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Civil Society Elites

Exploring the Composition, Reproduction,
Integration, and Contestation of
Civil Society Actors at the Top

Edited by

Håkan Johansson · Anna Meeuwisse

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Preface

This book is the result of collaborative efforts to combine research on civil society and elites. The concept of ‘civil society elites’ is based on our experiences and reflections during fieldwork in Europe. As we attended conferences and conducted interviews with civil society representatives and political leaders, we noticed that a few dominant civil society organisations consistently held significant power in diverse contexts. We also observed that the same individuals held multiple leadership positions, representing different organisations at different times. We began to conceptualise these leaders as civil society elites, which proved to be a fruitful analytical framework.

Many of the contributors to this volume participated in a research project at Lund University, Sweden, supported by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (www.rj.se). The project, titled ‘Civil Society Elites? Comparing Elite Composition, Reproduction, Integration and Contestation in European Civil Societies’ (M17-0188:1), included studies of civil society elites in four European countries (Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK) and at the EU level. All research conducted as part of this project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (for detailed information see www.civilsocietyelites.lu.se). We gratefully acknowledge the Foundation’s generous support, which has made this book and extensive research activities possible.

In addition, we would like to thank our colleagues who contributed their expertise on civil society elites in the United States, Denmark, and Hong Kong. Their insights have helped to make this book an original contribution to the field.

Lund, Sweden
December 2023

Håkan Johansson
Anna Meeuwisse

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Abbreviations

ABF	Arbetarnas bildningsförbund (Workers' Educational Association, Swedish)
ACRI	Associazione delle Casse di Risparmio Italiane (Italian organisation representing Foundations of banking origin and Savings Banks)
AGRI	Parliamentary committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
AOF	Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (Workers' Educational Association, Danish)
AOI	Associazione delle Organizzazioni Italiane di cooperazione e solidarietà internazionale (Association of Italian Organisations for International Co-operation and Solidarity)
BEUC	Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (European Consumer Organisation)
CDP	Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (Italian investment bank)
CEFA	Comitato Europeo per la Formazione e l'Agricoltura (European Committee for Training and Agriculture)
CEJA	Conseil Européen des Jeunes Agriculteurs (European Young Farmers)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer

xii Abbreviations

CIVOS	Civilsamhällets Organisationer i Samverkan (Swedish association promoting cooperation between civil society organisations)
COCIS	Coordinamento delle Organizzazioni non governative per la Cooperazione Internazionale allo Sviluppo (Italian coordination of civil society organisations for international development cooperation)
COPA-COGECA	European farmers and European agri-cooperatives
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Compagnia di San Paolo (Society of Saint Paul)
DJØF	Danmarks Jurist- og Økonomforbund (Danish Association of Lawyers and Economists)
ENVI	Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EXCO	Executive Council
FISH	Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap (Italian Federation for Overcoming Handicap)
FOB	Fondazione di Origine Bancaria (Italian Banking Foundation)
FOCSIV	Federazione degli organismi di volontariato internazionale di ispirazione cristiana (Federation of international Christian-inspired civil society organisations, Italian)
FOF	Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund (Association of Popular Enlightenment, Danish)
GenEd	General Education (required curriculum that makes up the foundation of an undergraduate degree)
HKJC	Hong Kong Jockey Club
HSBC	Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation
KFO	Kooperationens Förhandlingsorganisation (Co-operative Bargaining Organisation, Swedish)
LegCo	Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
MCL	Movimento Cristiano Lavoratori (Christian Workers Movement, Italian)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament

MRI	Mission-Related Investments
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIW	The Act on the National Freedom Institute (Centre for the Development of Civil Society, Polish)
OFOP	The Polish Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations
ORDC	Oslo Register Data Class Scheme
Philea	Philanthropy Europe Association
PiS	The Law and Justice Party (Polish)
PO	Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform, Polish political party)
PTA	Parent–Teacher Association
Quango	Quasi-NGO
SAF	Strategic Action Field
SISU	Svenska Idrottsrörelsens Studieförbund (The Swedish Sports Movement Study Association)
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SPLOT	The Polish Non-Governmental Organisations Supporting Network
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WWF	World Wildlife Foundation
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association

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1

Civil Society Elites: An Introduction

Håkan Johansson and Anna Meeuwisse

Introduction

This book introduces the concept of civil society elites. Despite a long fascination in the social sciences regarding the processes leading to the concentration of power and resources in different arenas of social, political, and financial life, scholars have not explored this concept, the possibility of a civil society elite, or the implications of this for the roles that civil society can and is expected to play. The reason for this may be that the concept comes across as counter-intuitive, or even paradoxical. It goes against mainstream understandings of civil society as a sphere for citizen mobilisation and participation. However, contemporary civil society shows anti-democratic tendencies, and an increase in illiberal civil society has been noted. These conceptual inconsistencies and societal developments make civil society elites even more relevant and scientifically important to explore. Through a series of theoretical and empirical

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investigations into how civil society elites can be understood and examined, and in which situations they are challenged, this book provides novel insights into current debates on elites, populism, and the role of civil society in contemporary liberal democracies.

Civil Society in Transformation

It is widely held that civil society performs key functions in liberal democracies (Diamond, 1994; Habermas, 1998). Scholars, activists, and politicians alike praise its significance as a sphere for citizen mobilisation and participation in-between political elections and alongside political institutions (Keane, 2009; Rosanvallon & Goldhammer, 2008). Through associations, movements, cooperatives, charities, and philanthropy, civil society functions as an intermediary between states and citizens. A vibrant, inclusive, and pluralistic civil society enables citizens to come together and mobilise common concerns, without which citizens risk losing trust in political institutions and decision-making procedures. It is therefore no surprise that the concept of civil society is associated with values of human rights and civility (Shils, 1991), bottom-up processes of self-organisation (Tocqueville, 2003), and deliberative decision-making (Cohen & Arato, 1992).

At the same time, civil society shows elitist tendencies as resources are concentrated into the hands of a few powerful organisations and their leaders (Altermark et al., 2022b; Nye, 1977). Civil society organisations (hereafter CSOs) build hierarchies that form civil society elites who are socialised into powerful institutions (Michels, 1962; Mills, 2000) and who interact and integrate with other elite groups. Research points to a growing concentration of political and economic resources in the hands of a small group of major organisations (Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020). Civil society actors like the Red Cross, Caritas, Barnados, Oxfam, and the World Wildlife Fund are all recognised brands with millions of members, generous donors, extensive turnover, and significant access to corridors of power (Guo & Saxton, 2020). Their leaders tend to enjoy status and prestige from other civil society leaders, the public at large, and leading politicians. Some are active at

national levels, while others are part of a ‘European’ or ‘global civil society’ and frequently meet with political and business leaders to discuss societal challenges and the role that civil society can play (Johansson & Kalm, 2015). Their powerful positions allow them to shape decisions that affect not only their members and beneficiaries but also society more generally (Guo & Saxton, 2020).

Oligarchic tendencies (Michels, 1962), in the form of the widening gap between leaders and their constituents (e.g. Hwang & Powell, 2009; Van Deth & Maloney, 2012), have increased the importance of these actors. Major CSOs offer a competitive salary, specialised posts, and promising career prospects (Bovens & Wille, 2017; Hilton et al., 2013). Notions like ‘professionalisation’ and ‘NGOisation’ suggest increasingly distant relations between leaders and members. As professionals take over key areas of decision-making in major CSOs, beneficiaries and members risk being reduced to ‘donors’, ‘checkbook participants’, or ‘credit card suppliers’ (e.g. Skocpol, 2003). These trends suggest greater disparities and social distance between members and civil society elites who are well-educated professionals or philanthropists and who feel at home in elite circles (Heylen et al., 2020; Jordan & Maloney, 2007). At the same time, the elected presidents, hired CEOs, and wealthy philanthropists owe their status and power to the democratic expectations of civil society.

As a sign of elite domination, we find contestations inside civil society on who is a legitimate civil society leader. Today’s activists and movements not only mobilise against felt injustice caused by states, markets, or other elite groups but also claim that civil society leaders and elites must ‘hold up the mirror’ to themselves (Civicus, 2020). Rather than being a vibrant sphere where people come together to address common concerns, these critics argue that civil society is shaped by closure and discrimination on the basis of class, gender, and ethnic lines, thus making it difficult for many people to engage with or take up leadership roles in civil society. Scholars have also found that leaders of major CSOs tend to be white, older, male, and educated at elite universities (Dale & Breeze, 2022; Gibelman, 2000; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021). These critics may want to revitalise democracy by developing new, more inclusive ways of working in civil societies (Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017), but the challengers may also be

politically driven or driven by competition for resources or leadership positions (Engelstad et al., 2019).

In today's political climate, civil society leaders are increasingly accused of being partisan political actors disguised as non-partisan civic actors (Brechenmacher & Carothers, 2018; Toepler et al., 2020). In particular, international organisations such as the United Nations and the European Union, and their affiliated CSOs and leaders, are distrusted. At the same time, critics of these institutions and CSOs have increasingly set up their own CSOs and are also networking at the supranational level. Attacks on liberal civil society are mobilised by various right-wing populist actors who actively oppose liberal CSOs. Following a populist frame, major CSOs—and their leaders—are portrayed as extremely powerful, bureaucratic, and unresponsive to the problems of 'the people' (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Kalm & Meeuwisse, 2020; Ruzza & Sanchez Salgado, 2021). Paradoxically, populist challengers who claim to represent the people often pursue political changes that also concentrate power in the hands of a narrow elite (Engelstad et al., 2019; Ivanovska Hadjievaska, 2022). It is therefore important to avoid the sweeping and often unfounded accusations against actors in civil society that are now often made by right-wing populists for political reasons to justify a 'shrinking civil space'. The political and cultural context in which civil society is embedded greatly influences the policies that are pursued and the consequences they have.

Aim and Purpose

The purpose of this book is to theoretically explore and empirically analyse civil society elites. We investigate civil society elites as an elite group alongside other elite groups (e.g. political or economic elites) and address questions like who the elected presidents, hired CEOs, and wealthy philanthropists are, where they come from, and what factors explain their power and privileged position. We define civil society elites as actors 'who have vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource' that is valued by others (Khan, 2012a, p. 362). Civil society elites occupy positions that provide them with access, control, or possession of valuable

resources that bring advantage and influence inside or outside of civil societies (Hartmann, 2007). However, unlike other elite groups their position is inherently paradoxical because civil society elites represent members, beneficiaries, and constituencies against powerful groups, while at the same time benefiting from their elevated position because they are socialised into elite circles. This position raises questions about whether these leaders embrace particular civil society values and about how well they represent their constituencies.

This book takes a comparative approach and investigates civil society elites across national contexts and thereby draws attention to how structural and contextual features shape the position that civil society elites occupy. Contributions include studies of countries such as Denmark, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the US, the UK (including a study of Hong Kong), and civil society elites at the EU level as a reflection of the supra-national characteristics of civil society elites (see also Altermark et al., 2022b; Johansson et al., 2022; Korolczuk, 2022; Santilli, 2022; Uhlin & Arvidson, 2022 for related studies). By using different research methods and studying civil society elites in different countries and contexts around the world, this book draws attention to the importance of social, political, and economic structures and the particular organisation and orientation of civil societies in different countries. Following discussions on civil society regimes that have shaped comparative civil society research (Salamon & Anheier, 1997, 1998; Salamon et al., 2003), this book seeks to advance knowledge on the contextual factors that shape civil society elites.

Key Contributions

This book makes a series of original contributions. First, through our analytical and empirical explorations of the concept of civil society elites, we seek to bridge elite studies and civil society studies. Elite research has seen an upsurge in recent years (Cousin et al., 2018; Gulbrandsen, 2019; Khan, 2012b, 2016; Savage & Hjelbrekke, 2021), and there are many reasons why social sciences should continue to pay attention to the people at the top of institutional orders (Denord et al., 2020; Engelstad et al. 2019; Korsnes et al., 2017; Savage & Williams, 2008; Vogel et al.,

2019). Elite theory posits that a minority of individuals hold the most power in society and are at least partially separated from a state's democratic election process. Scholars define elites as having key positions in powerful organisations and whose resources and power are institutionally and organisationally embedded (Michels, 1962; Scott, 1996, 2008). Elite research distinguishes between different types of elite groups. Studies into an economic elite reflect the distribution of economic resources and rising inequalities (Friedman & Laurison, 2019; Friedman & Savage, 2017), for instance tied to the 1%, the 0.1%, or the super-rich (Piketty, 2013). Studies into political elites (presidents or ministers) address political leaders' ambitions to tie resources and power under personal control (Best & Higley, 2018; Best & Hoffmann-Lange, 2018; Vogel et al., 2019) and how this is associated with declining trust in public institutions, decreasing political participation, and growing populism (Conti et al., 2016). Few, however, have investigated civil society elites, although elite philanthropy and private donations have been a long-standing feature of most civil societies, suggesting that there have always been elites in civil society (Barman, 2017; Maclean et al., 2021; Vogel, 2006; Zald & Lounsbury, 2010).

Civil society research mainly conceptualises civil society as a sphere for citizen participation, mobilisation, and expression of interest against states and markets (Alexander, 2006). While such functions are certainly relevant, both theoretically and empirically oriented civil society research tend to downplay the competition and conflicts among civil society actors over resources and the ordering, stratification, and hierarchies among civil society actors (collective or individual) that emerge (see, however, Gulbrandsen, 2020; Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020). Liberal civil society theory tends to regard civil society as something normatively good, thereby downplaying conflicts and power inequalities. Although Marxist and Gramscian theorists see civil society as a sphere of indirect domination entailing both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces (Buttigeg, 1995), elites have not received much attention here either. Similarly, post-structural or Foucauldian-inspired perspectives appear to disregard the idea of civil society elites (Dean & Villadsen, 2016).

Moreover, much civil society research has sought explanations and understandings of civil society, its actors, and its practices in states or in markets. Empirical studies that come under labels such as third sector, non-profit, or voluntary sector studies have focused on what takes place within organisations and have paid less attention to leaders of major CSOs and movements. This book offers a different perspective as we investigate competition over valuable resources, forms of social stratification, and power asymmetries inside the field of civil society. This suggests that knowledge on civil society's democratic potential cannot only be sought after in studies of what government or businesses do (or do not do), but must also include how civil society is internally structured.

The concept of civil society elites allows us to understand transformation processes in civil society differently. While many scholars have acknowledged the growing divisions between actors in the sector, divisions between leaders and members, and increasing ideological polarisation, mainly driven by external actors, few scholars have captured these as trends of elitism. Much previous research has examined how changing relations between states, markets, and civil societies affect CSOs and social movements, but few have focused attention on those who lead large organisations and movements and the power and influence they can exert because of such transformational processes. This book therefore provides and promotes knowledge about the mechanisms behind elitisation processes as a new approach in public and academic debates about the transformation of civil societies.

Themes of Investigation

This book puts forward four broad themes for empirical and theoretical inquiry of civil society elites, namely the *composition*, *reproduction*, *integration*, and *contestation* of civil society elites. Based on a wide range of empirical cases and original cross-country investigations, we will be able to draw conclusions on the phenomenon of civil society elites beyond current debates on civil society regimes, country models, or political contexts. Each theme is analytically separable, yet empirically integrated, and thus constitutes the logic by which the book is organised.

Civil Society Elite Composition

Elite composition constitutes a cornerstone in elite research because it attracts attention to the social profile of people at the top of different social orders. Elite research has typically focused on types and models of elite groups, often in a comparative fashion. This includes the investigation of national models of elites and their composition, size, and formation related to political, social, and cultural systems (Dahl, 1961; Mills, 2000; Useem, 1984). Much research has explored national elite types aimed at country case analyses and cross-country comparisons (e.g. Gulbrandsen & Engelstad, 2005; Larsen, 2016; Ruostetsaari, 2007).

A series of chapters in this book compare civil society elite composition across countries and civil society regimes. In Chap. 2, Sevelsted and Lunding investigate the composition of civil society elites in Denmark. The chapter gives an original historical account on the changing nature of civil society elites using data from the Danish Who's Who since the start of the twentieth century. The chapter notes that the Danish civil society elite has a more elite background and that more of them were born in the capital than other elites. They are increasingly well integrated with the state and the education sector, but to a lesser extent with politics. This historical account thus shows that composition, reproduction, and integration are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Chapter 3, by Lee and Scaramuzzino, takes off where the previous ended. Instead of addressing elite composition in a historical sense, Lee and Scaramuzzino provide an original comparison of civil society elite composition in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK and in connection to the general population. The chapter explores an elite survey with leaders of top CSOs in the abovementioned four countries and investigates the so-called 'civil society elite-masses gap'. The authors draw attention to the paradoxical position of civil society elites, who are expected to be representative of the people despite the exclusive social composition of the top-level leadership strata.

In Chap. 4, Santilli and Scaramuzzino explore elite composition from a methodological point of view. Alongside studies of elites at the top of institutional orders, the so-called positional method in elite research, they

suggest that civil society elites should also be captured through a reputational approach and an analysis of claims-making. The chapter explores these different approaches in the context of Italian civil society and investigates what elite composition each model captures. Their application finds that method selection is crucial regarding the key question on drawing the horizontal and vertical boundaries of an elite.

Civil Society Elite Reproduction

Studies into elite reproduction fall back on the distinction between reproduction and circulation, where the former suggests stability at the top and the latter suggests changes within a group of elites. Michels (1962), who studied trade unions and the German Social Democratic Party, pointed to elite reproduction when new groups were assimilated with old groups due to socialisation into organisations and leadership (Diefenbach, 2019; Heylen et al., 2020). With regard to elite circulation, Pareto (1991) argued that history constitutes a ‘graveyard of aristocracies’ as elite groups are always replaced by new elites. Others have put more stress on the significance of class structures or educational systems as factors that drive elite reproduction and homogeneity at the top (Hartmann, 2000; Karabel, 2005; Khan, 2012b, 2005; van Zanten, 2014). Scholars have also investigated how associations, social clubs, and social networks allow and/or restrict access into elite groups and top positions (Bond, 2012; Cornwell & Dokshin, 2014; Denord et al., 2011; Kadushin, 1995). Some have focused on norms, attitudes, and preferences as means for selecting some while excluding others (Ellersgaard et al., 2019; Ruostetsaari, 2007, 2015). Others have investigated leadership training as a mechanism of elite reproduction of civil society leaders (Altermark et al., 2022a; Ivanovska Hadjievaska et al., 2022).

Three chapters in this book investigate civil society elite reproduction. In Chap. 5, Altermark and Johansson provide an analysis into prizes and awards as a means by which civil society leaders are consecrated into a group of extraordinary citizens in society. However, they find that such consecration differs across national contexts. Civil society elites are praised by the state (through royal honours or presidential medals) in

some cases, while they are praised by their peers (civil society prizes and awards) in others. Following Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, the authors claim that these patterns lead to different modes of elite reproduction.

In Chap. 6, Voyer addresses civil society elite reproduction through a different approach as she investigates the social and cultural reproduction of economic elites as they engage as volunteers in elementary schools in the city of New York. Rather than investigating the reproduction of a civil society elite, she shows that civic activities and arenas allow a social glue that binds other elite groups together and provide a means for economic elites to legitimise their wealth through their charitable work.

In Chap. 7, Chi Lai expands this further through an analysis of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. She shows that the club developed into one of the world's largest charities and functioned as a place for bringing economic and political elites together as an elite of civil society. The empirical material for her chapter consists of an analysis of club leaders' personal and professional backgrounds, showing stability at the top for more than a century. Chi Lai finds that civil society elites come from privileged backgrounds and with extensive access to valuable resources, such as money or political capital, and that voluntary engagement and key leadership in CSOs binds them even closer together.

Civil Society Elite Integration

Integration is a central concept in elite research, often related to studies of elite interaction and interlock (Burris, 2005; Edling et al., 2014; Gulbrandsen, 2012). Here we find Mills' classic notion of 'the power elite' (2000) referring to elite integration across different sectors. Notions like 'revolving doors' or 'pantouflage' offer a different approach as they stress mobility between sectors (van Zanten, 2014). Others have put more stress on elite integration as a practice as elites engage in loose networks and shift positions (Wedel, 2009, 2017), for instance, through notions like boundary crossing and boundary-spanning practices as elites move between elite positions in different sectors or fields (Lewis, 2008, 2012; Reed, 2012). Studies into elite philanthropy is illustrative as

philanthropists take up key positions on boards (Ostrower, 2002) and by doing so exchange money for the ‘do good’ capital that civil society offers (Dean, 2020; Maclean et al., 2021). Some have also studied civil society elite integration, for instance, tied to EU institutions (Uhlin & Arvidson, 2022).

