

## Introduction

# EUROPEANIZATION, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE SWEDISH WELFARE STATE

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One might argue that the project of European integration has come a long way. Proofs of this statement are the rise and expansion of the European Union (EU) and the development of a common financial policy and currency. Furthermore, free movement of goods and people within the EU has been introduced along with a common system of border control. Recent developments on the European continent have, however, cast serious doubts on the stability of the project. The financial crisis of 2009, the refugee crisis of 2015, and the UK's decision to leave the EU in 2016 (Brexit) have put a strain on European cooperation and highlighted conflicts between and within countries, damaging the reputation and legitimacy of the EU and its public institutions. These crises have also sparked a mobilization of citizens in the EU countries and across borders within the anti-austerity movement and the refugee-welcome movement. Nationalist movements have also expanded in opposition to both European integration and immigration. While these crises have demonstrated the vulnerability of European cooperation, that cannot be taken for granted, they have also shown the existence of a common European public sphere for citizen mobilization around issues of public interest.

The concept of Europeanization has often been used to describe and explain the development of the EU and individual member states, not least in the debate on the future of the EU (Olsen 2002). The EU now affects

virtually every policy area to a greater or lesser extent, and Europeanization is understood as a process of change in both the domestic setting and at the EU level where resources and opportunities are redistributed. Europeanization has also become a common approach to understanding the inclusion and role of civil society in the EU (see, e.g., De Schutter 2002; Kröger 2016; Rek 2007; Smismans 2003; Trenz 2007; Warleigh 2001). Europeanization has implied both opportunities and challenges for civil society organizations (CSOs) across Europe, and one consequence of Europeanization is the rise of an EU-based civil society with its roots in national civil societies but organized at the supranational level (e.g., Johansson and Kalm 2015). For domestic organizations, the rise of an EU-based civil society has, among other things, meant new possibilities of participation, not least through EU-based organizations, as well as new funding opportunities. New opportunities at the European level have resulted in a more complex political environment where CSOs are acting in a multileveled setting and might be more or less likely to engage in EU activities to strengthen their resources and positions (Kendall 2009; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2009; Marks and McAdam 1996).

This book explores the Europeanization of domestic CSOs in Sweden. The concept of civil society is often used for highlighting a specific social sphere that is separate from the state, the market, and the family. Civil society and its functions in liberal democracies have been theorized from different perspectives, and sometimes in terms of expressions of different types of social contracts (Somers 1995; Trägårdh 2007). The Hegelian tradition emphasizes the function of civil society for channeling particular interests in society and the state's responsibility to subsume and transform them into universal and rational interests. According to the Tocquevillian tradition, on the other hand, civil society is a space of freely coordinated and organized individual interests and hence has the role of keeping at bay the more coercive forms of power embodied by the state. The role of civil society has also been related to different ways of organizing the welfare system and hence to so-called welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990). The Swedish understanding of civil society and its role, which is embodied in the Swedish welfare model, has sometimes been considered to conflict with the ideological and normative frames on which the EU project is based. By opening new channels for political influence, by allocating resources and funding for CSOs, and by spreading new norms and ideas, EU institutions may be seen as a challenge to the Swedish model and to the social contract on which this model is based. This is one of the main reasons why Sweden provides an interesting national context for the study of the Europeanization of domestic civil society.

CSOs might use EU institutions to challenge national or local policies and regulations but might also use resources at the local and national level

(contacts, funding, and institutions) to wield influence in Brussels. Few cases of EU regulations have engaged so many Swedish CSOs as the EC VAT Directive. According to Swedish law, many CSOs are VAT exempted, a privilege that organizations are eager to preserve. But in 2008 the European Commission (EC) addressed Sweden with a formal notice that the special VAT rules for CSOs were contrary to the EC VAT Directive (Cederholm 2013). Many prominent Swedish civil society actors in close collaboration with the Swedish government strongly opposed the ruling for six years until finally, at the beginning of 2015, the EC dropped the VAT issue. On the one hand, this episode can be interpreted as a clash between a European understanding of civil society as part of a social economy sector and a Swedish tradition of popular movements (*folkrörelser*), fueling EU skepticism among Swedish CSOs. On the other hand, voices claiming that Sweden should leave the EU have been few, and Swedish CSOs have instead interacted with the EU and its institutions to convince the EC to change its mind. One could say that Swedish CSOs chose protest instead of exit.

