

PREFACE

Carlo Ruzza

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

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

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

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

Carlo Ruzza (MA SUNY, PhD Harvard) is Professor of Political Sociology at the University of Trento in Italy where he teaches courses on European and International Politics and on Political Sociology. He has previously taught at the Universities of Leicester, Essex and Surrey. His research interests focus on populism, social movements, right wing parties and European Studies. His book publications include with Stefano Fella *Reinventing the Italian Right: Populism, Post-Fascism and Territorial Identity* (Routledge, 2009) and *Europe and Civil Society* (Manchester University Press, 2007). He has also published widely in refereed journals and published several edited books.