In a series of chapters, the authors analyse patterns of elite integration and factors enhancing and/or restricting integration across sectors and groups. In Chap. 8, Arvidson and Uhlin investigate the motivation of elite boundary crossing and how this leads to inter-elite integration. The authors provide an analysis of drivers and motivations related to an elite boundary-crossing career and find three ideal types of border crossers, namely elites who move to impose values from their sector of origin, elites who leave a sector where they no longer feel at home, and elites who move back and forth across sector boundaries to gain influence.

In Chap. 9, Arrigoni investigates a particular type of Italian foundation, foundations of banking origin (Fobs), as a case of elite integration. She illustrates how a set of people, who are already powerful in other fields, constitute themselves as a new political elite by virtue of their leadership role in civil society. Her prosopographic study shows what fields they came from and the capital they possessed before entering elite roles in Italian civil society. However, instead of defining them as moving from one field to another, Arrigoni proposes that these types of civil society elites gain their power from mixing logics from different fields and by operating both within and outside of formal structures. They form an interstitial elite in between fields.

In Chap. 10, Lee, Platek, and Scaramuzzino pay interest to a classic theme in elite integration, namely interlocking boards. The authors analyse the inter-organisational networks emerging from interlocking leaders among the most resource-rich national-level CSOs in four countries. Based on a social network analysis, the authors find small components of tightly connected organisations in the Italian and Polish cases, mainly around similar policy areas. In Sweden and in the UK, they find a handful of key CSOs that link the majority of the resource-rich organisations, thus occupying powerful network positions.

Contestation of Civil Society Elites

Elites are contested because their resources and positions are desired by others. Elites face counter-elites, referring to individuals whose 'views and goals differ significantly from those of the ruling body of a country' (Sekeris, 2017, p. 152). Due to the reproduction of elites and their protective practices, new non-institutional challenger actors often arise (Graff & Korolczuk, 2022; Hutter & Borbath, 2019; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Civil society leaders have almost by default been understood as elite challengers, as 'non-established elites', or as 'counter-elites' (Domhoff, 2009; Etzioni-Halevy, 1993, 2001). However, the boundaries have been blurred by the rise of populism (Engelstad et al., 2019) as populist leaders claim to be by and for 'the people' and accuse civil society of being elitist (Korolczuk, 2022) and have investigated the divides between conservative and liberal elites (Kalm & Meeuwisse, 2022).

In a series of three chapters, this book investigates by whom and on what grounds civil society elites are challenged. We use the term 'elite contestation' in a dual fashion because civil society elites can be contested while they themselves contest other elite groups. In Chap. 11, Kalm and Meeuwisse explore what types of contestations civil society elites face across Europe. The background to their investigation is the major structural trends of a shrinking civic space and marketisation processes. The chapter benefits from a survey of civil society elites in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. Kalm and Meeuwisse find that the elites seem to be challenged most often from within their own organisations and on professional rather than ideological grounds. More profound contestations tend to be directed at the organisations they lead rather than at them as leaders. The differences observed reflect the structural orientation of national civil societies.

In Chap. 12, Korolczuk explores elite contestation in a particular fashion as she investigates the increased pressure on liberal and left-leaning civil society actors by the state. Instead of addressing civil society elites as challenged by other civil society groups, this chapter analyses the strategies employed by the ruling party in Poland to marginalise the position

of some civil society actors while promoting others. The chapter finds that although the state has limited tools to promote elite change within civil society, its challenges of independent CSOs contributes to the process of democratic erosion, which undermines democratic values and civil society as an independent sphere in society.

In Chap. 13, Landorff investigates elite challenges as competition over valuable positions in institutionalised fields. Through an empirical investigation of the European Parliament's public hearings in the field of animal welfare, the chapter explores which civil society actors occupy incumbent elite positions and which civil society actors act as their challengers. The chapter shows how animal welfare organisations act as challengers to established civil society practices in the European Parliament by using the Intergroup as a venue to facilitate cooperation, resource concentration, and access to political elites beyond official parliamentary structures.

In the concluding Chap. 14, Johansson and Meeuwisse use Michels' concept of 'oligarchic elites' and Mills' theory of a 'power elite' to reflect on the volume's main findings and the paradoxical meaning of the concept of civil society elites. For example, the two approaches prove useful in distinguishing between the elites *of* civil society ('oligarchic elites') and the elites *in* civil society ('power elites'). Some themes for further research on civil society elites are also suggested.

The volume also contains an appendix that describes the data produced in the research programme 'Civil Society Elites? Comparing Elite Composition, Reproduction, Integration and Contestation in European Civil Societies', on which several of the chapters in the volume are based.

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Part I

Civil Society Elite Composition



2

The Danish Civil Society Elite 1910–2020: Continuity, Reproduction and Integration

Anders Sevelsted and Jacob Aagaard Lunding

Introduction

Several scholars have described how elites act *in* civil society. Elites engage with civil society to gain social capital through meeting places such as clubs or charities (Mills, 1999). The rich gain symbolic benefits by engaging in charity (Maclean et al., 2021), especially high-status causes like museums and universities (Monier, 2019; Ostrower, 1995). They also get to mingle with actors and celebrities (Brockington, 2014). Less attention, however, has been paid to the elites *of* civil society, that is, the elite that is defined by its leadership within civil society. As described by Michels at the start of the twentieth century (Michels, 1968) and in the introduction to this book, organised civil society tends to build its own elite.

Because these elites claim to be working on behalf of society and vulnerable groups, it is of both academic and public interest to understand who the leaders of civil society organisations (hereafter CSOs) are.

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Transparency and accountability are furthered by knowing this elite's descriptive characteristics (gender, age, education, class background, geography, etc.), the causes they support, their reproduction, and their integration with the rest of the elite.

In this chapter, we explore the causes, composition, reproduction, and integration of civil society elites in Denmark. We analyse the following questions: (i) What types of causes have Danish civil society elites historically been engaged in? (ii) How has the composition and reproduction of this elite changed over time? (iii) How integrated has the civil society elite been with the general elite and other sector elites in Denmark? These questions are answered by using historical data from three publications of the Danish Who's Who (1910, 1965, and 2020) and performing social network analysis (SNA).

We will first review the literature on civil society elites in general and the Danish and Nordic civil society elites specifically. We then introduce the characteristics of historical Danish civil society before we describe the study's operationalisation, method, and data. Then follows the analysis of causes, composition, reproduction, and integration of the historical Danish civil society elite before we conclude and discuss the findings.

Literature on Civil Society and Elites

The *elites of civil society* perspective focuses on the elite of the central organisations of the sector. Classically, Michels described the estrangement of the elite of political parties (Michels, 1968), and Mills portrayed union leaders as a sub-elite that stood between the elite and the masses (Mills, 2001). More recent studies have portrayed this elite as taking part in the general elite exchanges of economic and social resources (Gronbjerg, 1998; Ostrower, 1995; Useem, 1987, 1988), while others have found less integration through board interlocks than in other sectors (Moore et al., 2002).

In Denmark and Scandinavia, academic interest has overwhelmingly focused on the relationship between civil society and the state at the

organisational or the sector level. This is perhaps unsurprising because from the perspective of ‘crowding out’ theories (Boli & Wuthnow, 1991) it constitutes something of a paradox that the emergence of large welfare states has not led to decreased volunteering or donations in social-democratic regimes. Quite the opposite has occurred, and when looking at the general population, the Nordic countries along with the Netherlands score the highest on these parameters (Henriksen et al., 2019). If one measures Nordic civil societies in terms of volume, organisational density, local organisational activity, and number of volunteers, the sector is large (Boje et al., 2006; Ibsen et al., 2008; Selle & Wollebæk, 2010).

The emergence of welfare states has, however, formed the opportunity structures for civic engagement. Whereas volunteering in the US is oriented towards the poor and people in need, Danish volunteering is oriented towards leisure activities and political engagement such as political parties or advocacy. Donations are typically small, and there is a high degree of gender equality (Henriksen et al., 2019). This also means that measured in terms of paid employees, the Nordic sectors are small when compared to Germany or France (Salamon & Anheier, 1998; Salamon et al., 2003).

Understandably, then, plenty of scholars have studied the development of the relations between Nordic civil society and the state in the past 150 years (Bundesden et al., 2001; Henriksen & Bundesden, 2004; Klausen & Selle, 1995; Kuhnle & Selle, 1992; Lundström & Svedberg, 2003; Selle & Wollebæk, 2010; Trägårdh, 2007a, b, 2010). This has, however, led to a neglect of relations to other sectors (Henriksen et al., 2019). Moreover, an elite focus is absent—probably due to the mostly egalitarian and negotiated character of the sector. A single study has shown the centrality of union leaders in the Danish elite network (Ibsen et al., 2021). Non-contentious third sector organisations are only represented to a very small degree in the Danish elite, with only a few umbrella organisations (Steinitz et al., 2019).

In the following, we sketch the historical development of Danish civil society before turning to issues of method.

Historical Danish Civil Society

Present-day Danish civil society is part of the Nordic welfare state regime. It has high public social welfare spending and a non-profit sector that is small in terms of employees but large in terms of volunteers. Volunteers are mostly engaged in sports and leisure activities (Henriksen et al., 2019). At the risk of oversimplification, this state of affairs can be boiled down to four key developments (Sevelsted, 2022). First, there is the influence of the traditional elites of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century absolutist state and emerging civil society. With the 1849 constitution that gave the vote to propertied men over the age of 40, the bourgeoisie came into power and were faced with a growing urban proletariat. Public and private relief were mutually constitutive in supporting, deterring, and disciplining the poor. ‘Pioneer philanthropy’ targeted disabled groups and health issues (Henriksen & Bundesen, 2004).

Second, there was the influence of the classic social movements of the late nineteenth century, especially the labour movement, but also the women’s movement, the temperance movement, and religious revivalism. These movements form the basis of Nordic civil societies and have created a tradition for membership and volunteering. Denmark and the Nordic countries thus have both strong social movements and strong state traditions (Sevelsted, 2019).

Third, the mid-twentieth century saw the statisation of many areas and a concomitant change in professional dominance from the traditional elite (lawyers, theologians, and medical doctors) to new professions (social scientists and social workers). The social reform of 1933 meant increased centralisation of social services and regulation of the third sector. From the 1960s, social welfare was increasingly delivered by the public system through universalistic principles of eligibility, professionalisation, and specialisation of services and the decentralisation of services from the state to the municipalities.

Fourth, from the late twentieth to early twenty-first century there was a (neo)liberal rediscovery of the third sector and the dominance of the economist profession. The ‘third sector’ was praised for its flexibility and proximity to the recipients of benefits—in contrast to the bureaucratic

state—and was probably viewed as a cost-efficient way of handling the perceived fiscal and legitimacy crisis of the welfare state (Sevelsted, 2020). Many organisations saw a decrease in membership and a move towards drop-in volunteers with no organisational affiliation, even if membership numbers continue to be high when compared to other countries (Henriksen et al., 2019). The period also saw the emergence of the so-called new social movements that focused on life politics rather than material interests—even though the causes of Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and the gay rights movement were hardly new (Offe, 1985).

Operationalisation and Method

In order to study the role and position of the elites of historical Danish civil society organisations within the broader elite settlement in Danish society throughout the twentieth century, we use three publications of the Danish Who's Who (*Kraks Blå Bog*).

Since the first edition in 1910, *Kraks Blå Bog* has provided the public with small biographical entries on notable and powerful individuals in Danish society. The book has been printed every single year with the exceptions of 1944 and 1945, which were the last two years of the Nazi German occupation (where the publishing house briefly discontinued the publication in response to the pressure from the Nazi German authorities in occupied Denmark to remove all Jews). The selection of individuals is made by the editorial team and a body of consultants. If we trust the sources (interviews and official statements), the method of selection has been fairly stable throughout the years. The editors survey the press to collect new names of importance, but they accept suggestions from external sources. In this way, the publishing house keeps a database of potential individuals covering different areas of society, and on that basis 35 (in 2013) voluntary anonymous consultants with knowledge of the different areas weigh in on the final selection. In that sense the sample of individuals is based on the reputational method (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). Because the editors and consultants then select individuals based on their position within sectors and organisations, the selection criteria used by editors in practice is a combination of reputational and positional

approaches, akin to the British Who's Who (Reeves et al., 2017). A downside of this method is that we are at the mercy of the editors' possibly changing inclusion criteria over time. These criteria have become more 'popular' over time and now include, for example, media personalities and top athletes.

From these biographies, we constructed a cleaned and matched list of organisational affiliations for each individual for each year. If a person mentions an organisational affiliation in the career or membership section of their entry—the biographies are fairly standardised across editions and individuals—a link between the individual and the organisation is made. This provides us with a two-mode 'career network' of individuals and the organisations to which they are or have been affiliated. This means that the 'projected' individual-by-individual or organisation-by-organisation networks are both ontologically ambiguous. That is, the ties can be either synchronous, social connections (for individuals the co-presence in the same organisations, and for organisation the simultaneous 'employment' of the same individual) or diachronic, symbolic connections (for individuals this means having careers through the same organisations, and for organisations this means having engaged the same individual at some point—and they are symbolic because individuals have not been employed at the same time). Given the ontological ambiguity of the ties, we propose a novel approach to network decomposition, which we call k -circle decomposition. Inspired by the 'minimum degree' based k -core decomposition (Seidman, 1983), this new approach is a minimal membership decomposition, suitable for two mode affiliation networks.

In practice, this means that we perform an iterative pruning of the network in order to maintain only the most densely connected affiliations and actors, that is the 'overlapping social circles' akin to those described by Mills (1999) in his studies of power elites. In each iteration, only the organisations with more than k linking members are retained, where a linking member is defined as an individual with affiliations (past or present) to at least j of the remaining set of organisations. In this analysis, we fix the threshold for linking individuals, j , at three.

Thus, in the first step, when we go from k -score = 1 to k -score = 2, only organisations with at least two linking members are retained. In the next

step, from $k = 2$ to $k = 3$, only organisations with at least two members among the remaining linkers (i.e. individuals with three or more affiliations in the remaining set of organisations) are retained, and so forth. Although j is a constant, the quality of being a linker becomes increasingly rare as the set of organisations becomes more exclusive.

This leaves us every year with a *k-score* for individuals and organisations, which is a measure of how many iterations they ‘survive’. Thus, the *k-score* reflects the level at which the individual or the organisation is ‘deleted’. In order to get a proper continuous centrality measure, we propose ranking the individuals by their *k-sum*—that is, the sum of *k-scores* of *all* of his or her affiliations minus the number of members. Similarly, the *k-sum* of an organisation is the sum of *k-scores* of all its members minus the number of members. In that way the decomposition results in two centrality measures (for individuals and for organisations) that reflect how well organisations are at integrating or tying up the careers of central individuals who, for their part, leave a connecting trace between the organisations they are involved with throughout their careers.

In order to find the group of individuals who can be described as the elite actors of and in civil society organisations, we take a two-step approach to finding (1) the right organisations and (2) the right individuals.

(1) From the *k-circle* decomposition described above, all organisations or entities in the entire corpus of the Danish Who’s Who (1910–2020) have been assigned an annual rank based on their *k-sum* in the given year. Civil society organisations have been included on the basis of an adapted version of Salamon et al.’s coding schema (Salamon & Sokolowski, 1999). Specifically, we have excluded religious organisations, except for religious organisations devoted mainly to social work, as well as political parties, business and professional associations, trade unions, and other organisations primarily established to further their members’ interests. We define the most central CSOs throughout the entire period from 1910 to 2020 by taking all the organisations that for at least one year are in the top 25 among the subset of organisations coded as civil society. This leaves us with a sample of 105 organisations (out of 2725, if the top 25 had been unique in being included every year in the Whos’ Who).

(2) The text corpus of the 1910, 1965, and 2020 editions (~1000 pages each) provides us with a rich historical description of the career paths of a diverse set of elite individuals. In total, the corpus contains biographies on 18,767 notable individuals from civil service, politics, business, the judiciary, the military, culture, science, and civil society. From these individuals, we sample the individuals with a leading position (director, president, chair, etc.) in at least one of the 105 most central CSOs.

A Civil Society Elite Prosopography

Relative to the number of individuals portrayed in *Who's Who*, we find almost the same share of individuals with at least one leading position in a top CSO in each of the chosen periods. As seen in Table 2.1, the population develops from 2.2% (67 individuals) in 1910 to 2.5% (181 individuals) in 1965 to 1.7% (143 individuals) in 2020.

In the following three sections, we present three elements regarding historical changes in the prosopography of the civil society elite. Looking at the selection of CSOs represented in the three different editions of *Who's Who* by a past or present leader, we describe the representation of causes in the elite. In the next section, we focus on the social reproduction of the elite in terms of social background, demography, and gender. In the final section, we study the changes in the relationship between the civil society elite and the rest of the societal elite.

Table 2.1 Overview of *Who's Who* civil society elite

Year	Who's Who size	With any position in top CSO	With leading positions in top CSO
1910	3105	243 (7.8%)	67 (2.2%)
1965	7218	933 (12.9%)	181 (2.5%)
2020	8495	627 (7.4%)	143 (1.7%)

Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag

The Causes of Civil Society Elites

How has civil society elites' engagement in different causes changed over time? In order to answer this question, we have coded all CSOs in the sample according to their primary cause. We have coded according to ten categories (the adaptation of Salamon et al. 1999 mentioned above). Figure 2.1 depicts the relative ranking of categories based on the number of individuals engaged in the cause in the particular edition of *Who's Who*. Despite fundamental changes to Danish society over time, there is much continuity in the elite's engagement. This is evident when we take a look at the causes that have attracted the most individuals. Please note that one *Who's Who* individual may represent more than one organisation and thus more than one cause within and/or across categories.

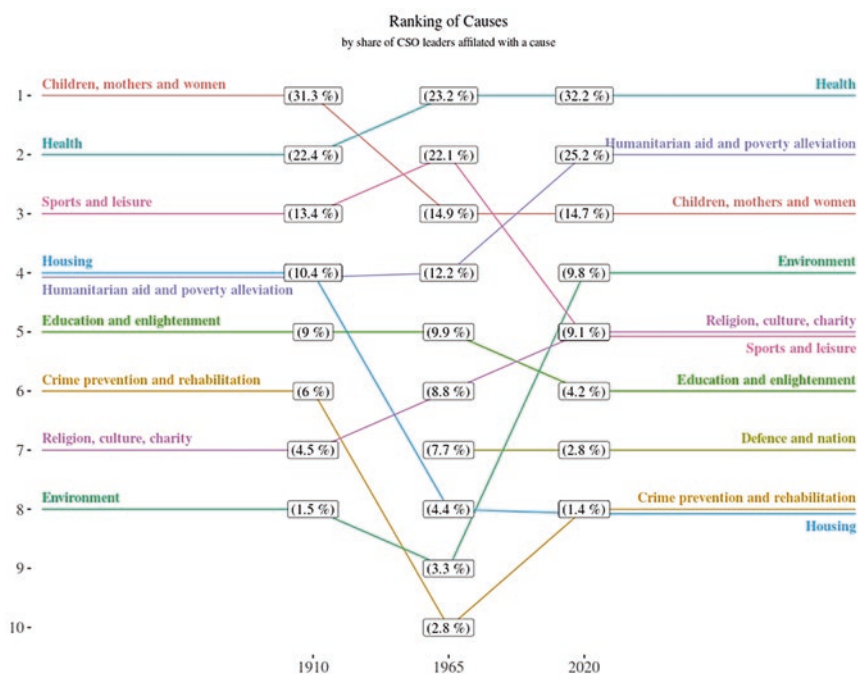


Fig. 2.1 Ranking of Causes, by share of CSO leaders affiliated with a cause. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

The three categories of ‘Children, mothers and women’, ‘Health’, and ‘Humanitarian aid and poverty alleviation’ are among the top causes throughout the study period.

The cause of ‘Children, mothers, and women’ (causes that were intrinsically linked in the beginning of the period, but are now more separate issues) is in the top three throughout the period. This is not least due to the Danish Women’s Society (est. 1871) that from its founding worked for gender equality and spearheaded the struggle for women’s suffrage. This speaks to elite continuity of the women’s movement in Denmark at least at the organisational level.