In addition to being a potential regulatory actor in a Swedish context, the EU also represents a potential new source of funding for many CSOs and an alternative to the Swedish system of public funding. Projects in partnership with different constellations of public and private nonprofit and for-profit actors are often sponsored and cofinanced by the EU, for example by the European Social Fund (ESF) in the area of integration in the labor market. Ironically, EU-funded rural groups seem to be especially active in areas where EU skepticism is strongest. They often use EU funding to strengthen citizen initiatives of self-governing and self-reliance aiming at maintaining the “sub-municipal territorial base of citizen identities” (Amnå 2006, 8).

Furthermore, many Swedish civil society representatives frequently visit Brussels, trying to influence EU institutions to adopt common rules on specific issues such as trafficking of human beings or to force the Swedish government to conform to EU directives, such as concerning the protection of endangered species. These few examples show different ways in which the EU has proven to be relevant for Swedish civil society sector by creating funding opportunities, by offering an arena for influence in policy areas, and by regulating the relationship between public authorities and national and local voluntary organizations.

In this book we understand Europeanization as a two-sided process in which the EU influences domestic actors, but where domestic actors also take advantage of the opportunities offered by the EU. It is reasonable to ask whether and to what extent the new opportunities offered by the EU are realized to their full potential; Europeanization also raises questions about the costs of interacting with public institutions at the European level. There are significant challenges for local and even national CSOs to interact with

the EU institutions, and it requires both the skills and capacity to be able to mobilize resources from the EU funding system and to wield influence in Brussels. The degree to which Swedish CSOs participate in the opportunities offered by the EU institutions might be influenced not only by the division of responsibility between the nation-state and the EU (Beyers and Kerremans 2007), but also by the organizations' commitment and the organizational and administrative skills that are required. Resources in terms of organization, expertise, and finances are said to set the standards of the EU game. The European level has sometimes been referred to as an elite project, consultation practices with nonstate actors have often been initiated by invitation only, and funding opportunities are bound to certain conditions that might imply adaptation to specific rules and regulations set up by EU institutions (Best, Lengyel, and Verzichtelli 2012). As highlighted by Fligstein (2008), however, the creation of a common European public sphere transcends the mere building of common European public institutions to which civil society actors might or might not have access. Europeanization is in fact both a political project driven by the national and European public institutions and a social phenomenon driven by spontaneous interactions and cooperations between nonstate actors (both enterprises and CSOs).

### **The Idea of a European Civil Society**

While transnational cooperation among European countries does not necessarily imply the creation of a new political entity and European-level public institutions, the project of building the EU by integrating nation-states on the European continent is, in a liberal interpretation, linked to the creation of a common public space. Europeanization as such is, however, not necessarily linked to liberalism; it has been understood as a sometimes coercive and violent expression of antiliberal conceptions of Europe, for instance, in the former communist Eastern bloc (Gosewinkel 2015; see also Conway and Patel 2010 for a historical perspective). While illiberal understandings of Europeanization do not need a civil society to rest on, a liberal conception of Europe, that we would argue is dominant in the understanding of EU institutions, does. A civil society as a social sphere separate from the state and the market was in fact the foundation from which the state's legitimacy was claimed in the development of the modern liberal nation-state (Swyngedouw 2005). What is peculiar with the EU project is that it can instead be argued to anticipate the existence of a European (civil) society and thus the need to create one.

