyse forms of international and European cooperation from the day when they were established and up until today. Data will be collected through analysis of organizational documents (historical overviews, annual reports, comments on official reports etc) and through interviews with key persons within the organizations. This study starts at the first half of Year 2 and will be completed within 24 months. The study includes *Scaramuzzino* and *Meeuwisse*, who have extensive experience of analysing Swedish CSOs in a historical and comparative perspective (e.g. *Meeuwisse* 2008).

Thematic study 5: The aim of this theme is *to compare the strategies deployed by Swedish CSOs in a multi-level perspective, and above all CSOs representing poor, disabled, homeless, immigrant women and irregular migrants*. We will carry out a detailed analysis of how such organizations Europeanize in relation to policy issues/processes that emanate from the EU level and hence are inherently multi-level. We aim to analyse how opportunities and barriers are dispersed at different levels, and the role of CSOs as transfer agents, i.e. how and with what relative success or failure domestic CSOs transform and translate acquired discourses, ideas, and knowledge into a national political arena and into their political activism. An important feature of these comparisons will be to highlight if and how EU-based networks of CSOs (e.g. the European Women's Lobby) support domestic CSOs, and to what effect.

The methodology adopted in this theme is to study strategically selected policy cases (*Kendall* 2009). By a policy case we mainly refer to an EU decision, strategy, method or process and how this is implemented at different levels (*Kendall* 2009). This could include the recently adopted directive on the return of illegal immigrants (REF), the involvement of CSOs in one of the open methods of coordination or how CSOs mobilize, organize and lobby in relation to the current European Year against Poverty. However, since the EU has an unclear mandate in



several of the issues addressed in this program, we need to include a broader variety of cases. One such case could be to analyze the role of European Social Forums, the ideas of Civil Dialogues currently appearing on the EU level, or single campaigns run by CSOs and how these are spread across different policy levels. A combination of policy cases originating from EU institutions and/or CSOs is preferable, since it allows for analytical reflections on the complex ways in which CSOs, EU institutions and domestic institutions interact. The study includes all members of the research group, starts during the second half of Year 2 and continues for approx. 30 months. Data and methods include a combination of organizational documents, participant observations and interviews with representatives of CSOs.

All in all, the program is constructed as a common endeavour where the different thematic studies will inspire and fertilize each other and where individual researchers will work together in different constellations over time. The initial studies focusing on the structural conditions and CSOs' activities on the EU level will provide valuable insights that will inform the following studies of Swedish CSOs' activities and strategies in a multi-level context. All researchers will be involved in the elaboration of the theoretical framework as well as in the work to integrate and synthesize the outcomes of the five thematic studies, which mainly will take place during the last year of the program.

The research group, networks and contacts

The proposed program implies close, interdisciplinary collaboration and links two research environments closer together. Based on previous collaboration between researchers from both environments, we have realized the potential and synergetic effects of a joint program. By combining individual competences, methods and theoretical approaches, we aim to contribute well-informed and complex analyses of the Europeanization of civil society in welfare policy.

At the School of Social Work, Lund University, research on social policy and civil society organisations in a changed welfare state are well-established research areas. Professor *Anna Meeuwisse* has been engaged in several research projects concerning Swedish civil society organizations and trans-national social movements, and currently directs the research project 'The European Union — a platform for trans-national co-operation: conflicts, challenges and opportunities for Swedish voluntary organizations?' *Håkan Johansson*, (PhD, Associate professor) has competence in the areas of comparative social policy and EU social policy, and is currently involved in a project on the public interest groups on the EU level. PhD Candidate *Roberto Scaramuzzino* (currently comparing CSOs in Italy and Sweden) is expected to complete his thesis in 2012 and will be involved in the program.

The Department of Political Science has a solid reputation for excellent research in international relations. *Sara Kalm* (PhD) has written a thesis on the politics of international migration and is involved in the program 'Democracy Beyond the Nation State? Transnational Actors and Global Governance'. *Ylva Stubbegaard* (PhD), in her research, has covered issues such as trans-national governance, civil society and democracy, and power analysis. The Department of Sociology offers strong competence in research on social movements. *Denis Frank* (PhD) has conducted post-doctoral research on undocumented migrants, and on how trade unions have responded to this immigration.

The School of Social Sciences at Södertörn University College has a strong record of research on social movements in a comparative perspective. Professor *Kerstin Jacobsson*'s field of interest is political sociology, and she has studied EU governance in the fields of social and labour-market policy. She has led several research projects and currently directs two others on

social movements and activism in Sweden and Eastern Europe. *Magnus Wennerhag* (PhD) defended his thesis 'The global justice movement and the transformations of modernity' in 2008 and works on social movements, globalisation and democracy.