In contrast, the organisations in the ‘Health’ category are replaced over time. Central health issues in 1910 were tuberculosis and temperance (each cause represented by four CSO leaders). In 1965, top health causes were polio and mental hygiene (as mental illness prevention was called at the time). In 2020, leaders of CSOs concerned with fighting cancer and heart disease were the most represented. In other words, the prominent health issues ‘of the day’ have always been a concern for the civil society elite.

Elite engagement in humanitarianism and poverty alleviation was dominated by the Danish Red Cross in 1910 and in 1965. However, in 2020 the organisation was overtaken by three other foreign aid organisations led by the umbrella organisation Danish Refugee Council.

The Danish elites have been engaged in organising the novel phenomenon of mass sports and leisure that emerged in the nineteenth century. In 1910, the national sports association and the YMCA/YWCA were present in the sample. In 1965, the YMCA/YWCA was by far the largest organisation with 20 leaders represented. In 2020, engagement in Sports and Leisure fell. In part, the fall is caused by a decline in religious engagement, that is, in individuals with ties to YMCA/YWCA. In part, elite sports seem to crowd out the traditional movement-based organisations—evidenced by the fact that the quasi-NGO Team Denmark that organises elite sports is present in 2020 with seven individuals. Team Denmark is not included as civil society because the organisation was founded by the central administration that still appoints half the board (while the other half is appointed by the Danish Sports Association).

Especially ‘Housing’ and ‘Crime prevention and rehabilitation’ stand out as causes that are falling out of elite grace. Housing drops from 10.4% to 1.4% during the period. The category is dominated by both bourgeois philanthropists and leaders of labour movement-related housing cooperatives. Two of the three organisations in 2020 are cooperatives. ‘Crime prevention and rehabilitation’ similarly drops to 1.4% from 6%. Also ‘Education and Enlightenment’ sees a minor relative drop (from 9% to 4.2%) during the period—even if they are relatively stable in absolute numbers. The beginning of the period contains leaders of philanthropic efforts to educate the working class. For the latter two periods, this sector is increasingly linked through representatives of the politically linked educational associations such as Folkeligt Oplysnings Forbund (FOF) and Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund (AOF), connected to conservatives and the labour movement, respectively. Interestingly, ‘Religion, culture, and charity’ has steadily increased owing to the steady representation of the socially engaged revivalist milieu around the Copenhagen Home Mission as well as charitable foundations.

Finally, environmental issues have experienced the greatest relative rise over the period. The Danish CSO Animal Protection is represented throughout the period. In fact, in 1910 it was the sole representative of environmental issues among the CSO elite. In 1965, Animal Protection was joined by the Nature Preservation Association. In 2020, WWF joined in with 6 people, meaning that the cause is now quite well-represented among the elite with 14 CSO leader positions.

Some of these developments can be explained on the basis of the development of Danish civil society described above. Increased state involvement in education, housing, and rehabilitation of criminals has most likely ‘crowded out’ civil society elite engagement in this area. This is exemplified through the organisation Help For Mothers (*Mødrehjælpen*) that was established in 1924 as a philanthropic organisation, only to become part of the public system in 1939 and then closed down in 1976. Unlike many other organisations, however, this CSO then re-emerged in 1983 on the initiative of prominent left-wing public figures. The crowding-out thesis might also be supported by the observation of sustained engagement in sports and leisure as well as humanitarian aid. Elites may have looked to sports and leisure activities that continued to

be organisationally independent of the state—despite being heavily subsidised by gambling taxes. Similarly, organisational elites in CSOs like the Red Cross may have looked to steer their CSOs' mission abroad as the public system increasingly cared for the national population.

Other trends run counter to the 'crowding out' thesis. For example, the elite has continuously been engaged in health care even though the public system has been heavily involved in this area at least since the 1960s. This may be an attractive area for elites to engage in because it is in a sense 'insatiable' and will as such always have a pioneer tinge—there are always new diseases, and new research is always needed to cure cancer, fight obesity, tackle mental illness, and so on. This also seems to be the case for humanitarian assistance. Here, the emergence of humanitarian state agencies has not meant the end of the need for assistance abroad. Seemingly, suffering beyond national borders cannot be crowded out. Environmental concerns also seem to provide continued positions at the top of CSOs. The current crisis is seemingly so deep that elites can continue to wield support for this cause, even as the cause is prioritised by political parties (at least rhetorically).

There does seem to be a development in the kinds of causes elites engage in. Whereas the elites of 1910 and 1965 were concerned with diseases and illnesses of the lower classes, today the focus of the elite is on diseases that can afflict all of the population. The elite thus seem to reflect the broader concerns of their time, which explains the decreasing engagement in defence and nationalist causes.

There might also be a mechanism of covariance between professional 'jurisdiction' (Abbott, 1988) and elite involvement meaning that when a lower-status profession takes over the leadership of organisations in certain causes (e.g. crime rehabilitation no longer being a cause for judges, but instead for semi-professionals), then these organisations are at risk of losing access to elite circles.

The Composition and Reproduction of Civil Society Elites

Before turning to the analysis of the changing composition of the civil society elites, let us reflect for a moment on a methodological difficulty that arises from the choice of taking not calendar years, but specific editions of the *Who's Who*, as the point of departure for the analysis. As a result of this, the elite group we identify for each period is made up of multiple generations. That is, they are in fact born in quite different times. The 1965 group, for instance, is composed of individuals born in the 1880s as well as in the 1920s (see Fig. 2.2).

To take this into account, in the following analyses of social background we split the results according to age (above vs below the median age) in order to distinguish between the 'older' and 'younger' generation within the period.

For the entire *Who's Who* population, we observe a decrease in elite reproduction—from around 48% to around 35% (with no significant generational differences). Comparatively, for the CSO elite we also observe a total decrease, but starting from a higher level and being less strong for the later period. Here, however, there are significant generational differences. For all periods, and especially in 1910 and 2020, the

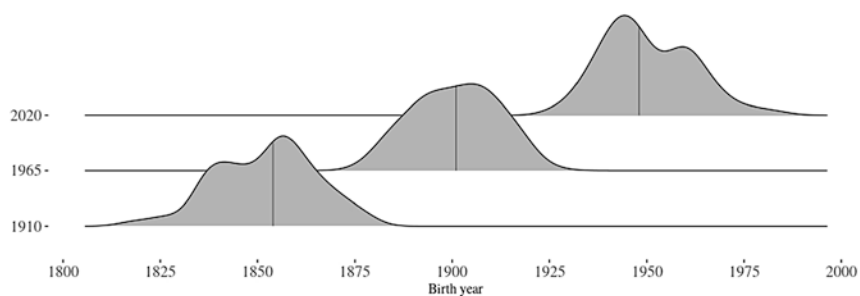


Fig. 2.2 Birth cohorts within the three periods. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag. Note: Horizontal lines represent the median birth year in each sample (1910, 1965 and 2020))

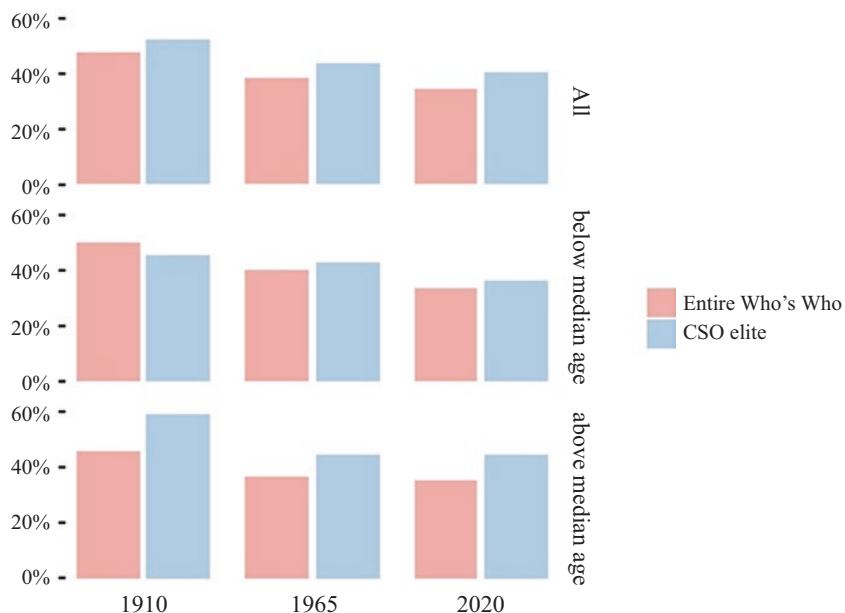


Fig. 2.3 Share with elite social background. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

level of elite reproduction in the older generation is much higher (Fig. 2.3).

That is, although the level of elite reproduction in the CSO elite has been in decline over the century, it has been less so, and from a much higher level and with stronger generational delay, than for the rest of the societal elite. This could be the result of a covariation in the social backgrounds of elites involved in civil society and most other established elite groups (e.g. medical doctors). It could also be the result of selection bias because we have selected the ‘elite of the civil society elite’, that is, only leaders and not ordinary members of CSOs in the Who’s Who (Fig. 2.4).

Taking into account that social class is not just a hierarchy, but rather a field of class struggles (Bourdieu, 1984) stratified in terms of capital volume as well as composition, we rely on the Oslo Register Data Class Scheme (ORDC) in order to divide the elite into a cultural fraction, a

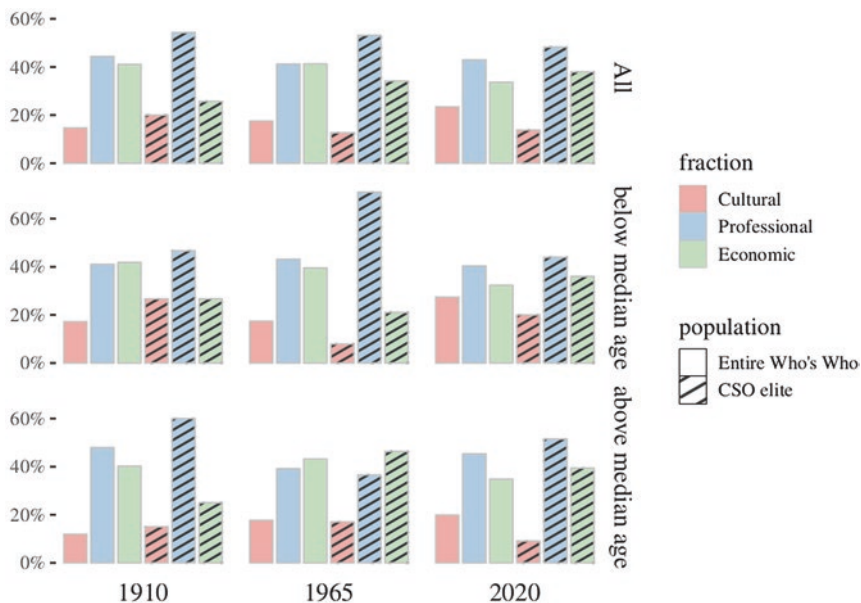


Fig. 2.4 Relative size of elite fractions. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

professional (balanced cultural and economic) fraction, and an economic fraction (Hansen et al., 2009).

A closer look then at the internal dynamics of elite reproduction reveals that those within the civil society elite whose parents were elite are predominantly from the professional fraction (i.e. their parents were, for example, high judges, politicians, higher civil servants, leading doctors, or military leaders). This is true for the entire period, although the size of the economic fraction increases at the expense of the cultural fraction.

Adding the question of generations, some interesting differences can be seen. While the elite background of the older cohorts of the 1965 sample resembles the overall Who's Who composition, with a slight overrepresentation of the economic fraction, the share of the 'younger' (born after 1901) cohorts of people from the professional fraction is very large. This is largely due to the fact that sons of the early twentieth-century judiciary at this point began to become engaged in CSOs. Of the

‘elite-born’ CSO leaders from the younger generation in the 1965 sample, 26% were sons of the judiciary.

In terms of inclusion of women, the CSO elite has been more open than the general Who’s Who elite. Already in 1910 the share of women was higher, although still only around 10% for this particular elite (Table 2.2).

Geographically, we observe a similar development. From the outset the leaders of central CSOs are almost all Copenhagen live, predominantly in central Copenhagen. Also, although the centralisation of the capital city declines over the century, it does so more slowly and to a lesser extent than the broader elite. Following the trend of the elite in general, they are increasingly—and even more so—born in the upper-class and upper-middle-class suburbs north of Copenhagen (e.g. the municipality of Gentofte). At the same time, as a general observation over the entire period, we find much fewer foreign-born individuals in the civil society elite compared to the general Who’s Who population.

Table 2.2 Gender and birth place

	Entire Who’s Who			CSO elite		
	1910	1965	2020	1910	1965	2020
Gender						
Women	6.0	4.6	24.0	9.0	11.6	31.5
Birthplace						
Copenhagen area	76.9	64.5	57.1	88.1	80.7	70.6
<i>Inner city</i>	67.4	28.3	25.6	77.6	41.4	30.8
<i>Upper-class suburbs</i>	7.3	26.8	19.9	7.5	29.3	22.4
<i>Middle-class suburbs</i>	1.7	7.4	8.8	1.5	8.3	14.7
<i>Working-class suburbs</i>	0.5	2.0	2.7	1.5	1.7	2.8
Provincial cities	14.1	26.3	24.3	9.0	13.8	20.3
<i>(+100,000 inhabitants)</i>	3.1	8.4	8.4	3.0	3.3	9.1
<i>(25,000–100,000 inhabitants)</i>	5.2	9.1	8.0	1.5	5.0	6.3
<i>(10,000–25,000 inhabitants)</i>	2.3	4.4	3.2	0.0	1.1	2.1
<i>(3000–10,000 inhabitants)</i>	3.4	4.4	4.7	4.5	4.4	2.8
<i>Rural (less than 3000 inhabitants)</i>	3.3	2.9	5.1	0.0	3.9	4.2
Abroad	2.9	5.8	6.6	0.0	1.7	1.4
Unknown	2.7	0.6	7.2	3.0	0.0	3.5

Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag.

Overall, we see how the civil society elite in some respects follows the general historical trajectory of the Who's Who elite as such—fewer people have an elite background, more women are represented, and fewer individuals live in the capital city. However, it seems that the civil society elite is even more 'distinguished' than the elite in general: More people have an elite background and more live in the capital. Interestingly, the 'sons of the judiciary' have played a disproportionately large role in the Danish civil society elite.

The Integration of Civil Society Elites

As introduced in Chap. 1, the literature has described how CSOs become more professionalised (Skocpol, 2004) and more consolidated and how civil society is increasingly disconnected from party politics (Katz & Mair, 1995). How might these trends affect civil society elites? On the one hand, one could imagine a sector whose elite would be increasingly disconnected from other elites because they would be 'sectorially isolated'. On the other hand, one could also imagine further integration at the top, as CSO leaders would increasingly be recruited from outside the organisation—what has been described as 'diploma democracy' or the rule of an educated elite (Bovens & Wille, 2017). We cannot offer any definitive answer here as to the most viable hypothesis, but we can offer insight into changes in civil society elite integration in Denmark over time.

In the following, we show integration by looking at the share of positions that CSO leaders have held in the most central organisations in other sectors. Specifically, we have taken the same approach here, creating a list of the organisations in the top 25 within their respective sector for at least one year throughout the century. Affiliation with a sector is then defined as having one or more positions in a central organisation in a given sector.

The overall development points to an increasing integration with the rest of the elite from the beginning to the middle period, and then little change between the middle and latest period. In 1910, 24% had more than one position in another sector. In 1965 and 2020, 50% and 42% had more than one position in other sectors, respectively. Civil society

has thus seemingly become more integrated at the elite level. Moreover, the biographies in 1910 were often shorter, which might be a part of the explanation of the lower share that year. There is, however, a quite uneven integration across sectors, as is evident in Fig. 2.5.

Throughout the period, there has been close integration with the state. Much of this integration has taken place through ‘quangos’ or quasi-NGOs such as commissions and other organisations with an advisory capacity. In the early period, this was the Tuberculosis Commission, and in 2020 the Refugee Council, Ethical Council, and UNICEF (United

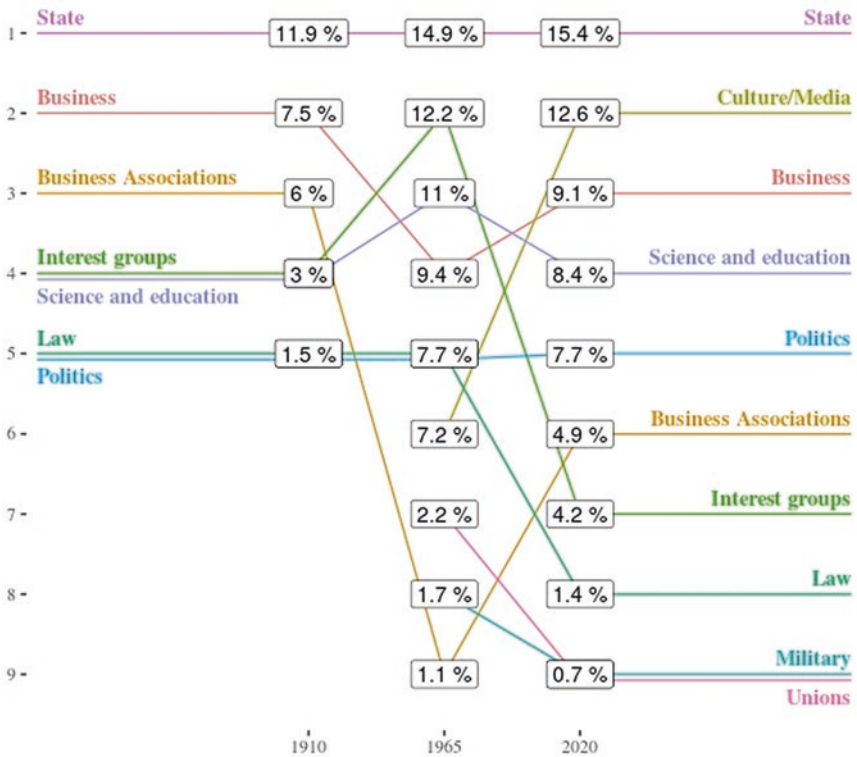


Fig. 2.5 Affiliations to other sectors, ranked by share of CSO leaders with more than one leading position in a sector. (Sources: *Kraks Blå Bog 1910*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 1965*, Copenhagen: Kraks Forlag; *Kraks Blå Bog 2020*, Copenhagen: Gads Forlag)

Nations Children's Fund) had this function. The national bank has connected the sectors throughout the period. This seems to indicate a career path of 'issue professionals' who are not concerned with sector borders, but who pursue careers across the public and third sector, for example in relation to foreign aid or diseases.

It is in this respect interesting to note that there is a lower level of integration of careers between politics and civil society. This integration has stagnated at 7.7%. To native Danes, this would probably seem surprising because a number of prominent politicians have taken up leadership positions in organisations such as Save the Children (Helle Thorning-Schmidt and Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen) and the Danish Society for Nature Conservation (Maria Reumert Gjerding). It thus seems that there is a 'publicity bias' at play here.

While the revolving doors are seemingly at a set pace between politics and the third sector, the mutual affiliations between civil society and science and education have risen from 3% to 8.4%. This could indicate that Denmark in some areas indeed has developed a kind of third sector 'diploma democracy' with a close relationship across sectors where individuals pursue careers across the public and the third sector in research, advocacy, and professional societies. More than 90% of the civil society elite have a university degree throughout the period. The diploma thesis is supported by the development of integration with unions. While union integration is consistently non-existent or very low throughout the period, the unions that integrate the elite change—from nurses' unions in the early period to umbrella organisations (the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions and the State Official's Union) in the middle period, and finally the Lawyers and Economists' Union (DJØF). This may indicate that issue professionals may have dominated the early period, while the later period is increasingly dominated by generalist professionals. It also appears that there is an inverse relationship between business associations on the one hand and unions and interest groups on the other that matches the waning and waxing of social-democratic ideology over the period. This could possibly indicate something about the hegemonic struggle between business elites and union elites.

The business sector is closely integrated with civil society throughout the period. Banking and insurance are present throughout, while the

shipping giant Mærsk enters the scene in 2020. This could indicate a less-than-clear separation between business and philanthropy—or maybe a demand from the private sector for a certain kind of status and expertise.