The idea of constructing a European civil society can be associated with the model of communitarian democracy in which demos, here the people

of Europe, with common values and identities are supposed to lay the foundation of *demo*-cracy (Tomšič and Rek 2008; Finke 2007). Communitarian democracy is, however, very closely connected to *nations* and the idea of culturally common belonging. In order to foster a sense of common European identity, a socializing mechanism is necessary. The idea is that it would be possible to develop common European values through a European civil society resting on domestic organizations working on local levels (Sánchez-Salgado 2007). One could argue, however, that such a project is in conflict with a recurring image of a transnational EU characterized by cultural diversity and a cosmopolitan view of citizenship. It also downplays the EU as a space of conflict and negotiation between states and between social movements and CSOs over national interests and the meaning of Europeanness (cf. Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006).

How does Europeanization occur in practice? Is it sparked at the institutional level from above, or does it spring from initiatives at the grassroots level from below? Turning the gaze from the political process and formal decisions to the way in which people actually interact across Europe, Neil Fligstein (2008, 1) asserts, “The growing cooperation amongst the people in Europe is now underpinned by a large number of Europe-wide fields of action, social fields where organized groups, be they governments, firms, nonprofit organizations, or interest groups of citizens from countries across Europe have come together for common purposes” (see also Kaiser and Meyer 2013). These types of horizontal linkages and ties are, however, unevenly distributed among Europeans. While a few, often upper- and middle-class, Europeans are deeply involved with other Europeans on a daily basis or more infrequently, the rest have little or no contact with people in other countries. Thus, the EU project as an elite project creates a tension or a gap between those who are Europeanized and those who are not (Fligstein 2008).

While economic integration has often been seen as opposed to the creation of a European social dimension (e.g., Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006), Fligstein (2008) argues that economic integration has been and still is a precondition for social interaction and cooperation among citizens and organizations across the borders of the nation-states. One of the key mechanisms is that with European integration, interest groups have become aware that decisions that are relevant to them are taken at a European level. To be able to affect such decisions, these groups have to be present in Brussels. As interest groups across Europe have realized that they have common interests, interaction and cooperation outside Brussels have also become a necessary step. However, not all interests have become Europeanized. While Europeans generally have accepted the idea that issues such as border controls, mobility of goods and services, and the protection of the environment

are to be handled by the EU, they have not agreed to what extent welfare issues such as pensions or unemployment benefits should be decided in Brussels (Fligstein 2008).

As discussed earlier in this introduction, recent events have challenged this development. The refugee crisis of 2015 has led to a temporary reintroduction of border controls between member states. These measures are a consequence of an unresolved conflict over the extent to which EU countries should grant refugee status and protection to migrants and how the settlement of the migrants should be distributed. In Sweden the debate around migration has clearly been linked to the welfare state and to the so-called costs of open borders and a generous refugee policy, a reframing that potentially positions the migration issue as a matter for national authorities.

While these developments challenge a view of Europeanization as a linear process of progressive integration, research on Europeanization has clearly demonstrated a continuous rise and development of CSOs at the European level (e.g., Johansson and Kalm 2015). Umbrella organizations, platforms, and networks for CSOs have been established and tend to interact with other CSOs as well as with public institutions. Many of them have headquarters in Brussels. Among these actors, we also find CSOs engaged in social welfare issues like women's rights, poverty, homelessness, integration, racism, and so on. This may be seen as a direct effect of an increasing interest of EU institutions in social policy issues. As European integration has spread, the EU has gradually broadened its ambitions and increasingly approached social areas that have previously been national concerns (Heidenreich and Zeitlin 2009; Hvinden and Johansson 2007; Kvist and Saari 2007). A common social policy agenda has, in fact, for some time been the foundation for EU institutions' efforts to harmonize national policies. The process of setting a common agenda began as early as the 1980s; since the late 1990s a common strategy for a European employment policy has been in place.