Members of the research group are well integrated into the Swedish research community within their respective fields, and here we would like to mention only a few key contacts. We aim to work closely with the Centre for European Studies at Lund University and draw on the Centre's resources, contacts and competence in cross-disciplinary EU studies. The program will be in continuous dialogue with researchers from the research program on 'Democracy Beyond the Nation State? Transnational Actors and Global Governance', funded by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Fund and located at the Department of Political Science, Lund and Stockholm University. Another key contact is the ongoing collaboration between the School of Social Work (Lund) and the Institute for Civil Society Research at Ersta Sköndal Högskola.

Members of the group regularly participate in international projects, networks and conferences (e.g. European Social Policy Research Network, European Consortium for Political Research, International Society for Third Sector Research, European Sociological Association, International Association of Schools of Social Work etcetera). Group participants are also members in Nordic Centres of Excellence in welfare research (e.g. www.reassess.no) and have experience of participating in EU-funded projects. Key contacts include scholars addressing issues of EU governance (e.g. Prof. M. Heidenreich, Oldenburg, GER, and Prof. J. Zeitlin, University of Wisconsin-Madison, US); citizenship and social policy (e.g. Prof. J. Clarke, Open University, UK, Prof. Bjørn Hvinden, Norwegian Social Research, NOR and Prof. A. Ewers, Justus-Liebig Universität Gießen, GER); and social movements (Prof. S. Saxonberg, Masaryk University, CZ).

Program management, work plan and budget

The *scientific leader* of the research program is Professor Anna Meeuwisse (will work 30 percent, of which 10 percent funded by the program). She bears the main responsibility for the completion of agreed aims and objectives, publication plans, joint volumes, contacts with publishers and fund-givers, international contacts etcetera. If case of approval, we will also establish an international advisory board for feedback throughout the research process, with the long-term aim of developing comparative projects, joint applications and publications.

All members of the research group will meet on a regular basis (approx. every second month) to discuss the progress in each research theme and to ensure coordination and vertical synergies between the themes. Members working in the thematic studies will naturally have more regular contacts, which do not necessarily imply face-to-face meetings, but could be secured via video and internet meetings. Moreover, the program is divided into three parts. During the first phase we will complete state-of-the-art papers for each theoretical debate and conduct thematic study one and two. During the second phase we turn our focus to Swedish CSOs (thematic study 3-5). During this phase we will also explore the possibilities of conducting country-comparisons, e.g. by the means of Jacobsson's research on social movements in Eastern Europe and contacts with NOVA in Norway. The last phase of the program includes synthesis of findings and theoretical implications. Almost all researchers will be involved during phase two and three.

A *post-doc position* (for two years) will be internationally advertised (via list serves and other channels) during the second year of the program. To promote inspiration and new ideas, one or two highly qualified *visiting researchers* will also be invited for a couple of months (Years

2 and 4). Bjørn Hvinden (Research Director, Dr. Professor at Norwegian Social Research) has agreed to come as our first guest professor. Members of the team supervise PhD students working on related topics, all of whom will be invited to participate in the program, present papers at workshops etcetera.

The program's *dissemination and communication plan* is directed to the academic community and to external actors and stakeholders. We plan to organize a number of conferences and workshops with invited Swedish and international scholars. The main academic output of the program will consist of journal articles, edited volumes and a joint volume to summarize the main findings. Jointly written texts will be encouraged, in order to enhance positive synergies of cooperation between researchers with different areas of expertise. Our ambition is to publish frequently in internationally peer-reviewed journals. We also plan to communicate with, and disseminate research results to, external actors and stakeholders. One means with which to do this is the construction of a program homepage. We also plan to organize sessions that directly target stakeholders (civil society representatives, politicians, civil servants).

A program of this kind requires an extensive *budget* for travelling and field work, e.g. to Brussels and other relevant sites across Europe. We have expected the costs for internal meetings to be approx. 50,000 SEK per annum and for field trips approx. 75,000 – 100,000 SEK per annum. Other costs include resources for a survey during year 2 (approx. 75,000 SEK); costs for participation in international conferences (approx. 10,000 SEK per person and annum); workshop with invited guests (approx. 25,000 SEK per annum); and costs relating to language editing, transcribe interviews etcetera (approx. 50,000 SEK per annum).

Ethical considerations

The project will observe the ethical guidelines for social scientific research (e.g. The Swedish Research Council's research ethics principles from 2002 and Respect, EU Code for Ethics for Socio-Economic Research from 2004). We will carefully inform all participants about our study and emphasize that participation is voluntary. We will guarantee that all data are treated with appropriate confidentiality and anonymity and that research material is safely stored.

Expected outcome of the research program

By the means of an inter-disciplinary team and a multi-methodological design, this program will produce important knowledge on how Europeanization affects CSOs working with welfare issues, a research issue previously not acknowledged. Our analysis of the dynamic interaction between institutional conditions *and* CSOs representing marginal groups will not only be of relevance for policy-makers on 'how to produce an inclusive polity', but also for scholarly debates on how structures shape collective action in a multi-level context and what barriers CSOs encounter in their mobilizing and organizing efforts across borders.

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