The culture/media category is interesting. The category is the result of a complexity-reducing effort to have a manageable number of categories, and so it contains both media personalities and individuals involved in religious social work. Somewhat surprisingly, the category was absent in 1910, but rose to 7.2% in 1965 and then to 12.6% in 2020. This development seems to be driven by religious social work and museums in the middle period and by newspapers and television in the later period. In other words, within this category, there is a story of disintegration of the religious elites and an integration of news media elites. From the same starting point, the sector of law experienced its zenith in 1965, only to decline again in 2020. The category is dominated by individuals in relation to legal courts.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described the historical trajectory of the *elites of civil society* in Denmark from 1910 to 2020 using data from the Danish Who's Who publications from 1910, 1965, and 2020. While most studies tend to focus on the elites *in* civil society, we have looked at the elites *of* civil society, that is, individuals in CSO leadership positions.

Throughout the period, civil society elites have constantly been involved in certain causes, and leaders of organisations dealing with health issues, children, mothers, and women, as well as humanitarian aid and poverty alleviation have been the best represented throughout the period. Other causes have been increasingly less represented by the elite. This goes for education, housing, and the rehabilitation of criminals. Possibly, there has been a crowding-out effect as the state has become the dominant provider. Alternatively, civil society elites may have focused on areas in which crowding out is not possible, and the sick at home and the poor and unfortunate abroad, and increasingly the degradation of the environment, seemingly provide endless opportunities for charity. A

third interpretation could be that certain causes have experienced a loss of status as low-status professions have taken up leadership positions.

Interestingly, the composition and reproduction analyses show that the civil society elite on the one hand has historically been more distinguished than the rest of the elite: more people have an elite background and more live in the capital. There might be some selection bias involved. On the other hand, the civil society elite has included more women throughout the period. Like the rest of the elite, but to a lesser extent, it has become slightly less ‘elite’ over time. A particularly interesting finding is the ‘sons of the judiciary’ effect. This group became particularly dominant in the middle period.

This civil society elite has become more integrated with the elite of other sectors over the century. Throughout, the sector elite was closely connected with the state elite, testifying to this Nordic strong state/strong civil society tradition. Interestingly, the integration with politics has not been particularly strong, while the integration with education has strengthened. These trends may be indications of a continued ‘issue professionalism’ across state and civil society as well as a kind of ‘diploma democracy’ where educational credentials and positions become more important. The reproduction effect of the ‘sons of the judiciary’ and the strong state and educational integration fits with other findings that civil society elites are in fact rooted in a ‘moral elite’ inherited from the nineteenth-century absolutist state, thus organising across state and civil society spheres (Sevelsted, 2022).

Looking ahead, the study of elites beyond the political and economic spheres that have traditionally been the central focus of elite studies is a promising research avenue for understanding how old aristocracies are reproduced in new arenas. Future research questions should include: How have the children of the administrators of the old societies (the absolutist state in the case of Denmark) found new functions in the new society? How have elite members of (relatively) declining sectors such as theological, judicial, and medical dynasties been reproduced in (relatively) ascending sectors such as the political system, civil society, the public sphere, and popular culture?

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3

Mirroring the Masses? A Cross-National Comparison of Civil Society Elite Composition

Jayeon Lee and Roberto Scaramuzzino

Introduction

Addressing the composition of elites is a task common to many elite studies (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). This approach is about identifying who the elites are and what characterises them. In this chapter, we study the composition of civil society elites in four national and one supranational context in Europe, using a novel comparative dataset based on surveys of the top-level leaders of the most resource-rich civil society organisations (hereafter CSOs).

This study draws on a particular strand of research in elite studies focusing on the ‘elite-masses gap’. The basic assumption is that elites are different from the rest whether formulated in terms of ‘elite-masses gap’

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(Müller et al., 2012), ‘elite-citizen gap’ (Dellmuth et al., 2022), or ‘elite-public gap’ (Kertzer, 2020). To study this gap, it is common to compare the composition and/or attitudes of an elite group with that of the general population (e.g., Dellmuth et al., 2022). A large gap between representative political elites and citizens has been suggested to potentially challenge well-functioning democracies. Best and Vogel (2018) link this gap to ‘political professionalisation’, which can be understood as a process at both the individual level and the structural level. While at the individual level representatives tend to become part of an occupational group, at the structural level the same group becomes established by formal and informal rules that define the group’s boundaries and collective identity. The creation of a ‘closed group’ of representative elites, for instance, makes some groups of citizens more likely to be selected into this elite group than others. In this sense professionalisation increases the autonomy of representative elites compared to their constituencies, thus making them less accountable (*ibid.*).

While the issue of the elite-masses gap has been particularly studied regarding political elites (Kertzer, 2020), it is also relevant for studies of the composition of civil society leaders. CSOs and their leaders are supposed to play a crucial role in bringing the voices of diverse groups into the political arena for a well-functioning, pluralistic democracy (Guo & Musso, 2007; Kohler-Koch, 2010; Smismans, 2003). Many CSOs claim, in fact, to represent the interests of specific social groups and to speak on their behalf. They seldom aim to represent the interests of the elites, but rather those of specific interest groups such as people with certain types of disabilities, retirees, sexual minorities, tenants, the homeless, and so on. Many others claim to be advocates for certain social causes, such as traditional values, social justice, gender equality, environmental protection, children’s rights, and so on. In both cases, CSOs and their spokespersons claim representativeness as a way to strengthen their leverage in communicating core messages in the public arena and in pursuing their missions, claiming to act as ‘transmission belts’ between citizens and policymakers (Albareda, 2018; Halpin, 2010). Although the leaders of CSOs are not necessarily appointed through formal elections by the masses in the same way as elected politicians, CSOs strive to establish ways of

ensuring representativity of their leaders vis-à-vis their constituencies (Johansson & Lee, 2014).

Besides representativity based on internal democratic elections, claims of representation based on having a leader with shared characteristics and identities as those they represent can be justified in the representation of marginalised social groups. A descriptively representative leader can potentially bring the perspectives and experiences of disadvantaged groups directly into the political arena (Pitkin, 1967). In a similar way, Saward (2010) includes ‘mirroring’ as one sub-type of representative claims where a representative appeals to the similarity between the claimant and the constituency he or she claims to speak or stand for. An illustrative example of such an effort to achieve descriptive representation might be found in a federation type of organisation for people with disabilities, where the organisation makes sure that its executive board consists of persons with different types of disabilities (Johansson & Lee, 2014).

While we expect that CSOs will strive for diversity and inclusiveness in the social composition of their leaders, we expect the leadership positions of the most resource-rich CSOs in each national context to be mostly occupied by people belonging to the social categories that are often found in positions of power in society.

Based on these debates, we argue for the relevance of addressing the elite-masses gap concerning civil society elites. A key empirical question here is about the composition of civil society elites and how well they reflect the characteristics of and attitudes held by the general population. We thus study the civil society elite-masses gap as a representation of the differences between civil society elites and the general population in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes in four national contexts (i.e., Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK) and at the EU level. The research questions are as follows:

- What similarities and differences do we find in the socio-demographic composition and attitudes of civil society elites in relation to the general population in each context?
- How can we understand the elite-masses gap across different national contexts characterised by different roles of civil society and different degrees of professionalisation and at the EU level?

These questions are of key importance for civil society research. In fact, as with representative political elites, trends of professionalisation and long chains of representation might have contributed to creating a closed group of civil society elites. In line with Michels' (2001) theory of the 'iron law of oligarchy', concerns have been raised as to the representativeness of leaders of major CSOs, thus problematising the possibly increasing distance between the leadership strata of civil society and their constituencies (Skocpol, 2003). The emergence of the skilled, professionalised civil society leaders, possibly resembling other political elites in their socio-economic disposition and career paths, raises the question of the capability of civil society leaders to actually deliver on the promises of democratic and pluralistic representation for their causes and constituents. In Michels' (2001) view, the professionalisation of leaders would involve civil society elites becoming increasingly conservative towards societal change when it comes to their attitudes.

Method

Empirically, we analyse the composition of civil society leaders using cross-national survey data from the Civil Society Elite Survey (see the Appendix to this volume by Scaramuzzino and Lee) carried out within the research programme 'Civil Society Elites? Comparing Elite Composition, Reproduction, Integration and Contestation in European Civil Societies', funded by Riksbankens jubileumsfond 2018–2023. The respondents (N = 897) are top-level governing and executive leaders of resource-rich CSOs in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK and at the EU level using a set of common indicators measuring financial and political resources. Our contribution is to empirically determine the composition of the group of leaders as a *de facto* civil society elite who occupy the highest leadership positions in the most resource-rich CSOs in the five contexts.

We focus both on the socio-demographic characteristics of the leaders (see the Appendix to this chapter) and on their attitudes regarding four core sociopolitical issues. By mapping out the composition of civil society elites in relation to that of the general population using another set of

comparative data (the European Social Survey, 2018, Round 9 data), we are able to explore the civil society elite-masses gap. The cross-country comparison allows us to address both general patterns in civil society elites regardless of contexts and different patterns that can be understood through the lens of civil society regime theory and levels of professionalisation, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

In our analysis of the composition of civil society elites across the five contexts, we consider two sets of variables that are connected to the leaders' socio-demographic background and to the leaders' attitudes (see Table 3.1).

The socio-demographic variables include age, gender, education, and country of birth and relate directly to the issue of homogeneity and to how inequality in society is reproduced based on specific categories (Tilly, 1999). They also relate to theories about resources and capital that different individuals control based on their social position, such as cultural and social capital (Swartz, 1997). Based on a common understanding of political elites, which dates back to the work of Pareto in the nineteenth century, we expect a certain level of homogeneity among our leaders when it comes to socio-demographic characteristics (Best & Higley,

Table 3.1 Variables used in the analysis of civil society elites' composition

Civil society elite	Population (ESS)	Measure
<i>Socio-demographic background</i>		
Age	Age (15–90)	Mean, standard deviation, population aged 65 or older
Gender	Gender	Percentages (female)
Education (level)	Education (level)	Percentages (higher education)
Country of birth	Born in country	Percentages (foreign born)
<i>Attitudes</i>		
Social trust	Social trust	Mean (0–10)
Ideological position	Ideological position	Mean (0–10)
Satisfaction with democracy	Satisfaction with democracy	Mean (0–10)
Gay and lesbians' rights	Gay and lesbians' rights	Mean (1–5)

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey; European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018). Data file edition 3.1. Sikt—Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, Norway—Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. <https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018>

2018) and attitudes (Best et al., 2012; Gulbrandsen, 2019; López et al., 2020).

The attitude variables focus on the leaders' attitudes concerning issues of democracy and equality. Among these variables, we consider social trust, ideological position, satisfaction with democracy, and gay and lesbians' rights. The variables have been chosen partly because they allow us to compare the attitudes held by civil society elites with the general population in each national context through the European Social Survey (ninth round). Social trust relates to a classical outcome of civil society participation and engagement (Putnam, 2000). Ideological position, as a variable, places the respondent on a classical left-right continuum with a middle point. Satisfaction with democracy can be related to the classical function of civil society as a critical voice, watchdog, and counterweight to the state (Arvidson et al., 2018). Finally, gay and lesbian rights is an important dimension of human rights that creates polarisation in the public debate and that is not directly overlapping with an ideological positioning on a left-right scale.

The analysis is built around a bivariate analysis comparing the civil society elites with the general population in each national context. Measures of associations are presented for the correlation between the specific variable and national context of the civil society elite. As a measure of difference or distance between the civil society elite and the general population, we present a 'gap-measure' (cf. Müller et al., 2012) that we calculate as the difference between the mean value for the elite and the mean value for the general population.

Before we delve into the analysis of our data, it is relevant to briefly discuss the types of organisations that are represented in the sample that the leaders in the survey are leading. To the extent to which civil society leaders are expected to descriptively represent their constituencies, the type of organisations they lead will give some insights into what constituencies they are expected to mirror. Unfortunately, due to anonymity in our survey study, the responses of the leaders cannot be directly linked to a specific organisation or type of organisation. However, by looking at the sample of organisations in each of the national contexts, we can understand which types of organisations are represented among our respondents.

First of all, we find quite similar types of organisations and movements in all national contexts. Most of them work with general and broad issues such as health, social justice, poverty alleviation, the environment, human rights, international aid and development, sports, and so on. These organisations would have, in terms of the socio-demographic composition, broad constituencies involving diverse social categories. A very small number of organisations in our sample would relate to constituencies that are clearly defined in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, for example pensioners' and youth organisations for age, women's organisations for gender, and ethnic organisations for country of birth. The samples do not generally include any organisations that would have an over-representation of people with a higher education background (e.g., professional organisations). Hence, from a socio-demographic perspective, we would expect a large majority within the civil society elite in our study to represent constituencies that are diverse concerning our four variables of gender, age, country of birth, and education.

When it comes to attitudes, however, we would expect the leaders to embody the values and missions of the organisations they lead (and of their constituencies). The majority of the organisations in our sample have a progressive and solidaristic stance towards issues of social justice, equality, anti-discrimination, and human rights, although we find both organisations belonging to more traditional movements such as the Catholic organisations and organisations belonging to more secular and progressive movements (Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021).

Different Civil Society Contexts

Civil Society Regimes

One way of understanding different roles and ideals related to civil society across national contexts is through the concept of 'civil society regimes'. The four countries considered in this study are often placed as examples of different civil society regimes, and their civil society sectors have different characteristics. Sweden, as an example of a Nordic or social

democratic regime, has a mostly advocacy-oriented civil society sector with a relatively large workforce mostly made up of volunteers rather than paid staff. The Italian civil society sector, as an example of a continental or corporatist regime, is mostly service oriented with a larger share of paid staff compared to Sweden. Likewise, the UK's civil society is an example of an Anglo-Saxon or liberal regime and is characterised by the prominent role of civil society as service provider, with a larger proportion of paid staff than Italy and Sweden. Finally, Polish civil society, as an example of the Eastern or post-communist regime, is also service oriented, but with smaller workforce than the other countries and with a very small share of paid staff (Archambault, 2009; Salamon et al., 2017; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018).

Based on this comparative contextual information, we argue that the civil society sectors in different countries can be understood as a segment of the professionalised labour market to varying degrees, which could entail more or less stratification and hierarchisation between the organisations with implications for the composition of the leadership strata. If we understand professionalisation of the sector as a precondition of elitisation, we expect that a civil society sector characterised by a larger employed workforce and a pronounced role as service provider—hence comprising a relatively well-defined labour market—is characterised by a leadership with a more pronounced elite status. From this point of view, we can expect the top-level leaders of the most resource-rich CSOs in Italy and the UK to be characterised by higher social positions and elite characteristics in their composition compared to Sweden and Poland. Italy and the UK would thus present a larger elite-masses gap compared to Sweden and Poland.

Conditions of Engagement of Civil Society Elites

We should, however, keep in mind that the regime-level characteristics from the existing literature relate to the civil society sector as a whole, while our survey respondents represent the most resource-rich organisations at the national level. Therefore, we complement the cross-contextual expectations based on the civil society regime literature with our

first-hand survey data. Our data can provide us with relevant information about the conditions of engagement of the civil society leaders, which can be used to understand similarities and differences between the countries when it comes to the composition of civil society elites.

In Table 3.2, we present how the conditions of engagement among our respondents differ across our contexts in relation to a few variables that we operationalise as tokens of professionalisation. We look, for instance, at the extent to which the leaders receive economic compensation and if they support themselves mainly through their engagement in civil society. A larger share of leaders receiving economic compensation and supporting themselves with such compensation would indicate a more professionalised civil society sector. We also want to see how long they have been in the position of leadership and how long they have been engaged in the organisation. Shorter time in the position of leadership and shorter periods of engagement in the organisations are interpreted as tokens of professionalisation, in a sense that leaders are hired based on their competences and merits rather than their long-time commitment to the organisation. We also look at the share of executive leaders (e.g., secretary generals, directors, and CEOs) compared to representative leaders (e.g., spokespersons, chairpersons, and presidents), and a larger share of

Table 3.2 Conditions of engagement of the civil society elite by national context

	Italy	Poland	Sweden	UK	EU	Measure of association and significance
Economic compensation (%; N = 883)	33	44	75	60	49	0.314***
Support through engagement (%; N = 878)	25	32	48	54	43	0.201***
Years in the position (mean; N = 885)	9	9	5	6	6	0.263***
Years in the organisation (mean; N = 872)	21	17	14	11	11	0.291***
Directors (%; N = 880)	23	14	38	48	45	0.260***

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey (Sig. †: $P < 0,1$ *: $P < 0,05$ **: $P < 0,01$ ***: $P < 0,001$)

the former category of leaders is seen as a sign of a more professionalised civil society sector.

The economic compensation of the leaders shows a higher level of professionalisation in Sweden and the UK than in the other contexts. Sweden has a higher share of leaders who receive economic compensation than the UK (75%), but the UK has a higher share of leaders who support themselves through their engagement in civil society (54%). This suggests that a larger share of Swedish leaders receive economic compensation of more modest amounts, often in the form of an honorarium rather than a salary. The UK is the only context in which a majority of the leaders support themselves through their civil society engagement. Leaders at the EU level are placed more in the middle on a continuum, while Poland and Italy have less professionalised leaderships with a minority of leaders supporting themselves through their engagement in civil society, specifically one in three for Poland and one in four for Italy.

We find a similar pattern when it comes to career trajectories with Sweden, the UK, and the EU presenting shorter trajectories both concerning how long the leaders tend to have held their positions and how long they have been engaged in the organisations they lead. The first measure suggests more frequent turnovers and possible labour market dynamics with individuals having occupied leadership positions for an average of five to six years in Sweden, the UK, and the EU. Italian and Polish leaders have on average been in leadership position for nine years. We find a similar pattern when it comes to the internal career trajectories in particular for the UK and the EU, with leaders having been involved in the organisations for 11 years, followed by Sweden with 14 years. For Italy and Poland, we find longer internal trajectories with Polish leaders having been involved for 17 years and Italian leaders for 21 years on average. Shorter internal trajectories can once again be understood as tokens of professionalisation and labour market dynamics, while longer internal trajectories can be understood as the opposite in the sense that qualifications related to long-term commitment to the organisation and the cause play a more important role. Finally, the share of directors among the respondents across the contexts points to similar comparative conclusions, with a greater share of executive leaders in the UK, the EU, and

Sweden on the one hand and a smaller share for Italy and Poland on the other.

In conclusion, looking at the conditions of engagement among the civil society leaders who participated in our study we would expect more elite status of leaders and hence a larger elite-masses gap in the UK, the EU, and Sweden and less so in Poland and Italy. This expectation is considered in the following section where we analyse the socio-demographic composition of civil society elites in relation to the general population.

Socio-Demographic Background of Civil Society Elites

We address the socio-demographic background of the civil society leaders and the elite-masses gap in Table 3.3. First, we compare the mean age of our civil society leaders in relation to that of each context using European Social Survey data. We find significant differences between the civil society elites across the national contexts in this respect. The Italian leaders are the oldest on average (59 years old) followed by Sweden and the UK (57 years), the EU (53 years), and Poland (51 years). These differences between the mean values are statistically significant.

If we look at the average age in the general population in each context, however, we get a slightly different picture. Here it is important to remember that the European Social Survey includes only people aged 15 and older. The Swedish population is the youngest of all the contexts, and thus it is in Sweden that we find the largest age gap (12 years) between the civil society elite and the population, followed by the UK (10 years), Italy (9 years), the EU (5 years), and Poland (4 years).

The age span can be quite large, and thus it is relevant to also look at the age distribution to see to what extent the leaders' ages tend to concentrate around the mean or if they are more dispersed. As it usually takes time to get access to elite positions, we expect the standard deviation of the age among our respondents to be smaller than in the general population, which is confirmed by our analysis of the data. The smallest variation we find is in the UK followed by Italy, the EU, Sweden, and Poland.