Today there are EU policies in areas such as poverty, social exclusion, health care, and pensions (Borrás and Jacobsson 2004; Jacobsson and Johansson 2009). These regulations at the supranational level are often framed in terms of antidiscrimination and equal treatment rather than in terms of social rights linked to citizenship as is often the case in Sweden (cf. Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006). Because these areas are considered politically sensitive, the ambition has seldom been to produce binding legislation; however, the EU has sought to influence developments in member states by involving CSOs as a means of strengthening the EU's legitimacy and facilitating the implementation of supranational decisions (Saurugger 2007). Hence, although its mandate in the area of social policy is still limited, the EU has created new opportunities for CSOs by actively recruiting them in the effort to increase integration in this policy area and to legitimize

the EU as a democratic construction (Finke 2007; Heidbreder 2012, 2015; Kohler-Koch and Finke 2007). Political processes at the EU level, such as the antidiscrimination clause in the Amsterdam Treaty, the Open Method of Coordination on social policy, and the creation of national action plans on social inclusion, have all engaged domestic CSOs (see Erneberg 2015 for an overview). Still we have little knowledge about how these activities are linked to civil societies at the national level and to the domestic actors interacting within these networks at the EU level. This volume aims to contribute to filling this knowledge gap.

### **Researching Europeanization and Civil Society Organizations**

Research on EU civil society and CSOs operating at the EU level has expanded considerably over the past decade. Even if this research has mainly focused on what takes place in Brussels and less so on the Europeanization processes, they still have relevance for the topics raised in this book. There is extensive research on the democratic quality of an EU-based civil society and in particular on CSOs representing various interests at the EU level (e.g., Kohler-Koch 2009; Kröger 2013; Kröger and Friedrich 2012; Rodekamp 2014; Steffek and Hahn 2010; Steffek, Kissling, and Nanz 2008; Tomšič and Rek 2008; Trenz 2009). Scholars argue that the participation of CSOs follows a transmission belt model, meaning that EU-based CSOs could be transmitters of EU information to domestic members and/or actors while acting as a collector of knowledge and information from the domestic level and bringing it into the EU debate (see further discussion below). Authors in this volume have questioned this model in recent empirical research (e.g., Johansson and Lee 2014; Johansson and Schütze 2014). Johansson and Lee (2014, 412), for example, discuss the “representational gaps” between EU-based organizations and their national members and argue that only “a limited number of members might in practice exercise full participatory rights in internal authorization and accountability processes.”

Scholars have also explored the role played by EU institutions in promoting and interacting with civil society actors at various levels. Much research has been carried out on the governance arrangements used by the different EU institutions (mainly the EC) vis-à-vis CSOs (mainly those operating at the EU level) (Greenwood 2007a, 2007b; Kohler-Koch 2009; Smismans 2003, 2008; Trenz 2009). These scholarly debates have revealed the EC’s entrepreneurial role and shown that over the years it has both indirectly and directly mobilized and/or set up associations of civil society in various policy fields it has deemed relevant (Bouwen 2009; Coen and Richardson 2009; Kohler-Koch and Finke 2007; Sánchez-Salgado 2007). The EU’s forms of

financial, technical, and ideational support have encouraged scholars to talk of participatory engineering in order to capture this remarkable bureaucratic activism (Kohler-Koch and Finke 2007). Studies have also explored the EC's explicit preference for certain selected representative organizations at the EU level and pointed out its administrative as well as strategic preference for a limited set of peak organizations that are operating in Brussels and acting as the EC's selected partners (e.g., Armstrong 2002; Greenwood and Halpin 2007; Greenwood 2007b).