Table 3.3 Comparison of civil society elites and the general population across contexts: Socio-demographic background

	Italy		Poland		Sweden		UK		EU	
	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP
Age (CSE N = 874; Mean Eta squared = 0.045***)										
Mean	59	50	51	47	57	45	57	47	53	48
Age gap (years)	9		4		12		10		5	
St. dev.	11	19	15	19	14	19	10	19	12	19
Gender (CSE N = 888; Cramer's V = 0.206***)										
Male (%)	72	48	51	48	42	51	60	49	56	48
Gender gap	24		3		-9		11		6	
Level of education (CSE N = 881 Cramer's V = 0.215***)										
Higher education (%)	79	13	95	24	77	28	88	31	93	22
Education gap	66		71		49		57		71	
Country of birth (CSE N = 893, Cramer's V. 0,193***)										
Native (%)	94	90	98	99	91	83	87	83	80	88
Foreign-born gap	4		-1		8		4		-8	

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey; European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018). Data file edition 3.1. Sikt—Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, Norway—Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. <https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018>; (Sig. †: P=<0,1 *: P=<0,05 **: P=<0,01 ***: P=<0,001)

The second socio-demographic variable we consider is gender. When it comes to gender distribution, there are stark differences across the contexts. While it is only in Sweden that we find a higher share of female leaders among our respondents (58%), Poland is in second place with an almost equal representation of male and female leaders among the respondents (49% and 51%, respectively). Both sexes are also rather equally represented in the EU context (44% female and 56% male). In the UK and Italy, female leaders are the minority among our respondents—40% of our British respondents are female, while only 28% are female in Italy.

Because the share of the male population is very similar across the national contexts, variations between national contexts when it comes to the share of male leaders is a direct indication of different gender gaps across the contexts. We measure the gender gap as the difference between

share of males in the general population and the share of males among our respondents. Only one country context, Sweden, presents a negative gender gap with a 9% lower share of males in the civil society elite than in the general population. We find a small gender gap in Poland with only 3% fewer males in the civil society elite than in the general population. We find larger gender gaps at the EU level (6%) and in the UK (11%) and especially in Italy (24%).

Studies of elites have found extensive evidence for the importance of educational capital, and in some contexts even attending specific higher education institutions, for becoming part of the societal elite (e.g., Ellersgaard et al., 2013). It turns out that the absolute majority of leaders of resource-rich CSOs in all of our contexts have had higher education. Poland and the EU level stand out to some extent, with over 90% of all respondents having had higher education. Next follows the UK (88%), Italy (79%), and Sweden (77%). The lowest share of leaders with a higher education background found in Sweden might be explained by the democratic ideal upheld in the popular movement tradition characterising Swedish civil society (Lundström & Svedberg, 2003). Compared to the general population, the education gap is larger in Italy than the UK due to the smaller share of highly educated people in society at large in Italy.

The last socio-economic variable is place of birth, and we look at the share of leaders that are native born in each national context. We find the smallest share of native-born leaders at the EU level with 80% of leaders born within the EU, a figure that is 8% lower than the average in the EU's general population. This might be explained by the large number of international organisations present at the EU level. Poland also has a negative foreign-born gap (-1%), but the numbers are very small both in terms of share in the civil society elites (98% native-born leaders) and in the general population, so the pattern must be taken cautiously. The UK has the lowest share of native-born leaders (87%) among the national contexts and also a relatively small gap of only 4%. The same goes for Italy due to the larger share of native-born persons in the general population. In Sweden, we find a relatively small share of leaders born in Sweden (91%), but considering a relatively higher share of foreign-born persons in the general population we find the largest gap in Sweden.

In sum, we find that each of the socio-demographic characteristics of the civil society leaders we looked into has its own pattern when it comes to the differences across the national contexts and in relation to the general population. A higher gap concerning our variables suggests that the civil society elite can be characterised as ‘exclusive’, in the sense that there is an over-representation of dominant groups in society (older, male, highly educated, and native-born leaders), while a lower gap might imply a more ‘inclusive’ national context in terms of the composition of civil society elites. The results show no uniformly cross-cutting pattern for any of the variables considered. Sweden stands out as being the most inclusive when it comes to gender and education but the most exclusive when it comes to age and country of birth. Also, Poland and the EU level have mixed results showing an inclusive tendency in terms of age but an exclusive tendency in terms of educational background. A pattern common to all national contexts is that the civil society elite tends on average to be older than the general population and that they are to a larger extent highly educated. When it comes to gender and country of birth, we find different patterns in the national contexts.

Attitudes of Civil Society Elites

We address the attitudes of the civil society leaders and the elite-masses gap in Table 3.4. The first variable that we focus on is social trust. A general pattern found across contexts is that the level of social trust among the civil society elites follows the national pattern, and the civil society elites in low-trust countries, for example Italy and Poland, have lower trust than the civil society elite in high-trust countries like the UK and Sweden. It is also clear in all national contexts that the civil society elites have higher social trust than the general population and that the gap is larger in low-trust countries.

The second variable we focus on is ideological position on a left–right scale represented by numbers ranging from extreme left (0) to extreme right (10) with a middle point (5). We find that civil society elites in all contexts position themselves more to the left compared to the general population. In addition to this commonality, we find differences between

Table 3.4 Comparison of civil society elites (CSE) and the general population (POP) across contexts: Attitudes

	Italy		Poland		Sweden		UK		EU	
	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP	CSE	POP
Social trust (CSE N = 848; Mean Eta squared = 0.045***)										
Mean	6.8	4.8	6.6	4.1	7.6	6.2	6.9	5.2	6.5	5.0
Trust gap	2.0		2.5		1.4		1.7		1.5	
Ideological position (CSE N = 821; Mean Eta squared = 0.060***)										
Mean	3.1	5.3	4.4	5.7	4.5	5.2	4.2	4.9	4.0	4.9
Political gap	2.2		1.3		0.7		0.7		0.9	
Satisfaction with democracy (CSE N = 847; Mean Eta squared = 0.191***)										
Mean	5.1	5.1	3.3	5.4	6.1	6.4	4.6	5.1	4.8	5.2
Satisfaction gap	0		2.1		0.3		0.5		0.4	
Gay and lesbians' rights (CSE N = 880; Mean Eta squared = 0.033***)										
Mean	1.5	2.2	1.5	2.6	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.9
Gay/lesbian rights gap	0.7		1.1		0.2		0.4		0.7	

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey; European Social Survey Round 9 Data (2018). Data file edition 3.1. Sikt—Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, Norway—Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. <https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS9-2018>; (Sig. †: $P < 0,1$ *: $P < 0,05$ **: $P < 0,01$ ***: $P < 0,001$)

the contexts with the Italian leaders being more to the left in terms of a larger gap, followed by the EU level, the UK, Poland, and Sweden, whose civil society elites are comparatively closer to the middle point of the ideological scale.

With regards to the variable measuring the extent to which respondents are satisfied with the ways in which democracy functions in one's country, we find a consistent pattern across the contexts where civil society elites are less satisfied than the general population (except for Italy where the mean value is the same). The most satisfied with how democracy works in their country are the Swedish leaders, followed by Italian, EU-based, British, and finally Polish leaders, who are least satisfied. It is also clear that the gap in relation to the general population is not that large except for in Poland where civil society leaders are on average 2.1 points less satisfied on a scale from 0 to 10.

The last variable we compare is the extent to which respondents endorse equal rights for the gay and lesbian population, and we find that in all national contexts the civil society elites are more progressive on average than the general population. Following the national pattern, we find slightly more conservative views among our leaders in Italy and Poland than in the other national contexts. The largest gap we find is in Poland where we observe the most conservative attitude towards this issue. In fact, Polish civil society elites are on average 1.1 points more progressive than the general population on a scale from 1 to 5.

When it comes to attitudes regarding key issues of democracy and equality, we thus find a much clearer pattern with Poland being the national context with the largest gap between the civil society elites and the general population (except for ideological position) and Sweden being the context with the smallest gap. Furthermore, we consistently find that the civil society elites tend to have higher social trust, are more leftist, are less satisfied with democracy, and are more progressive towards gay and lesbians' rights than the general population in all national contexts (except for satisfaction with democracy in Italy).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we set out to explore the composition of civil society elites across different countries and at the EU level in comparison with the general population in each context in order to address the civil society elite-masses gap. We depart from a theoretical perspective where the civil society elites are expected to be representative of the general population in terms of their social composition and attitudes. At the same time, we expect the empirical results of our analyses to be more complex, informed by the perspective of a possible tendency of elitisation of civil society leaders driven by professionalisation of the top leaders in the sector. In this concluding section, we discuss the main results of our analysis of the composition of civil society.

When it comes to the socio-demographic backgrounds of the civil society leaders, we find both inclusive and exclusive patterns in three of the contexts, that is, in Poland and Sweden and at the EU level. This

shows that civil society elites can be characterised as both inclusive and exclusive social groups when it comes to different dimensions and different contexts. With respect to age, civil society elites in all contexts are of older age, and this can be related to the long career trajectories that are required for people to reach the leadership positions of the most resource-rich national-level CSOs. The fact that civil society elites in all contexts have partaken in higher education to a much greater extent than the general population can be related to a demand for certain knowledge that is best acquired through academic degrees.

Two of the country contexts present exclusive patterns concerning all of the socio-demographic background variables among the civil society elites, that is, Italy and the UK. The leadership strata in these contexts are characterised by an over-representation of male, older, highly educated, and native-born leaders. These exclusive patterns are partly in line with our expectations based on these countries' civil societies being more service oriented and professionalised to a higher degree compared to Sweden and Poland. When it comes to the UK, it is also in line with our own survey data regarding the conditions of engagement of civil society leaders.

We find a clearer pattern across countries when it comes to the civil society elite's attitudes and how they fare in relation to those of the general populations. A consistently higher level of social trust among our leaders compared to the general population can be interpreted from the perspective of a widely understood role of civil society as the fabric of social trust in society (Putnam, 2000). The more leftist positions of the leaders compared to the general population can be related to the historical development of many CSOs, originating from progressive social movements engaging for social justice and the emancipation of different minority groups (Ruzza, 2020). Dissatisfaction with democracy among the leaders can be understood in relation to the critical role that is ascribed to civil society actors in liberal democracies. It could also be seen in light of the neoliberal turn of the last decades in many countries' social policies that has negatively and disproportionately affected the weaker social groups for which many CSOs advocate (Chancel et al., 2022; Piketty, 2014). Increased inequalities both globally and within countries have been reported over the last 40 years (Chancel et al., 2022). Finally,

progressive attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights can be related to the historical legacy and focus on human rights and the fight against discrimination as discussed above.

An elitisation of civil society leaders would, in accordance with the elite literature, suggest that the elite-masses gap is more in the direction of the elites being more conservative and satisfied with the status quo than the masses. In fact, this is the thesis brought forward by Michels (2001) as part of the 'iron law of oligarchy'. Compared to the general population, our data tend to contradict such expectation, suggesting instead that civil society elites have more progressive attitudes and are less satisfied with democracy than the general population. It would of course be interesting to see to what extent the volunteers and activists within CSOs would have even more 'radical' attitudes.

Comparing our results concerning the two sets of variables in our study, we thus find a certain homogeneity across countries when it comes to the civil society leaders' attitudes rather than their socio-demographic backgrounds. Trying to empirically explain this result would require another round of study, but there are some possible explanations. One hypothesis would be that the composition in terms of socio-demographic background is partly a product of exogenous factors, for instance gender and ethnic-based relations in each national context. The large share of women at the top of Swedish civil society could be a consequence of both exogenous factors such as the stronger position of women in society as well as endogenous factors such as the focus on voluntary engagement rather than professional engagement in the civil society sector. Following a similar logic, Italy would be the opposite case with a low share of women at the top due to a generally weaker position of women in the labour market and in positions of power as well as a more professionalised, service-oriented civil society sector.

The composition in terms of attitudes and the more homogeneous pattern that our results show in this respect could be interpreted as a consequence of endogenous factors within the civil society sector, such as the historical legacy and ideological profile of the organisations. Here, two separate and not mutually irreconcilable hypotheses could be put forward. On the one hand, it is possible that holding a certain set of attitudes is an important selection criterion for becoming a leader, creating

mechanisms of ‘ideological control’ of the people who are appointed, elected, or recruited to higher positions in the organisations. These mechanisms would function in a similar way as other requirements such as higher education, thus creating more or less formal selection criteria for career advancement (cf. Johansson et al., 2022). On the other hand, it is also possible that a mechanism of socialisation as well as long internal career trajectories (between 5 and 12 years before becoming a leader on average) contribute to shaping the relatively homogenous attitudes among the civil society leaders. Adhering to these attitudes could become part of a collective identity that is also part of a professionalisation process, as described in the introduction to this chapter.

The similarities in terms of attitudes considered in our study cut across different civil society regimes as well as the different degrees to which civil society sector is professionalised. This suggests that there exists a possible core value community of the civil society elites beyond specificities of different national contexts that shapes the composition of the top-level civil society leaders. What might be called a ‘civil society ethos’ could possibly distinguish civil society elites from other elites.

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Appendix

Variables	Survey questions	Response alternatives	Dummy variables
Age	Which year were you born?	Numerical	45 years or younger 46–55 years 56–65 years 66 years or older
Gender	Please indicate your gender	Female, male, non-binary	1 = Male 0 = Female

(continued)

(continued)

Variables	Survey questions	Response alternatives	Dummy variables
Education	Highest level of education you have achieved	PhD or equivalent, master's degree, bachelor's degree, diploma in vocational training, secondary school, primary school, no formal education	1 = Higher education 0 = Lower education
Country of birth	Where were you born?	Country X, other European country, country outside of Europe, prefer not to answer	1 = Native 0 = Foreign born
Leadership position	Which of the following titles describe best your position in the organisation?	Chair or president (or similar), vice chair or vice president (or similar), secretary general, executive director, or chief executive (or similar), vice secretary general, vice executive director or vice chief executive (or similar), Other	1 = Secretary general, vice secretary general (or similar), 2 = Non-secretary general, vice secretary general (or similar)

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4

Organisational, Reputational, and Visible Leaders: A Comparison of Three Approaches to Civil Society Elite Identification

Cecilia Santilli and Roberto Scaramuzzino

Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the notion of civil society elites and in the process of civil society hierarchisation. Excluded for many years from classical elite studies, recent research in this field has shown that civil society, as with other sectors, embodies actors with different interests who might compete for controlling 'valuable resources, such as money, information, expertise and knowledge or ability to mobilize extensive numbers of people to push for policy change' (Johansson & Uhlin, 2020, p. 83).

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Starting from this point, we apply and critically evaluate the results of three different elite identification methods—the positional method, the reputational method, and claims-making analysis. The aim is to address the implications of different methods of elite identification for our understanding of civil society elites and to reflect on the methodological challenges in the study of civil society elites. Hence, we focus on comparing both the application and operationalisation of the methods and their results in terms of which actors are identified. We are interested both in the extent to which the identified actors overlap between methods and in the types of actors that tend to show up with one method and not the other.

The methods are applied to the context of Italian civil society. Common to all the three methods is that they address power stratification in Italian civil society by exploring the accumulation of different types of resources whose uneven distribution can give rise to civil society elites. The main contribution of the chapter is thus methodological. Two of the methods, the positional and reputational methods, are directly derived from elite studies (see Hoffman-Lange, 2017), while the third is ‘borrowed’ from social movement studies (e.g. Cinalli & Giugni, 2013). We will refer to this third method as ‘the visibility method’.

There is a clear link between the method of elite identification and the understanding of resources, power, and influence as expressed by Ursula Hoffman-Lange (2017) concerning political elites: ‘The choice of method for identifying and studying elites is associated with theoretical differences about the loci of power and influence in modern societies and also with different objectives of elite research’ (p. 86). Hence, we will briefly discuss some of the theoretical assumptions about resources and power for each method before delving into the application of the methods in the Italian context. We depart from the assumption that civil society is a heterogeneous field made up of many different actors with different aims and characterised by soft and indirect forms of power (Scaramuzzino, 2020), which is why its stratification is based on different sources of power such as economic, political, organisational, individual, formal, and informal power.

Italian civil society is characterised by high degrees of informality in its governance (Polizzi & Bassoli, 2011). Recent studies have shown that access to arenas for decision-making and positions of power and influence is regulated by complex, opaque, and corporatist structures and

procedures (Polizzi & Bassoli, 2011; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021). These specificities make it evident that different methodologies for the identification of civil society elites can provide different understandings of who the elites are, for instance, depending on whether we focus on formal positions of power or on reputations of being powerful. The visibility method from social movement studies adds an important perspective to the study of civil society elites. In fact, there is a lack of systematic analysis of how these three aspects of power, that is, formal position, reputation, and visibility, tend to contribute to the stratification of power in civil society and can be used to identify the elites.

Methods of Elite Identification

The Positional Method

The positional approach in this chapter draws on a large-scale mapping of civil society organisations (CSOs) and their leaders at the national level based on indicators of resources (see the Appendix to this volume) that allow us to identify resource-rich organisations and their leaders.

In elite studies, there is a broad agreement with the assumption that formal leadership positions, or ‘command posts’, as termed by Mills (1956), are a relevant element for the identification of elites. In the last century the dominant theories on elites have defined and analysed elites as those occupying prestigious and stable positions in both the public and the private sectors (Schjif, 2013; Wedel, 2017). In fact, since the work of Robert Michels (2001) on the ‘oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy’, many strands of elite theory have related elitism to top positions in organisations. It was, according to Michels, within the complex, large-scale organisations of the labour movement that individuals monopolised and hoarded organisational means and resources thus producing an internal stratification that distanced the leaders from the masses. According to this assumption, resources are largely tied to positions of leadership in organisations of national relevance (Hoffman-Lange, 2017), and elites are those who can exert influence through their strategic positions in powerful organisations (Higley & Burton, 2006).

This approach has some pitfalls in the sense that it does not give any specific guidelines for specifying either the horizontal boundaries (i.e. the boundaries between civil society and other sectors) or the vertical boundaries (i.e. the boundaries between the elite and the non-elite). ‘The inclusion of elite sectors and the choice of cut-off criteria for distinguishing elite and non-elite positions have to rely on the results of previous research into the importance of different sectors, organisations, and leadership positions’ (Hoffman-Lange, 2017, p. 82).

Following this method, we choose as our point of departure to focus on the formal leaders of CSOs of national relevance. This study draws on a sampling of relevant organisations active at the national level in Italy. The organisations were selected because of their high level of status and recognition both in civil society and by the state. In order to identify these organisations, we used five indicators that allow us a broad and complex interpretation of organisational resources following the Multi-Dimensional Measure of Resource Stratification in Civil Society and adapted to the Italian context (see Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021; Scaramuzzino & Lindellee, 2020).

The civil society elites would then be identified as the top leaders of the CSOs identified, which could include people in the following positions: the top representative leaders such as presidents, chairpersons and their deputies, and board members as well as the directors, secretary generals, and their deputies.

The method is considered to be quite inclusive leading to an overestimation of the size of the elites and thus leading to the inclusion of individuals whose actual power and influence can be questioned (Hoffman-Lange, 2017).

The Reputational Method

The reputational approach is based on an analysis of the perception that civil society leaders have on which actors are influential in society. The reputational approach is thus not directly bound to the organisational resources but rather to a subjective understanding of the power dynamics and power distribution by actors in the field. In fact, influence and power can also be informal and linked to other elements (e.g. indirect forms of

influence, personal reputation, centrality in networks, and specific or exceptional skills) rather than to formal positions and to organisations or institutions (Wedel, 2017). Thus, the reputational method potentially takes into account both positional and personal resources (Hoffman-Lange, 2017).

The coexistence of informal charismatic and formal bureaucratic rules was already highlighted by Weber (1997), but classical elite studies have predominantly focused on formal organisational roles (see North et al., 2009, for an exception). Mainly associated with Floyd Hunter's (1953) works, the reputational approach is often used in elite studies for identifying elites. It relies on experts' opinions for defining elites and powerful actors. Some scholars have criticised this approach (Dahl, 1961; Scott, 2004) because it seems applicable only in relatively small communities where everyone knows each other, for example within an organisation or a specific policy field.

The method also has some pitfalls that can be described as the need for a broad range of experts in the field as well as a list of potential elite people for the experts to select from or with whom to rank the elite. This creates some methodological challenges in terms of setting up a representative and diverse expert group that covers different sub-fields as well as requiring them to assess a long list of names. Thus, the method has often been used in combination with other methods of elite identification. 'In combination with the positional or decisional methods, however, asking respondents to identify top influencers in their own organisations or in policy decisions in which they have been personally involved makes sense and has been successfully applied by Laumann, Knoke, and others as a form of snowball sampling' (Hoffman-Lange, 2017, p. 86).

To operationalise the reputational approach and to identify the power that derives from personal reputation, we rely on survey data focusing on the perceptions of national Italian leaders. The survey was conducted in 2021 and targeted 680 civil society elites, namely presidents, directors, and deputies of CSOs, based on the same mapping as in the positional approach. The survey received 133 answers (19% response rate). The survey was carried out based on the same mapping as in the positional approach but leaving it up to the leaders that responded to the survey to name who they consider to be influential and thus to be the elite. Due to

the lack of previous studies about civil society elites, we chose the positional elite as our experts for applying the reputational method.

For similar reasons and for the purpose of potentially identifying individuals that the positional method had missed, we chose not to present a list of possible elite persons but to leave the respondents free to identify whomever they wanted. They were asked to identify three people. Also, the survey question used for the reputational approach was formulated in a quite open statement including both power, resources, and influence. Because we assumed that many individuals in civil society do not have a complete overview of the whole sector, we chose to narrow down the question to the issues with which they worked. The question also allowed us to indicate individuals by name or position and organisations. The question was the following: 'Which three individuals in civil society do you consider to have most power, resources, or influence concerning the issues you work with? Please state names/positions and organisations'.

The method thus does not rely on actual resources wielded by the elite, as in the positional method, but rather on who has the most power, resources, or influence in the eyes of the positional elite (i.e. the leaders of the elite organisations).

The Visibility Method

The visibility method that we adopt in this study draws on a claims-making analysis that focuses on civil society actors' interventions in the public domain. This approach is based on the assumption that public visibility, and not only formal positions or reputation, can contribute to leaders' authority and legitimacy. Departing from this point, we can say that visibility is at the same time a sign and a result of power and influence. The individuals who have access to the public sphere are those with more power, and at the same time visibility gives them more influence and legitimacy. By focusing on individual political claims, in this case in national newspapers, as units of analysis, we can identify a group of civil society elites who are the most present in the public debate and thus potentially are the most influential when it comes to public opinion. In fact, many civil society organisations might be as interested in

influencing public opinion as in influencing politicians and public policy. This is true for both interest groups and for social movements (Johansson et al., 2019).

The correspondence between the formal position, reputation, and public visibility of leaders in a movement or an arena is a central question in social movements analysis (Bassoli et al., 2014; Malinick et al., 2011). In the field of elite studies, as discussed above, the formal leadership position is considered the sign of elite status (Hoffman-Lange, 2017; Michels, 2001). Some recent studies, however, have shown that the correspondence between formal positions of leadership and actual power and influence is not always obvious in social movements (Diani, 2003; Malinick et al., 2011), thus stressing the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the influence, representativity, and legitimacy of leaders.

In recent years there has been a growing research interest in how visibility in the public sphere might contribute to achieving social groups' and leaders' authority and legitimacy (Cinalli & Giugni, 2013; Nepstad & Bob, 2006). Studies in the field of social movements have shown that not only is the institutional dimension of political context relevant (i.e. structural opportunities), but public discourse (i.e. discursive opportunities) matters too when it comes to gaining influence and mobilising social groups (Benford & Snow, 2000; Cinalli & Giugni, 2011). Cinalli and Giugni (2013) in their research about Muslims' political participation in Europe showed, for instance, that the institutional and discursive dimensions are interconnected and that Muslims' political participation stems 'not only from the openness or closeness of the institutional settings' but also from access to the public debate (ibid, p. 150). That is, visibility participates in the political prioritisation or de-prioritisation of a specific issue or group.

In order to capture the civil society actors who are most visible in the public debate, we rely on the method of claims analysis that consists of retrieving interventions in the public domain on a given issue by drawing from media sources, in this case newspapers (Cinalli & Giugni, 2011; Koopmans & Statham, 1999). To be operationalised, this method needs a specific issue on which the actors can construct their claims. This is of course also part of the method's limitation because it will tend to only identify civil society elites based on visibility concerning specific policy

issues. As will be discussed below, we chose to operationalise the method concerning one specific policy issue. However, an analysis based on a wide range of policy issues would have given a more complete picture of the ‘visible’ civil society elite.

Three Types of Elites

The Organisational Elite

Indicators of resources, as explained earlier, identify the organisational elite. The first two indicators that we used measured different forms of status and recognition internal to civil society: (1) organisations that held posts in decision-making bodies within umbrella organisations in specific policy areas and (2) organisations that were members of umbrella organisations representing the civil society sector. The last three indicators measured status and recognition external to civil society: (3) organisations that were included in the tax deduction scheme for private donations, (4) organisations that were included in specific ministries’ registries for consultations, and (5) organisations that held posts in the Council for the Third Sector, which is the consultation body between the state and civil society.

These indicators can thus be understood as conditions for the inclusion of specific organisations among the elite. Following the Multi-Dimensional Measure of Resource Stratification in Civil Society (see Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021; Scaramuzzino & Lindellee, 2020), we see these indicators as ‘conditions’ for organisations to be included in the sample. Based on an approach of including all organisations that fulfilled at least one condition, a total of 293 organisations were identified. Some organisations were identified by more than one condition.

If we were to assume that all of these 293 CSOs are elite organisations and that the elite positions are the top representative leaders (‘presidente’) and executive leaders (‘direttore’) and their deputies, we end up with quite a large population of civil society elites. Although we were not able to retrieve the names of the leaders of all organisations, we still ended up with a population of 680 leaders. This confirms that the positional method is potentially very inclusive in terms of how many resources are required to be considered part of a civil society elite.

However, our method allows for a more exclusive approach to elite identification. If the conditions are the operationalisation of the indicators of resources, then resource accumulation could be measured by how many conditions the CSOs fulfil (Scaramuzzino & Lindellee, 2020). The accumulation of these indicators can thus be interpreted as an 'elite score' for an organisation. The organisations with elite scores of 4 or 5 ($N = 15$) would be at the top of the pyramid, those with an elite score of 3 ($N = 35$) would be in the middle, and those with scores of 1 or 2 would be at the base ($N = 243$). Using this elite score, it is possible to take a less-inclusive approach and to draw the vertical boundaries in a way that allows for the identification of a smaller group of high-score organisations and thus a smaller group of leaders comprising the civil society elite.

We chose the inclusive approach by sending out the survey to all 680 leaders. Although the survey, due to anonymity, would not allow any link between the respondent and their organisational affiliation, we were able to determine if the respondent was selected from an 'elite score 1', 'elite score 2', or 'elite score 3' organisation. The results of the survey clearly show that the elite score matters for some status-related variables. For instance, Italian leaders of organisations with higher scores have on average higher income than leaders of organisations with lower scores. They also tend to have networks of collaborations that span across multiple organisations.¹ These results, although only based on bivariate analyses, suggest that indeed the elite score of the organisation, which measures organisational resource accumulation, reflects the amount of resources that the leaders control.

Looking at the top elite organisations, that is, the organisations with an elite score of 4 or 5, we find 15 CSOs in Italy. Their 35 leaders could be seen as the positional civil society elite in Italy based on a very restrictive understanding of its boundaries.

¹Based on bivariate analyses of survey data concerning the elite score variable and two survey questions: 'Please indicate your total average monthly income' and 'In your professional/private network, are there individuals with a central position in the following institutions/organisations?' with 21 alternatives (e.g. 'national parliament', 'think tanks', 'banks and financial companies'). The correlations based on comparisons of mean values are significant.

The Reputational Elite

The reputational method draws on a survey of the civil society leaders of the organisations identified through the positional method. Only 60 individuals chose to answer the reputational question, and a few did not fill in all the information for all three suggested individuals. For the purpose of the reputational method, the level of analysis is not the respondent but rather the answer in terms of the identified elite. In this logic, each respondent gets three 'votes' that can be assigned to any individual they know of. Because no respondent would give more than one vote to the same person, a single individual would not be able to receive more than 60 votes. In our analysis, to be considered complete the answers should contain enough information to be able to identify at least the sector/organisation that the respondent had indicated for the elite person. After removing the answers that were not complete, we were left with 149 complete answers, which means that our 60 respondents had given 2.5 votes each on average.

In the reputational study, the respondents were asked to name three individuals *in civil society* whom they considered to have the most power, resources, or influence concerning the issues they work with. The question was clearly pointing at individuals within the sphere of civil society, although it left open the respondent's interpretation of what it means to be 'in civil society'. A sectoral analysis of the reputational elite, based on our theoretical understanding of the boundaries between societal sectors, in fact shows that many respondents tended to identify individuals belonging to other sectors.

Following a similar definition of the sector as we have used in the positional method (see method Appendix), 91 named individuals belonging to the civil society sector. It is clear, however, that 58 individuals identified by our respondents did not fall into our definition of organised civil society used in the positional method. However, in a broader understanding of civil society, we find leaders of three trade unions. We also find a hybrid organisation, Equo Garantito, that organises and represents fair trade producers and retailers that are both non-profit and for-profit. Finally, we also find three individuals engaged in civil society with no

clear strong organisational affiliation. One is a university professor in physics who has been engaged in mobilisation and movements for world peace and the environment. The second is a former member of parliament and is engaged in many organisations working with issues of civil society and welfare. Both of these individuals can be considered examples of charismatic leaders whose role transcends their organisational affiliation. The third individual is not named but has a role in coordinating a consultative body for CSOs engaged in social promotion.

The second largest sector that is identified as the organisational affiliation of the civil society elite is the public sector ($N = 41$). Here we find both political and administrative positions at all levels of administration, including local, regional, national, and EU level. A small number of individuals identified by the respondents ($N = 5$) we would categorise as belonging to the business sector. It is interesting to note that these individuals tend to serve either representative bodies for the business sector, for instance employers' organisations (and hence formally associations of employers), or parts of the business sector that are close to the civil society sector, and they are characterised by elements of idealism and a strong value base such as the fair trade movement. Close to this sector we also find one individual representing an umbrella organisation for public and private for-profit landlords. Other smaller categories that could belong to different sectors are the media ($N = 2$) and universities/research institutes ($N = 2$). These categories might include public, business, or civil society organisations. The largest group, however, consists of individuals holding positions in civil society organisations.

Compared to the positional method, we find that our approach using the reputational method allows us to question the self-evidence of the concept of 'in civil society' as a sector characterised by clear demarcations and to instead suggest blurred horizontal boundaries of the elites. The understanding of 'civil society' in the Italian context among the positional elite seems to be broader than the academic understanding of it, including not only people with less clear organisational affiliations (the non-organisational civil society elite) but also trade union representatives, representatives for business interests, and political leaders.

Among the 91 individuals who were stated to be affiliated with the civil society sector among the reputational elite, we were able to link 89

individuals to a specific CSO (based on our definition of civil society). Some CSOs turned up more than once, resulting in a total of 56 CSOs whose representatives were deemed to be a civil society elite. As in the positional method, the number of mentions in the reputational method can also be seen as an indicator of the accumulation of reputational resources. If we look closer at the organisations that got at least two mentions, we find 12 CSOs.

Among the 56 CSOs identified by the reputational method, the number of organisations also identified through the positional method is 24, which means a consistent overlap with the positional method. However, among the 12 CSOs mentioned more than once in the reputational method, the overlap is even larger. In fact, eight of them were also identified through the positional method. The fact that many of the civil society actors identified through the reputational approach overlap with the more resource-rich organisations identified through the positional approach suggests that the resource indicators applied in the positional method and the inclusive approach that was adopted here tend to draw vertical boundaries between the elite and the non-elite, who also include the reputational elite to a large extent.

It is, however, also interesting to look at what the reputational approach adds in terms of vertical boundaries. What actors do we identify in terms of having the 'most power, resources or influence' that we do not capture with our indicators? A few CSOs ($N = 6$) that were identified through the reputational method could not have been included in the positional method due to the fact that the positional method was targeting CSOs active at the national level, while these organisations were local or based at the EU level. This of course challenges the assumption that the civil society elite are by definition a national phenomenon.

The other CSOs ($N = 26$) could have been included in the positional method but were not, supposedly because they did not fulfil any of the conditions determined by the organisational resource indicators. Among these, a large category are the bank foundations ($N = 8$) whose influence on civil society is mostly based on their control over funding. In this sense they tend to function in a similar way as public funding, although they are themselves civil society actors (see Chap. 9 in this volume).

It is interesting to note that, although our question would allow the identification of charismatic leaders whose elite status would not be linked to organisational affiliation, we only find three individuals among the reputational elite with no clear organisational affiliation. This suggests that the positional elite tend to share a view of civil society elites as organisational rather than individual.

The Visible Elite

As discussed earlier, claims-making analysis requires a focus on a specific issue for which the claims are made. The issue considered in our study is that of migration, which is one of the main contentious public issues in recent years in Italy (Della Porta, 2018). There is, in fact, an open conflict between many civil society actors (not only actors belonging to the migration sub-field) and the government since the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 (Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2022). The data were gathered following a two-step procedure normally used in claims-making analysis (Cinalli & Giugni, 2011, 2013). In the first step, we selected the following four national newspapers (available online through the source Factiva): *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, *Il Giornale*, and *La Repubblica*. The choice of newspapers was to ensure a sample as representative and unbiased as possible. *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica*, and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* are the most relevant newspapers in Italy. The first historically represents the moderate Italian bourgeoisie, the second has a progressive centre-left orientation, and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* is a relatively recent newspaper that has a liberal orientation. *Il Giornale* is a conservative newspaper. The articles were harvested by using relevant keywords (focusing both on the actors and the issue) for the period 2015–2019, starting in the year when the debates around the so-called refugee crisis began until the year of the greatest clash on the issue and its spillover to the whole civil society sector (Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2022).

With this method the unit of analysis is the single claim, which is an intervention made by any actor in the media linked to the issues of migration and civil society. One article may of course include more than one claim, and one claim could be made by more than one actor. In total, 400

claims were coded by random sampling of 701 claims selected from the newspapers. For each claim, we identified the claimant, the form, the addressee, the content, the object, and the framing. This methodology allowed us to analyse which actors have visibility in the public debate.

A sectoral analysis of the most relevant actors of the claims across the timespan from 2015 to 2019 shows that the most common types of actors were civil society actors amounting to 68% of all claims. This category includes CSOs, informal actors, non-organised actors, trade unions, and civil society as an unspecified actor. The second most relevant actors are state and political actors, making up 30% of the claims. The third group present in the sample are international public actors with 2% of the claims. Similarly to the reputational approach, we find mostly claims by civil society actors, but also claims by public national (mostly) and international political actors. This shows that civil society elites tend to appear in the public sphere in dialogue and interaction (more or less contentiously) with public authorities.

In Table 4.1, we look at the civil society actors' claims (N = 274). The columns distinguish between collective actors and individual actors as claimants.

As shown in Table 4.1, we found 162 claims by collective actors (59%) and 112 claims by individuals (41%). Among the group of collective actors, the main actors were CSOs (59%) followed by unspecified actors, for instance 'a group of citizens' or 'civil society' (25%), specific citizens groups (9%), and trade unions (7%).

In the remaining 112 claims, the main actor is an individual. Analysing this group, we can see that some individuals represent a specific

Table 4.1 Number of claims by type of civil society actor

Sector	Collective actor		Individual actor	
	N.	%	N	%
CSO	95	59	33	29
Org. not specified	40	25	67	60
Citizens informal groups	15	9		
Trade unions	12	7	12	11
Total	162	100	112	100

Source: Authors' own calculations

organisation or citizens' group in the claim. In the case of these 45 claims, the name of the person is followed by the name of the organisation she or he represents (33 claims refer to CSOs). Hence, in 67 claims we find as main actors individuals without any reference to an organisation. Among these claims, a majority of individuals ($N = 37$) clearly belong to one or more organisations, while the rest ($N = 30$) do not belong to a specific CSO. The claims-making analysis thus seems to open for a less-organisational understanding of civil society elites. This is evident both in terms of identifying individual leaders making claims without mentioning which CSOs they represent and individuals who are not immediately linkable to a specific CSO.

In order to see if there is any correspondence between the three types of elites, we look at the CSOs that are present in at least one claim. This analysis includes the organisations mentioned in the claims, the individuals mentioned in the claims with organisational affiliation, and the individuals for whom we are able to identify an organisational affiliation. We can identify 42 CSOs through the claims-making analysis, 26 of whom are also identified by the positional approach with an overlap of 61%. The overlap with the reputational method is nine CSOs, corresponding to 21%. It might be important, however, to keep in mind that the inclusive approach in the positional method produced a much larger group of organisations (293) than the reputational method (56).

As with the other methods of identification, we can use the number of claims made by a specific actor as a measure of resource accumulation. We find 23 CSOs that are involved in at least 3 claims with 2 actors having 30 claims each. Compared to the positional elite and the reputational elite, we find a larger overlap among these highly visible CSOs. The overlap is 69% ($N = 16$) for the positional method and 35% ($N = 8$) for the reputational method.

The horizontal boundaries of this visible elite are not only defined by the definition of civil society but also defined according to the issue-centred method, in our case with a focus on the migration issue. Although it is clear from this analysis that many of the representatives of the visible elite are organisations that are working with many different issues, the bias towards the migration policy area is evident from the presence of some specific CSOs that are working mostly with refugees. Among these

we find CSOs such as Seawatch and Mediterranea running rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea and local associations such as Centro Astalli running refugee centres in Rome and Baobab working with social inclusion mostly with migrants. Some CSOs also tend to gain visibility through charismatic leaders who are present in claims sometimes as individuals without any reference to the organisation. Here we find leaders such as Pope Francis I, don Ciotti, a Catholic priest involved in the fight against organised crime, Gino Strada, a doctor and founder of Emergency, an organisation giving humanitarian medical help to victims of conflicts, and Carola Rackete, the captain of a rescue ship that challenged the Italian government's attempt to enforce the blockade of all ports for migrants.

Moving from the organisational level to the individual level, the individuals who have made more than one claim in the media without any reference or clear affiliation to an organisation are all public figures who have been visible in the debate but do not have a clear sectoral position. Roberto Saviano (N = 7) is a famous journalist and writer, Luigi Manconi (N = 7) is a former politician, MEP, and academic (sociology), Mimmo Lucano (N = 5) is a former politician at the local level and mayor of a small town in southern Italy, while Aboubakar Soumhaoro (N = 2) is an activist for migrants' labour rights.

The visible elite thus seem to be less bound to organisations, and this might have to do with the personified public debate (Andrews & Caren, 2010) suggesting the need for a 'face' in claims-making, even when the statement comes from a collective actor. It also suggests that while some institutional channels for resources and influence might be reserved for formal organisations (e.g. funding, interest representation), the public debate is much more open for individual charismatic leaders.

Conclusion

The application of the three methods of elite identification have highlighted some crucial challenges when it comes to civil society elites. The first challenge relates to the issue of the *horizontal boundaries of the elite*, that is, the boundaries of civil society. In our operationalisation of the

approaches, the positional and the claims-making approach require that a sectoral delimitation be applied by the researcher. Where to draw the line for the civil society sector is a methodological challenge common to both approaches. The reputational approach, in our application, instead leaves the definition to the respondent, and from our study it is clear that the respondents' understanding of 'actors in civil society' did not match our expectations. In fact, many respondents identified politicians and representatives of the state as civil society elites. This suggests a lack of consensus around the sphere of civil society and its boundaries. There is probably also a tension between 'elites in civil society' as elite groups that have influence in civil society and 'civil society elites' as elites whose societal influence is derived from a position in civil society. Although our understanding is the latter, it is possible that some respondents interpreted our question as referring to the former definition.

Another relevant challenge can be related to the *tension between individuals and organisations* when it comes to civil society elites. As an elite, the civil society elite is made up of individuals, while civil society is most often described as being composed of collective actors. There is thus a need for handling the tension between a sector in which 'belonging' is often ascribed through membership or affiliation with a collective actor (organisation or movement) and a category (elite) that defines a group based on individual characteristics. It is clear that the positional approach subordinates the identification of individuals to the identification of organisations while the reputational and the claims-making approaches allow more flexibility when it comes to what type of actor can be identified, including individuals with no clear organisational affiliation.

A third methodological challenge is related to the *segmentation of civil society in policy areas*. We find this challenge in all of our methods. Some of the indicators are bound to specific policy areas when it comes to both public consultations and umbrella organisations. The reputational method needs to take into consideration that civil society actors might not have an overview of the power relations in the whole sector but rather a more narrow view linked to their specific issue. The claims-making analysis needs to be linked to a specific issue, and thus any selection of policy areas, no matter how numerous, is potentially biased.

A fourth challenge that we can identify is related to the *vertical boundaries of the elite*. In our application, all three approaches are more or less inclusive based on measures of accumulation in terms of numbers of conditions fulfilled, votes given by respondents, or claims made in the newspapers. Because the approaches measure status, resources, and power differently, they can also be used in combination by looking at different forms of overlap between the elites. Also, because power is more diffuse in the sphere of civil society than in other spheres, we can see the methods of elite identification as complementing each other and allowing us to identify an ‘inner-core’ elite drawing on all three types of power—positional, reputational, and visible. Accordingly, it is at the intersection and overlap of these elites that we need to look in order to be able to identify the ‘inner-core’ (see Fig. 4.1).