Another strand of research pays much more attention to strategies that CSOs, mainly interest groups operating at the EU level, deploy to make claims and seek political leverage. Studies demonstrate that EU-based CSOs tend to use insider strategies and to engage in activities such as lobbying, legal actions, expert opinions, position papers, conferences, and participation on various advisory or consultative committees rather than more-confrontational activities such as demonstrations and protests (Balme and Chabanet 2008; Cullen 2003; Kriesi, Tresch, and Jochum 2007; Sánchez-Salgado 2007; Saurugger 2006). Such strategies have mainly been used by the set of institutionalized CSOs operating in Brussels (Cullen 2010). Partly related to this line of research are the studies on the Europeanization of protest and social movement activities (e.g., della Porta and Caiani 2007, 2009; Imig and Tarrow 2001; Ruzza and Bozzini 2008; Teune 2010)—in other words, whether the claims and targets of social movements have a European dimension. This strand of research has seen the EU as an emerging political opportunity structure that international and domestic CSOs and social movements act on and react to (e.g., Marks and McAdam 1996). This structure includes, among other things, financial, political, and legal opportunities (Marks and McAdam 1996). Changes in the social and political environment might therefore bring about not only improved access to material resources, but also political and administrative elites' recognition as legitimate participants and an improved scope for political representation. The EU's advancements in fields such as environmental concerns, disability policies, and gender equality have given birth to a number of analyses of how the EU encourages agency in the forms of social movements or other types of transnational activism (e.g., Imig and Tarrow 2001). Findings suggest, among other things, homogenizing effects on social movement groups and organizations as they enter into the EU sphere and adopt similar organizational structures, high levels of professionalism, similar types of resources, and a politically neutral discourse (Ruzza 2011).

The literature on interest groups and social movements entails work that studies the impact of Europeanization on both CSOs and on the member states. One discussion concerns the extent to which the EU empowers



domestic CSOs by providing new avenues for influence, funding, and networking opportunities. Engaging in a multilevel game may allow CSOs to bring pressure on their national policymakers from the outside through the so-called boomerang effect (Keck and Sikkink 1998) or ping-pong effect (Zippel 2004), going back and forth from the EU to the national level with their demands. The EU has also been found to affect the domestic opportunity structures for CSOs. An effect of EU funding, for instance, has been a differentiation between the haves and have-nots in civil society where large organizations or organizations belonging to umbrella organizations often have the administrative capacity to apply for funding while smaller organizations do not (e.g., Rek 2010; Roth 2007).

Research about the EU's influence on Swedish CSOs and on Swedish organizations' activities at the EU level are scarce and seem to point in different, partly discordant directions. A study published in 2009 (Olsson et al. 2009) suggests that Europeanization in Sweden is quite modest because of the mismatch between the social democratic values so central to the Swedish model and the perceived character of the EU as an institution. Our own previous studies on the former EU-funded EQUAL Community Initiative (2000–6) suggest that quite a few Swedish voluntary organizations in the social welfare area have been able to mobilize EU funding and hence strengthen their position in their organizational field of activity (Scaramuzzino et al. 2010; Scaramuzzino 2012). Several of the initiatives within the structural funds have been based on requirements of partnerships between nonprofit, public, and private organizations, and participation in these partnerships has led to an (at least temporary) increase in financial resources for some of the organizations.

Because of an alleged mismatch between the EU and Sweden and the close relationships between Swedish CSOs and public institutions, Swedish organizations might be expected to be less incentivized to seek political influence and to mobilize resources at the European level. Domestic embeddedness might, however, also trigger Europeanization because organizations that have access to opportunity structures at the local and national levels more than organizations that do not have that access have the resources necessary for influencing and mobilizing at the European level. Furthermore, access to several layers of opportunity structures potentially diminishes the risk for organizations of becoming too dependent and eventually co-opted by local, national, and EU institutions. It should also be kept in mind that civil society is not a homogeneous, consensus-based, social field; rather, it is characterized by contention and competition (Johansson and Kalm 2015). For CSOs that are at odds with the normative stands of the Swedish state, Europeanization might actually appear to be a viable option for accessing resources, legitimacy, and potentially political influence, not only at the

European level but also in the domestic setting. We will 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.

### **Europeanization and the Swedish Model**

Research on the Europeanization of civil society suggests that the environment, and particularly the relationship to the national and local governments, sets the scope of conditions for CSOs' engagement with the EU (Beyers 2002; Buzogány 2013; Cram 2001). Sweden has always had an ambivalent relationship with the EU. Sweden has been a member of the EU since 1995, but this membership has never been uncontroversial. The referendum for joining the EU passed by only a small majority, and a proposal on joining the common currency in 2003 was turned down by the Swedish voters in another referendum.

In this sense Sweden represents yet another awkward partner in the EU family (Johansson 2003) following the same pattern as the UK in its "sense of detachedness and removal from EU institutions" (Olsson et al. 2009, 178). Some argue that the Swedish EU skepticism has its roots in a profound mismatch between the way in which the EU institutions are perceived and core values in the Swedish polity as institutionalized in the welfare model: "Whatever its claimed advantages in terms of economic development and employment generation, the EU has been seen as insufficiently open, democratic and social citizenship oriented, both in terms of the substance and style of its policies" (Olsson et al. 2009, 178).

Not least the Swedish popular movements, the backbone of organized civil society in the country, have been critical of potential changes brought by EU influence on national and local welfare policies (Olsson et al. 2009, 179). Accordingly, the social contract on which European integration is based—*informed by notions such as federalism and subsidiarity*—poses a threat to the way in which the Swedish model conceives the relationship between the state, the individual, and civil society (Trägårdh 2007). The Swedish civil society sector has been defined through the concept of popular movements rather than third sector, social economy, or other concepts used in central and southern Europe. The notion of popular movements emphasizes the democratic function of Swedish CSOs rather than their significance in economic terms, with a focus on membership and representativeness rather than on service production and employment (Olsson et al. 2009). However, despite a recognized strong role and responsibility of the state in crucial areas such as social welfare, Swedish civil society is vibrant

in terms of the number of organizations (Lundström and Wijkström 1997; Wijkström and Einarsson 2006), the civic engagement of citizens (Svedberg, von Essen, and Jegermalm 2010), and the creation of social trust (Trägårdh et al. 2013).

Swedish national identity is tightly linked to the welfare state and to a “Swedish model [that is] characterized by a particular form of statism built on a vision of a social contract between a strong and good state, on the one hand, and emancipated and autonomous individuals, on the other” (Trägårdh 2007, 27–28). The underlying idea is that the alliance between the state and the individual would liberate the latter from dependency on institutions in civil society such as the family, the churches, and charitable organizations. In line with this perspective on Sweden, cross-national comparisons of civil society have identified a specific Nordic, social democratic model characterized by extensive state-sponsored and state-delivered social welfare protections that leave little room for service-providing CSOs. Most organizations instead have a more prominent role as vehicles for expressions of political, social, or recreational interests (Salamon and Anheier 1998). Scandinavian civil society has hence traditionally functioned to “strengthen representative democracy through political socialization and a legitimacy-delivering corporatist arrangement” (Amnå 2006, 3). The participative and deliberative character of this model has been emphasized in which “not least the unions, the cooperative movement, and the employers’ organizations—co-govern Swedish society in close but free cooperation with the representatives of state” (Trägårdh 2007, 2).

The Swedish neo-corporatist welfare model has by tradition been based on close alliances between the state and civil society (Micheletti 1995; Lundström and Wijkström 1997; Lundström and Svedberg 2003). Up until the 1930s, most welfare service provision in Sweden was organized and delivered by traditional charity organizations. With the development of the welfare state, public authorities eventually took over many of these organizations’ social service provisions. In the social welfare domain, the division of responsibilities between the public and the civil society sector has been quite clear, even if it was never really formalized: while the public sector would provide the welfare services, the civil society sector would be advocating for interest groups’ rights, critically scrutinizing the functioning of the public sector, and formulating new ideas. This model earned strong support in public opinion, including within the civil society sector itself, and advocacy, evaluation, and innovation are the domains in which Swedish welfare organizations have been most active (Olsson et al. 2009; see also Lundström and Svedberg 2003; Lundström and Wijkström 1997). Swedish CSOs have, for instance, challenged the Swedish government regarding welfare rights and have been influential in pushing for workers’ rights, women’s

rights, and the rights of migrants, older and disabled people, and so forth (e.g., Lundström and Wijkström 1997; Micheletti 1995).