The model illustrates our finding that the three elites, identified with the three methods, tend to overlap. In our case we find, for instance, eight CSOs that are identified as part of all three elites and that in our understanding could be seen as an ‘inner-core’. It should of course be kept in mind that the visibility approach in this chapter has a bias towards the

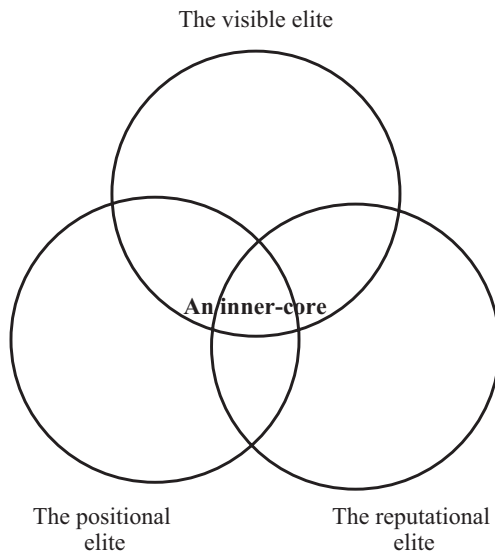


Fig. 4.1 Methods of elite identification and their intersection. (Source: Figure made by the authors)

migration policy area. To be more representative of the civil society sector in Italy, our study should have been complemented with a claims-making analysis focusing on other important policy issues (e.g. welfare, environment, and international solidarity). Such claims-making analyses would probably have allowed us to identify other CSOs and their leaders as the visible elite and thus to expand the ‘inner core’.

More in general, one of the challenges of identifying civil society elites boils down to the fact that ‘civil society’, although a concept frequently used in research, is not self-evident for many actors and not easily circumscribed in the field work. Although drawing the boundaries of the elite is acknowledged as a main methodological challenge by many elite scholars, it might be an even greater obstacle when it comes to civil society.

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Part II

Civil Society Elite Reproduction



5

Consecrating Civil Society Elites in Europe: Examining Civil Society Prizes

Niklas Altermark and Håkan Johansson

Introduction

Prize-giving is one of the most common mechanisms for the consecration and formation of social hierarchies. Prizes are cheap ways of paying tribute, and because they rarely disappear there is an accumulating number of prizes and awards within different social fields (Asante et al., 2020; Best, 2008). Prizes have played, and continue to play, a key role in film, literature, arts, and academia. Status in such fields tends to be closely linked to the recognition of certain prizes as particularly prestigious and awarding (e.g. Inglis, 2018; Lincoln, 2007). Being awarded a Nobel Prize, a Booker Prize, a Pulitzer Prize, or a Golden Palm provides the awardee with extensive prestige and public recognition. They place the

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receiver in a group with other prominent and admired individuals. Although most other prizes are less known, they also grant awardees recognition, albeit among a smaller circle of peers (e.g. Berry, 1981; Volz & Lee, 2012; Zuckerman, 1977).

Although we find extensive studies of prizes in a wide range of social fields, few have explored civil society prizes, that is, when leaders, employees, or volunteers win prizes for their engagement within civil society, and even fewer have studied prizes aimed at top civil society leaders. The purpose of this chapter is to address this gap by answering the following research questions: How common are civil society prizes among top civil society leaders across European civil societies, and who are granting prizes in different societal contexts? Based on sociological approaches to prizes and awards, we assume that prizes function as mechanisms of status formation and status differentiation within social fields. Our study of prize-giving 'at the top' aims to advance our understanding of the formation of civil society elites in Europe (e.g. Altermark et al., 2022; Johansson & Uhlin, 2020).

This chapter draws on a comparative study of civil society prizes in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. Our data consist of a survey targeting the civil society leaders of major, resource-rich, and national civil society organisations (CSOs) in these countries (see Appendix for further clarification). Our comparison of the frequency of awarding prizes among top CSOs as well as who praises top leaders allows us to explore the consecration of civil society elites across country contexts and civil society regimes. The four countries studied here offer extensive variation regarding how civil society is organized and its relations to states and markets. We draw on the sociological literature on prizes and awards as well as Bourdieu's theory of fields and capital. However, our study comes with some limitations. Although explaining prize reception has been a key focus in the sociological literature on prizes, this lies beyond the scope for this chapter. This also includes explaining why people win a prize or the effects such prizes might have on individuals' careers or status positions (e.g. Benveniste et al., 2022).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, we provide an overview of the existing literature on prizes as a tool of stratification and field constitution before presenting our survey data and methodological choices.

Thereafter follows our descriptive analysis of prizes and awards among top civil society leaders in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. In the discussion, we explore country-specific differences as a reflection on the role civil society plays in each context and discuss the need for further research.

Theorising Prizes and Awards

A common starting point for much theorising on prizes and awards is that they operate by separating extraordinary individuals from ordinary people (see Bourdieu, 1984, 1996). They construct the category of a 'winner', while others are made into 'losers' (Childress et al., 2017, p. 48). Such roles are of special importance in cultural fields where prizes function as a form of symbolic capital, equal to money in the field of business (English, 2005).

Prizes include the transformation of economic capital into symbolic capital. Awards might come with low financial costs, 'the value may be very high for the recipient. The costs mainly consist in the selection and presentation at a special ceremony' (Frey, 2007, p. 7). Although prizes contain important elements of economic gain, both for receivers and for givers, this is not what structures the field of civil society. People are instead praised for their commitment to a common cause or to a good cause. We suggest that prizing in the field of civil society shares similarities to those in the fields of arts and culture since people engage on the premises of doing good deeds for a public purpose rather than for personal profit. It thus appears reasonable to interpret prizes as a form of symbolic capital in this sector, like cultural fields.

Some prizes are however more prestigious than others because they provide more symbolic capital, but the symbolic value of a prize depends on set of factors. Its value corresponds with the reputation of the prize-giver because the symbolic capital that comes with prizes and awards is closely connected to the status of the awarding organisations (Allen & Parsons, 2006). The status of a prize may also be dependent on the composition of the jury because prominent juries appear to increase the status of a prize. This implies that the symbolic value of a prize is linked to the status of the people who are connected to the prize (Pallas et al., 2016,

p. 1074). The status of a prize similarly depends on the status of previous awardees because admired individuals tend to shine also on future generations. This goes both ways as despite being individually praised, the awardee has incentives to stay loyal to the prize-giving organisation 'because doing otherwise would reduce the value of the reward received' (Frey, 2007, p. 7).

While this strand of research focuses on prizes as a system of capital exchange, other studies capture the determinants of being awarded. Childress et al. (2017) point to the significance of the status of the individual being awarded and the organisation that they are representing as important factors, that is, high-status individuals or individuals belonging to high-status organisations are more often awarded prizes compared to those lacking such recognition. In a study of film prizes, Rossman and Schilke (Rossman & Schilke, 2014, p. 32) found a spillover effect with regard to networks and collaborators. This suggests that people are more likely to be awarded prizes if associated with high-status individuals.

Prizes also have field-constituting effects, especially in areas characterised by weak professional development. Anand and Brittany (2008) suggest that prizes configure fields by creating ceremonial spaces of interaction and by organising participants around common and particularly worthy interests. Rituals at prize events produce and consolidate hierarchies. Instituting a prize may also give the founding organisation status and help them draw attention to certain issues. Prizes and awards can also strengthen the legitimacy of a social field and reaffirm its boundaries (Anand & Watson, 2004). Sapiro (2016) argues that literary prizes consolidate the autonomy of the world of literature by highlighting aesthetic merits. This separates the literary fields from business (which allocates status by merit of sales) and politics (where ideology appears as a prime value). Cultural fields share some similarities to civil society, with respect to both the insistence on autonomy from other fields and the lack of widely recognized status hierarchies. Against this background, Boli's (Boli, 2006, p. 106) work on the constitution of a global moral order is relevant, suggesting that award ceremonies in the global humanitarian field serve the purpose of elevating prized individuals and of dramatising a commitment to the global moral order. Thereby, prize ceremonies contribute to establishing a certain ethos in the field.

Based on this literature review, we distinguish four propositions that will inform our empirical analysis of prizes and awards. First, prizes and awards have field-constituting effects through field differentiation (see Best, 2008). They produce and reproduce what is considered particularly worthy by highlighting individuals and their achievements as worthy of appraisals. This occurs by legitimising certain issues, practices, and values, thus separating this field from what is valued in other fields. Second, prizes create hierarchies as certain individuals are separated from a larger group and are defined as extraordinary. This is of particular importance in fields with weak formal structures, like civil society. Third, prizes provide symbolic capital to the awarded individuals, and potentially also to the awarding institution depending on the status of the awardee. Symbolic capital works as a non-monetary but widely recognised resource within the field, but also outside since it can be traded for political or economic capitals. Fourth, the status of a prize depends on the status of givers and receivers and less on the sum of money provided. This suggests that the symbolic capital gained is higher if a person receives a prize or an award from an organisation with high status and if previous laureates come with high esteem.

Data and Methodology

Selection of Countries

This chapter draws on a study of prizes to top leaders in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. The countries included differ across several dimensions, including how civil society is organised and its main functions with regard to states and markets. It is, however, a delicate issue to both analyse and find comparable dimensions because national civil societies come with great diversity. Social origin theory offers some help in this respect because it provides us with a way to categorize civil societies based on their macro-level characteristics (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Studying different countries' levels of public welfare spending (relating to the core function that CSOs play as engaged either

in public service provision or in advocacy) and the size of the sector as a 'job market' (reflecting sector-level professionalisation) allows for a distinction of types of civil societies, which are sometimes referred to as civil society regimes (see also Arvidson et al., 2018). The liberal regime type is connected to low government spending and a high degree of social service orientation among CSOs, and this is linked to high levels of volunteerism. The corporatist regime type reflects extensive cooperation/consultation between state and civil society, often regarding social services. And in the social democratic regime type, service provision is mainly provided by the state and civil society mainly performs advocacy functions.

These regime differences have informed our choice of countries in terms of Italy (corporatist), Sweden (social democratic), and the UK (liberal). UK civil society (or the charity sector) stands out as highly professionalised, with a small set of large CSOs (or charities) that have extensive staff and are highly involved in service delivery, yet also receive substantial donations from the public in general and from philanthropists. A legacy of popular movements continues to shape Swedish civil society, dominated by historically large membership-based organisations that are mainly engaged in advocacy. Civil society in Italy has historically been corporatist and has been highly involved in service provision in close connections with the state. The decentralised structure of organisations and the local orientation of activities is also worth mentioning. Our fourth case, Poland, can be described as an example of a hybrid regime, shaped by the fact that CSOs served key functions in the democratisation process. Recent scholarship describes Polish civil society as 're-combined', suggesting that new and old forms of engagement and organisation coexist and compete (see Ekiert & Kubik, 2014). Others stress the weak organisational structure of Polish civil society with many small organisations, albeit dominated by a few large and resource-rich actors (Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017).

Data Collection

This chapter builds on a survey targeting top civil society leaders in the above-mentioned countries (see Appendix 1 of this book for details on the sampling process, survey design, response rate, etc.). Our analysis draws on the survey item: ‘Have you ever been awarded any prize or award for your engagement in civil society?’ Respondents could answer this question by yes/no, which in turn was followed by an invitation to specify which awards and prizes they had received. We coded this open question in the following manner. First, we coded the listed prizes and awards into a numeric variable reflecting how many prizes and awards they had received. To capture a cumulative effect, we coded each prize as a unique prize; and the more listed unique prizes, the higher was the number of prizes. The country-specific coding was conducted by scholars with sufficient knowledge about each nation and who were internally coordinated to ensure inter-coder reliability.

We furthermore coded the listed awards and prizes into type of prize providers based on the background of the giving organisation. The following categories were identified during the coding process: (a) state awards, that is, national awards given by a state body (e.g. royal, presidential, and military awards); (b) local public prizes, that is, given by local or regional governments; (c) business awards, that is, given by business/for-profit entities; (d) civil society prizes, that is, prizes and awards given by civil society actors within the country; (e) international prizes, that is, given by international governmental organisations or international CSOs (i.e. foreign based); (f) academic awards, that is, given by higher education institutions and other educational bodies for research/academic/education-related achievements; (g) media awards, for example prizes for civil society given by online media or newspapers. Each prize listed was coded into one category, implying that each respondent could receive prizes from different types of prize-givers. Answers that did not contain sufficient information were coded as missing, for instance, when respondents stated that they had received an award, but their answer did not clearly spell out the prize-giver (e.g. answers like ‘I don’t know’ or ‘The prize was for an inclusive project’).

Distribution of Prizes across Countries

Top leaders of major national CSOs tend to be praised individuals. Our study shows that about 30% of the leaders had received a prize for their engagement in the sector. At the same time, almost two-thirds had not received a prize. It is most common to receive a prize in Poland, as almost half of the Polish leaders are awarded a prize for their engagement in civil society. Leaders are less often prized in Italy, Sweden, and the UK. One possible interpretation is that prizes and awards are a more frequent currency in Poland or that the Polish civil society sector is smaller such that there are fewer people to award prizes to (Table 5.1).

Our study moreover allowed us to compare how often leaders gain prizes, that is, the cumulative effect of awarding prizes. Most respondents who had received a prize or an award had only received one or two. A smaller group of leaders had, however, received a larger number of prizes and awards. Although it lies beyond the scope of this chapter to explain why some leaders gain several prizes, scholars have suggested that prizes often come with a so-called Matthew or Matilda effect (Merton, 1968). These notions refer to the mechanism of cumulative recognition. In other words, if you already have received a prize, it is highly likely that you will receive another one (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006). Being awarded implies a sign of consecration, that is, defined as an awardable civil society leader. Several prizes might also reflect long and successful careers, that is, leaders with a large number of prizes have been active in the sector for a long time, providing them with more ‘opportunities’ compared to newcomers in the field. While these are relevant individual-level factors, we also find

Table 5.1 Civil society elite appraisals in European countries

Have you received an award or a prize for your engagement in civil society?	Country				Total
	Sweden	Italy	UK	Poland	
Yes, I have (%)	28	27	34	46	33
No, I have not (%)	73	73	66	54	67
Total N.	306	129	122	172	729

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey. Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. * = 5%, ** = 1%, and *** = 0.1% significance. n.s. = not significant. The association was significant to the level of *** and 0.163 for Cramer's V

differences across country contexts. Once again, Polish civil society leaders stand out as being most frequently awarded. The average number of prizes in this context is around 1.9 prizes per leader. Italian leaders are awarded prizes almost to the same degree, as they receive an average of 1.79 prizes. Leaders in the UK receive on average 1.62 prizes, and Swedish civil society leaders receive the least with an average of 1.40 prizes.

Who Consecrates Civil Society Elites

The sociology of prizes assumes that the type of giver and the status of the prize are key elements concerning the amount of symbolic capital that is awarded to the prize receiver. Our analysis does not offer us the possibility to analyse the motives of the giving organisation, but we can still analyse the type of organisation that dominates prize-giving to top civil society leaders in each respective context. The distinction between internal and external recognition is a useful analytical distinction in this respect. Civil society leaders might be awarded a prize from their peers, colleagues, and fellow civil society leaders, but they might also be awarded a prize from actors external to the sector like the state, business, media, or academia. Table 5.2 shows the distribution of prize-givers for each context.

Our study illustrates some interesting differences regarding which type of actor is awarding prizes to top civil society leaders. The state (or other public agency) is a central producer of symbolic capital, and this is especially evident in Italy. Although we find that Italian civil society leaders receive prizes from a wide range of actors, a state prize is the most common. Almost 40% of the awarded Italian civil society leaders had received a state award. The most common award is a state medal, albeit not of the highest order. Top civil society leaders are hence given tribute by public honours system that annually awards individuals for their services to the country. It appears to be relatively common for civil society leaders to gain such awards, which reflects the country's corporatist tradition. Local and regional prizes were also often mentioned. Public actors are thus the key sources of recognition for top civil society leaders in Italy. A significant share of the Italian leaders also receives awards from peers, that

Table 5.2 Types of awards to civil society elites (percentages). Note that the total percentages for each country sums up to a larger number than 100% as prize-receivers may be awarded prizes from several different actors

	Sweden	Italy	UK	Poland	Number of analysed cases	Cramer's V
State awards	10	38	71	57	195	0.499/***
Local public awards	17	38	5	31	195	0.270/**
Corporate awards	6	3	8	16	195	n.s.
Civil society awards	69	24	18	24	195	0.456/***
International awards	6	10	8	9	195	n.s.
Academic awards	4	21	18	0	195	0.303/***
Media awards	7	0	8	9	195	n.s.
Total N.	73	29	38	58		

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey. Note. The columns report the number of leaders who have received an award in one country

The number of analysed cases are the total number of individuals having received a prize and provided examples of the prize received.

The table does not report those who have not received an award. The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V.

* = 5%, ** = 1%, and *** = 0.1% significance. n.s. = not significant

is, civil society prizes. They are to lesser extent awarded by academia, and prizes awarded by media or businesses are insignificant.

In Poland, the state is also the dominant actor in giving prizes to top leaders in civil society. More than half expressed that they had received a prize from the state. Most examples of state prizes listed were medals of honour, reflecting that civil society leaders have been seen as worthy of state recognition. The Polish constitution (Article 138) grants the president the right to confer orders and decorations as 'the supreme honour for the civil and military merits, during the time of peace and war, for the glory and development of the Republic of Poland' (www.president.pl). It is moreover common to have received a prize from local authorities or public agencies. However, Polish civil society leaders also receive awards from the business sector, but to a lesser degree compared to state or public authorities.

The UK follows a similar pattern with strong emphasis on state recognition of top leaders (see Harper, 2020). The most frequently listed prize

is a royal honour. Leaders of major organisations have frequently received an Order of the British Empire or a Commander of the British Empire. The royal honours system was historically an exclusive prize given to distinguished groups of individuals who had performed service to the country. Since the early 1990s, the system has been democratised by increasingly awarding prizes to people engaged in charities and the voluntary sector (*ibid.*). The honours go to people who have made achievements in public life and/or committed themselves to serving and helping Britain. People are nominated and selected by an honours committee, and the final decision is made by the queen, who also hands over the honour. Top leaders in the UK are less awarded by business, academia, or the media. They are also rarely awarded by local authorities.

Sweden differs to the other countries in that a small part of the top leaders have been awarded a prize from state or local public authorities. For instance, approximately one-quarter of the awarded Swedish leaders had received a prize from the state and local authorities. In Italy and Poland, the same number exceeded 70%. Swedish leaders are instead praised by their peers, as a large majority received their award from actors within the civil society sector. Swedish civil society leaders moreover most often only receive one prize, that is, there is a low degree of prize accumulation. Few Swedish civil society leaders stated that they had received a corporate award, an international award, an academic award, or a media award. This is logical considering that Swedish leaders are less awarded in general compared to leaders in Italy, the UK, and in Poland. Swedish leaders are in that respect less often awarded prizes, and when they receive a prize, it is mainly from within their own sector. This implies that symbolic capital in Swedish civil society is an 'internal affair'.

Sweden moreover differs from the other countries in that leaders are rarely awarded the same prizes. Quite remarkably, of the total examples of prizes expressed in the survey, only one prize appeared more than once (a civil society leadership prize). The pattern is instead a wide variety of intra-organisational, local, and national prizes. This suggests that the prize offering is weakly consolidated as there is no dominant prize reappearing in the material. Compared to Italy, Poland, and especially the UK, leaders rarely receive a state honour despite Sweden having a well-developed system of royal honours. The Swedish royal house hands out

medals to citizens who have made extraordinary achievements in Swedish society, and about 100 citizens receive such a royal medal every year (see <http://www.kungahuset.se>). Despite civil society leaders being eligible to be awarded a royal medal, only two of our respondents reported that they had received such a medal. This suggests that civil society leaders are not recognised as making a valuable contribution to society to the same extent as in the other countries. State medals are instead mainly given to leaders from academia, business, politics, literature, and sports (based on analysis of data from the royal house, see <http://www.kungahuset.se>).