The often-noted similarities among the Nordic countries in terms of their welfare systems and in the role of their civil society can be related to similar societal features and historical developments concerning class structure, the role of the labor movements, and the role of the Lutheran church (e.g., Esping-Andersen 1990; Salamon and Anheier 1998; Trägårdh 2007). There has also been a tradition of inter-Nordic cooperation. This tradition of openness toward neighboring social-democratic countries coupled with a general suspicion of influences from countries belonging to different social and welfare models makes Sweden intriguing to study from a Europeanization perspective. However, European integration has coincided with important changes in the Swedish welfare system.

### **Europeanization of Swedish Civil Society between Continuity and Change**

Since becoming a member of the EU, the Swedish welfare state has undergone considerable shifts, and the terms and opportunities for Swedish CSOs have changed. This development consists of a whole new openness to the idea that people's needs for welfare can be satisfied in other ways than through the state—in other words, that responsibility for welfare can be divided among different actors, including CSOs (e.g., Hartman 2011; Svallfors 2015). The changes in the Swedish welfare system can be argued to be a product of both exogenous factors such as globalization, Europeanization, and international migration and of endogenous factors such as individualization, a weakening legitimacy of the welfare state, and demographic changes (Jaeger and Kvist 2003). It is remarkable that the debate around EU membership and the debate about the role of Swedish civil society took place at the same time in the 1990s. These heated debates also engaged the same actors, social movements, and political forces gathering around quite polarized positions. One side argued against EU membership and against a role of civil society as a service provider, and the other in favor of Swedish membership and for a liberalization of the Swedish welfare system (cf. Trägårdh 2007).

Whether these changes in the Swedish welfare state have simply coincided with EU membership or are a result of Europeanization is of course debatable. However, this does remind us that Europeanization might imply not only new opportunities that domestic actors can strategically choose to use, but also new forms of influence and regulation to which CSOs have to adapt. Today, the third sector in Sweden is recognized as critical for the future of care provision and, as many researchers have pointed out, there

has been a shift in which the service function is much more stressed—a redirection from voice to service (Lundström and Wijkström 2012). The government wants public, private, and third-sector producers to participate in all areas of the welfare system, albeit through publicly funded service production. External service delivery options have been made possible through reforms inspired by the principles of privatization and marketization, that have allowed for nonstate actors—both for-profit and nonprofit—to produce social welfare service on behalf of the public sector. In order to strengthen the third sector and to create an environment of diversity where public, private, and third-sector producers participate and compete in all areas of the welfare system, efforts have also been made to conclude general agreements between the public sector and different parts of the third sector (Johansson 2011; Johansson, Kassman, and Scaramuzzino 2011). However, there has been confusion and disagreement about roles and positions along with worries about how agreements of this kind will affect the independence and integrity of the organizations.

Some of these trends might actually be traced back to processes at the European level. The development toward a more pluralistic political system has, for example, been influenced by EU membership as well as by international best-practice models from outside the EU framework (e.g., the Swedish compact; Johansson and Johansson 2012). New concepts and organizational logics have been introduced to the Swedish civil society sector, not least through the many funding programs of the ESF such as the EQUAL Community Initiative (Scaramuzzino et al. 2010).

Swedish CSOs act in a transformed political environment where processes of European integration contribute to a development where the national setting is just one among many in a complex and multilayered political context. The once unchallenged role of the nation-state is hence downplayed through external influences from supranational governance and international regulations, while at the same time the political arena is opened for a number of new societal actors (Hvinden and Johansson 2007).

While the social welfare policy area is still highly dependent on national regulations, the municipalities (*kommuner*) enjoy far-reaching autonomy in Sweden. The Swedish welfare system in fact embraces important local variations. The extent to which social services have been privatized, for example, vary between different municipalities (Svallfors 2015). This means that Europeanization might be more or less evident in different parts of the country, a variance that research also suggests. The institutionalization of the concept of social economy through EU funding seems, for instance, to be much more pronounced in the northern rural regions of Sweden where “EU regional and local development support is disproportionately concentrated” (Olsson et al. 2009, 167). It is in this changing environment that

Swedish CSOs must be understood if we want to grasp the processes and mechanisms behind Europeanization.

## **Our Contribution**

This book is a product of the joint effort of a research team linked to the research program *Beyond the Welfare State—Europeanization of Swedish Civil Society Organizations (EUROCIV)* financed by the Swedish Research Council. The program adopted a multimethodological design, including a survey among Swedish CSOs, answered by more than 2,700 organizations, and a number of qualitative case studies.

We are interested in whether and to what extent CSOs are interacting with institutions and organizations at the European level, the forms and conditions of such interactions, and the versatile dynamics that Europeanization involves and produces. European integration implies adaptation to common rules and norms. We argue that Sweden is a particularly interesting case of Europeanization because the Swedish view on the role of the state, civil society, and solidarity stands in contrast with many values at the base of the European integration project. The perceived mismatch between the norms and values informing the Swedish model and the EU integration program, as well as recent developments in the Swedish welfare state, makes Sweden particularly interesting for the study of Europeanization. It also motivates a focus on the policy area of social welfare. We make a broad interpretation of social welfare and include not only service production or charity work but also mobilization and organization of marginalized groups and advocacy for their rights.

Some of the organizations that this book deals with could be portrayed as lacking conventional organizational resources such as finances, administrative structures, legal expertise, contacts, lobbying skills, and large membership bases. Due to their representation of marginal groups, they might have difficulties in attracting resources from members or from external funders. Such organizations stand in sharp contrast to much common understanding of what it takes for domestic organizations (profit and nonprofit) to successfully mobilize on the EU level.

We understand Europeanization as a two-way process in which the EU influences domestic actors, but where domestic actors also make use of the EU. This approach should not be understood as focusing on the way in which the EU affects the nation-state and vice-versa, but rather as highlighting the interaction between agents and structures. The focus will be on Swedish CSOs as agents in an institutional context that is placed on different geographical levels—from the local to the European—and that provides

both opportunities and constraints. We hence interpret Europeanization as a process that might be both enabling and constraining for CSOs, producing both opportunities and increased regulation.

We also want to contribute to the discussion about Europeanization by means of a multidimensional approach that, we argue, gives us a nuanced understanding of the processes involved. We acknowledge that Europeanization might encompass several dimensions, so we have developed a typology that enables us to distinguish different aspects of Europeanization, including regulatory, financial, and organizational influence as well as discursive, participatory, and identity impacts (see chapter 1). Our definition of Europeanization is hence broad and includes many different activities that relate to the European level. We are interested in the linkages between Swedish organizations and the social fields at the European level; those linkages imply a broader approach to Europe than merely the EU institutions (see also Johansson and Kalm 2015). From the point of view of many CSOs that we discuss in this book, the boundary between the EU and Europe and between Europeanization and internationalization may be blurred or even irrelevant.

Furthermore, we consider CSOs as a set of institutions carrying different, sometimes opposing, normative frames. Civil society is hence a social sphere characterized by contention rather than consensus. Much research has focused on the relation between civil society and the state. Our approach is interactional and pays attention to dynamics of contention, competition, and cooperation between CSOs.

This introduction is followed by a two-chapter section made up of a theoretical chapter and a context chapter. The second section, also comprising three chapters, presents and discusses results from the EURO CIV survey while the third section presents a set of qualitative case studies. All of the empirical chapters explore different types and dimensions of Europeanization: in other words, regulatory, financial, organizational, discursive, participatory and identity Europeanization, drawing on the typology presented in chapter 1. The chapters are based on different types of data and focus on different types of organizations and policy issues ranging from labor market integration, gender equality, and prostitution, to health and consumer rights. For the purpose of addressing these topics each chapter develops its own theoretical framework, all more or less explicitly drawing on the political opportunity structure approach. This approach is combined with agency-focused theoretical perspectives and concepts such as resource mobilization, framing and so on, in order to also address the organizations as agents of Europeanization. In Section IV, Concluding Remarks, the editors briefly sum up the results of the studies, relating them to the overall themes of the volume outlined in this chapter.

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