Discussion

The sociology of prizes has long shown that prizes, and above all highly recognised prizes like a Nobel Prize, a Booker Prize, or the Golden Palm, bring symbolic value to those who receive them. Awardees gain recognition in the eyes of their peers and competitors, but also among the public in general. Some prizes hand out a substantial sum of money, yet the symbolic capital that they bring separates the receivers from other actors. For instance, only one-third of the leaders in our sample had received a prize for their activities within civil society, suggesting that this is an exclusive event that distinguishes them from other civil society leaders.

Who provides a prize is a cornerstone for understanding the status remitted with a particular prize. Several of the leaders had received widely recognised and highly honoured prizes like a royal honour or a presidential medal. In Italy, Poland, and the UK, the state appears to be the bank of symbolic capital as leaders in these countries are primarily awarded by the state. These state prizes are not targeting civil society exclusively but are highly recognised societal prizes. The high status of the prize-giving organisations implies that the prize comes with high symbolic value for those being recognised. Its symbolic value brings recognition across fields, can be translated into other forms of capital (economic, social, or political), and can thus provide social advantage compared to others. Or to put it differently, in Italy, Poland, and the UK the state elevates civil society leaders into becoming members of a national elite because they are being recognised for their services to the country. They are symbolically included

in a group of other societally recognised leaders through the medals and titles they are now allowed to use.

Sweden stands out as different in this respect because Swedish leaders are rarely praised by the state or the royal family. Instead, they tend to be prized by small and local prize-givers that exclusively target civil society or their own CSO. The recognition they gain and the symbolic capital that they possess is in this respect primarily produced by their peers and brings limited societal recognition. Compared to the civil society elites in Italy, Poland, and the UK, Swedish civil society leaders are not integrated into a societal elite to the same extent. The dominance of internal prize-giving suggests that in Sweden civil society appears to be its own bank for the production and distribution of symbolic capital.

These differences have implications for the exchange value of the symbolic capital in national civil society fields. Leaders in Italy, Poland, and the UK (above all those being awarded by the state) control not only a high volume of symbolic capital but also a type of symbolic capital that allows them to enter systems of capital exchange with other societal elites. The titles they carry provide them with recognition from leaders in other sectors, partly because of the recognition of the prize or that other elites have been awarded the same prize. Top civil society leaders in Sweden enter into a different system of capital exchange. The prizes they have received provide them with a particular peer recognition that signals that they have extensive peer support for the work they carry out. Instead of an entry ticket into a societal elite, local prizes confer upon them the status of being one among peers rather than one among a societal elite. These findings suggest a higher degree of symbolic stratification within Italian, Polish, and UK civil societies as some leaders gain societal recognition, whereas others do not. This type of stratification is less apparent in the Swedish context because almost no civil society leader gains the opportunity to benefit from the state as a bank of symbolic capital.

Theories on prizes suggests that these can have field effects. The observed prize patterns in Italy, Poland, and the UK suggest civil societies in these countries to be more interlinked with other fields. In the UK, these are tied to the state, while in Italy and Poland these are also tied to business, media, and academia. This shows field integration at the top between civil society and other social fields. UK civil society appears to be

closely and symbolically tied to the state through the royal honours, following the country's long tradition of charitable giving and social class structure. Although leaders also win internal prizes from their peers (civil society actors praising civil society leaders), we did not find any civil society prizes that seem to come with a particular status. The strong internal orientation of prize-giving in Sweden suggests that this is a field separated from other fields, but internally fragmented due to the wide variety of internal prize-givers. What counts as symbolic recognition in Swedish civil society thus differs from what counts as symbolic recognition in other fields because the sector is its own bank of symbolic capital. Similarly in the other countries we did not find a dominant civil society prize with extraordinary status. This suggests that in all countries the question of what issues, practices, and values should be valued through prize-giving practices is less institutionalised within civil societies compared to other fields such as the arts, culture, or academia.

Similarities across country contexts do, however, provoke questions concerning how to theoretically understand civil societies and their relations to states and markets. Established theories like social origins theory assumes that civil societies follow regime differences. While this might very well be true regarding some aspects of how civil societies are organised, this appears to be less significant with regard to the function of civil society prizes awarded to top leaders. Despite regime differences, we find a similar dominance of state prizes in Italy, Poland, and the UK. Although the sector serves different purposes in these countries and has distinctive histories and relations to other sectors, leaders are mostly awarded by the state. In addition, the most dominant prizes are largely comparable despite country-specific differences, and these consist of state medals and honours that are widely recognised in each society. It thus appears that a well-established honour system structures symbolic capital also in civil society rather than the specific national characteristics of civil society. The relative lack of medals and honours in Sweden, on the other hand, might indicate that the higher 'exclusivity' of the Swedish honours means that it is hard for civil society leaders to be consecrated by the state, and instead they must consecrate each other. This can be seen as reflecting the general status of the sector, or what counts as status in society at large considering Sweden's egalitarian ideals.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an original empirical investigation into civil society prizes in a cross-country comparative perspective. Although we have extensive knowledge of the role of prizes and prize-giving with regard to other fields, scholars have not paid much interest to civil society prizes or the capital and field-constituting effects of prizes in civil societies. Our results show considerable differences across countries, although not with respect to the established civil society regime types. The observed patterns depend on the dominant prize systems in each respective country rather than the internal features of civil societies.

Civil society elites in Italy, Poland, and the UK have a type of symbolic capital that ties them into other elite groups in society due to their recognition by state honours or presidential medals, while civil society elites in Sweden are primarily praised internally by their peers. Top leaders in Italy, Poland, and the UK are symbolically integrated into other elite groups, while Swedish civil society leaders appear to form a separated elite group apart from politics, business, culture, or the arts. Elite status in the Swedish context is thus internally reproduced and less dependent on external status recognition.

These findings have importance for how we can understand the stratification of European civil societies, suggesting that prizes and awards are an element of the formation of field relations and modes of internal stratification. We encourage further studies that explain why certain groups of civil society leaders receive a prize (or several prizes), while others do not.

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6

Elite Integration Through Volunteerism: The Case of a New York City Parent-Teacher Association

Andrea Voyer

Introduction

Volunteerism is essential to civic life, but it is also key to the processes whereby economic, social, and cultural elites become civil society elites. Research emphasising the value of civic engagement generally assumes that inequality is not endemic to volunteerism and is instead merely something that arises on account of inadequate rules and management or as a result of the substitution of paid membership for in-person civic participation (Skocpol, 2013). However, others have observed that civic involvement often amplifies the voices of and supports the interests of wealthier and better-educated individuals and groups (Verba et al., 1995). Furthermore, elite integration through civic involvement can reproduce status and power differentials within civil society organisations by leading to hierarchies of types of civic engagement. For example, in the case of parents volunteering in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) discussed

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below, different types of parental involvement (e.g., directing PTA communications vs donating significant sums of money to the PTA) are not equivalent and have a different relationship to elite integration.

In this chapter, I examine elite integration through the case of involvement in a PTA in a New York City public elementary school I call Bricks School. I show how parents with elite standing outside of their children's school become elite PTA volunteers within the school. Following the definition of civil society elite motivating this volume, I see PTAs as civil society organisations with significant and increasing control over educational resources and decision-making. The elite parents studied in this research parlay their elite social positions into leadership positions in the PTA. These parents solidify their standing in the PTA and the school by accessing more 'do good' capital (Dean, 2020).

Methods

Data were collected as part of a broader study of civil society organisations in New York City. The research was conducted by me and a research assistant. We carried out fieldwork at Bricks School between Fall 2015 and Spring 2018. We attended PTA meetings, volunteered at events, participated in organising committees, and socialised with parents before and after school. We identified ourselves as researchers and openly took notes and recorded the meetings. After the first year of fieldwork, we supplemented ongoing observations with 24 interviews of a purposive heterogeneous sample of parents. The interviews focused on parental involvement, including parents' financial contributions and time commitments to the school and the PTA. Throughout interviews, pseudonyms are used for the school and all research participants. Only the real names of public figures and government officials are retained. NVIVO qualitative data analysis software was used to organise the data, which were first index coded and then coded for emergent topics, and finally thematically coded for additional topics important for the present article (Deterding & Waters, 2021).

Background

Elite integration through PTA volunteerism unfolds in the broader context of school-supporting civil society organisations, including PTAs, becoming more embedded in public school systems. This embedding process took a particular form in New York City and in the school where this research was conducted.

The Growing Power of the PTA

PTAs are important school-based civic associations (Christensen et al., 2016; Crawford & Levitt, 1999; Murray et al., 2019; Putnam, 2000). PTAs also provide funds and other necessary resources. Furthermore, they represent parents in school governance, and they can act as an advocate for the school through their visibility and the participation of their members in broader social and governmental institutions such as school boards and city councils. Like other civil society organisations, PTAs foster participation. Parent volunteers in the PTA can take an active role in school governance, and they build social capital through opportunities for socialisation, civic training, and the development of helpful parent networks (Christensen et al., 2016; Putnam, 2000; Small, 2009). The literature on volunteerism and civil society tends to assume that PTAs and their parent volunteers produce social capital with a salubrious effect that extends beyond parents and the school to democracy and civil society in general (Christensen et al., 2016; Crawford & Levitt, 1999; Putnam, 2000).

Parents have long joined together to form PTAs and other school-supporting organisations. However, research in the United States documents a dramatic increase in the money flowing into schools through such organisations (Brunner & Imazeki, 2004; Christensen et al., 2016; De Leon et al., 2010; Haar, 2002; Murray et al., 2019; Nelson & Gazley, 2014). The number of PTAs in the United States tripled between 1995 and 2010 (Nelson & Gazley, 2014), and PTA revenues have also risen by 3.9 times over the same period, topping \$400 million in 2010 (Nelson & Gazley, 2014). This amount may seem small compared to the combined

\$593.7 billion that states, municipalities, and the federal government spent on public elementary and secondary education in the United States in the same year (Brunner & Sonstelie, 2003; Dixon, 2012). However, PTA fundraising is concentrated in schools and districts with higher-income families (Addonisio, 2000; Brown et al., 2017; Brunner & Imazeki, 2004), and in 2010 only 20% of school districts had at least one revenue-generating PTA (Nelson & Gazley, 2014). There is also state-based variation in the relationship between PTA revenues and urbanicity, school size, and school diversity.¹ Due to the uneven distribution of PTAs and revenue-generating PTAs in particular, and because PTAs and other school-supporting organisations are independent of the schools they support, parent volunteer hours are not reported and their monetary contributions are not typically included in the schools' records of educational expenditures (Haar, 2002). As a result, measures of investments in education likely underestimate parental inputs through school-supporting civil society organisations as a source of educational inequality (Addonisio, 2000; Brown et al., 2017).

The onset of rising PTA financial contributions to public schools occurred in the mid-1990s as a result of policy changes (Sattin-Bajaj & Roda, 2020). During this period, education policy in the United States began emphasising parental volunteerism in schools as a key component of school quality. In 1994, President Bill Clinton revised national education policy, and parents and communities were the focus of the new policy (Schwartz et al., 2000; Superfine, 2005). Prompted by the national reforms, many states and municipalities increased outreach to parents. Following this, New York State introduced the requirement that all New York City schools have an active parent association or PTA, a school leadership team including parents, and a community education council made up of local citizens.² These laws were implemented in a New York

¹ Brunner and Imazeki (2004) find a positive relationship between PTA fundraising and diversity and urbanicity in California and a negative relationship between parent fundraising and school and district size. Meanwhile, Murray et al. (2019) find that North Carolina schools with more students are more likely to have high-revenue PTAs, but the percentage of minority students within the school is negatively related to PTA revenues.

² See the Laws Of New York Consolidated Laws Education Title 2: School District Organisation Article 52-A: New York City Community School District System, Section 2590-C.

City school reform emphasising improving communication between schools, parents, and communities (Henig et al., 2011; O'Day et al., 2011). Each school received a full-time parent coordinator—a paid administrative staff member responsible for managing school-parent relationships and coordinating with PTAs and other community organisations that work with and serve the city's public schools (Henig et al., 2011). Schools were also directed to expand their collaboration with education-supporting civil society organisations (Henig et al., 2011). Solicitation of parent input was formalised through the development of an annual survey of parents. Additionally, an annual quality review of schools was established. The parent survey is included in the quality review.

These reforms directly integrated PTAs and other civil society organisations into the governmental apparatus of public education. The reforms mandated parent volunteerism and required close ties between civil society organisations and the school. They also made parents and the satisfaction of parents very important to school principals and other educational administrators. With the reforms, New York City schools were now evaluated partly based on their relationships with parents and their ties to the school PTA. To understand the practical significance of this elevation of PTA organisations for elite integration, we turn to the case of Bricks School.

Bricks: A Segregated School with an Integrated PTA

Bricks School sits amid public housing projects in a Manhattan neighbourhood that has undergone rapid gentrification. The school serves children between the ages of 4 and 11 years old. The socio-economic extremes of New York City are represented in the school. In 2016, about 25% of people in the school's post code lived below the poverty line; meanwhile, more than 20% of people lived in households with an annual income greater than \$200,000, putting them in the top 2% of households in the United States, and in the top 5% of households even in well-off New York City (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Bricks offers a ‘gifted and talented’ (gifted) program, an accelerated academic track with admission by examination, which is most popular for students from wealthier and more educated families. The school also serves ‘general education’ (GenEd) students who live within the immediate neighbourhood, including low-income public housing. The school is racially and economically segregated along these two academic tracks. In 2016, approximately 40% of students came from families receiving public assistance. In the same year, about 30% of students were Hispanic, about 25% Asian, 25% White, and 15% Black. In 2016, around half of approximately 600 students had a low-enough family income to qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch.³

Despite the segregation of educational tracks, there is only one PTA at Bricks. As previously mentioned, New York City public schools are required to have a PTA, and all parents are automatically members. According to the city regulations, PTAs are charged with advocating for students and their families, facilitating communication between parents and the school, organising activities, and supporting the school through fundraising, volunteerism, and educational programming for parents.⁴

The Rise of the Bricks PTA

The power of the Bricks PTA grew as a result of a funding crisis. After the introduction of the gifted program, half of the seats in the school were filled by children who received top scores on the New York City gifted and talented examination. Children taking and scoring well on the exam were more likely to be Asian and White than Black or Latino, to be residents of wealthier neighbourhoods, and to have access to paid exam preparation (Gootman & Gebeloff, 2008). The influx of ‘gifted’ students shifted the school’s demographics. As a result, the school lost \$250,000 in funding when the percentage of low-income students dropped below

³Data on New York City Schools is available through the City of New York

<https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/>, the State of New York <https://data.nysed.gov/>, and the National Center for Education Statistics <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>

⁴For more information, see New York City Schools guidelines for Parent and Parent Teacher Associations <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/get-involved/parent-associations>

Manhattan's 60%⁵ eligibility threshold for special funds for low-income schools. According to multiple parents who were in the school at that time, the principal addressed the parents at a PTA meeting and announced that unless parents raised additional money, she would discontinue the music program and curtail spending on school supplies. At that time, the Bricks PTA did not prioritise fundraising. According to the records of the PTA, the organisation had not raised more than \$12,000 in any given year for which records were available. Now, galvanised by the loss of funds, a group of PTA parents held a fundraiser. They raised about \$80,000 and saved the music program.

In subsequent years, PTA fundraising continued and accelerated. Just a few years later, in 2016–2017, the revenue of the Bricks PTA was almost twice the amount of the lost special funding. In 2016 the Bricks PTA budget was approximately \$450,000.⁶ The Bricks PTA raises funds through classic PTA fundraisers such as raffles, bake sales, coin drives, and book fairs (see Putnam, 2000, pp. 55–57, 302). However, the organisation's largest sources of income are a \$150-per-person black-tie gala and auction, a direct-appeal fundraising campaign that targets parents, aggressive pursuit of corporate matches,⁷ and a walk-a-thon. Throughout this research, the PTA continuously expanded its offerings of educational and enrichment activities and requested even larger financial contributions from parents. While this research was ongoing, the requested contribution increased substantially, from just a few hundred dollars per

⁵For more information on title I, see the Archived Tip Sheet <https://cccdistrictone.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/title-1-tip-sheet.pdf>

⁶NYC public schools' per pupil expenditures in 2016–2017 were \$20,724. But when you pull out the children who receive special education services, per pupil expenditures are \$15,736. In the same year, Bricks per student expenditures were about \$18,000. This means that the PTA funds—approximately \$750 per child—is a 4% increase in per pupil expenditures. However, that base number includes physical plant, busing, meals, and other fixed costs. Considering expenditures on instruction only, NYC per pupil expenditures for typical students are \$9034. This means that the Bricks PTA money is an 8% increase over the average expenditures on instruction. Spending on student activities is about \$424 per for typical students in New York City. Because most Bricks PTA money goes to enrichment, that would more than double the average spending on enrichment. New York City expenditure data are available here: <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports-and-policies/financial-reports/financial-data-and-reports/new-york-state-school-funding-transparency-forms>

⁷When a company makes a charitable contribution to organisations that their employees support independently.

child to \$2000. Fundraising totals increased by more than 30% over the same period.

The loss of special funding transformed the Bricks PTA from a low-key civic organisation into an elite school-supporting civil society organisation with substantial influence. However, in actuality the resulting change in fundraising activity brought the Bricks PTA in line with other high-revenue PTAs (Brown et al., 2017). The PTA money was spent on community activities such as school talent shows, holiday performances, community dinners, and a neighbourhood fair. The PTA also provided an assistant teacher for each classroom, offered supplementary allowances for the teachers and principal, secured preparatory courses for the required standardised tests, and purchased materials for music, theatre, and robotics classes, among other things.

Elite Integration through the PTA

Consistent with elite integration in other civil society organisations, the central position of the PTA and parent volunteerism at Bricks led to the centralisation of power in the hands of just a few parents, most particularly parents who were members of the economic, social, and cultural elite and who tended to have children in the gifted program. These individuals raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support the school. Through their involvement, they had a disproportionate impact on the operation of the school and were able to use their position to translate their elite status outside of the school into elite status within the school. Although they were not the only parent volunteers, a status hierarchy emerged in which elite parents were able to convert their greater economic, social, and cultural capital into more 'do good' capital that they leveraged to build their social networks and gain access to leadership positions.

Elite integration through PTA volunteerism unfolded through attaching symbolic value to high-budget PTAs, using PTA involvement to hoard opportunities, and policing elite boundaries in access to PTA networks and leadership.

The Symbolic Value of the PTA

The policy emphasis on parental participation made the connection between parent volunteerism and school success clear—a good school was defined as a school with engaged parents. Given the emphasis on involvement, PTA fundraising totals and the programs funded by the parents provide easy-to-read metrics of school quality.

In interviews, parents discussed how they used information about the PTA budget and PTA-funded programs to evaluate and select schools. Many parents discussed attending an information night for prospective families. At those events, a member of the PTA leadership was there to present information about the PTA budget and PTA-funded amenities at the school. In the interviews, parents discussed comparing the Bricks PTA budget with PTA budgets of other schools they considered for their child. Some parents admitted that Bricks had been their second choice after the gifted program at a nearby school known throughout the district for its, as one parent put it, ‘million-dollar PTA’.

This monetary value provided by the PTA is partly symbolic. Even parents who did not believe their financial support or volunteering would impact their own children’s education directly had an incentive to be engaged in order to ensure that the school retained its reputation. In interviews, some parents explained that their children did not participate in supplementary school activities, but all the same a PTA budget, a list of parent-provided enrichment activities, and the smaller child-to-teacher ratios resulting from parent-funded assistant teachers provided easy-to-read metrics of just how wealthy and connected other Bricks parents were.

Opportunity Hoarding

Elite integration through parent volunteerism in public schools leads to opportunity hoarding because the resources that the PTAs and other school-supporting civil society organisations provide confer school-based advantages not available in schools without such support (Murray et al., 2019). Furthermore, elite parents who donate their time and money to the school are in a better position to exert influence *within* the school to

secure specific advantages for their children. Past research has observed that influential parents leverage their power to ensure that the school places their children with highly regarded teachers or disregards teachers' placement recommendations regarding access to accelerated and advanced courses (Lewis & Diamond, 2015). Past research has also observed that the children of parents who support the school may receive preferential treatment in the classroom (Posey-Maddox, 2014).

The use of PTA funds could also facilitate opportunity hoarding as many PTA-provided programs and resources were selected specifically by the PTA leadership and were intended to provide an academic edge to Bricks students. Parents discussed the advantages resulting from the introduction of teaching assistants who decreased the teacher-student ratio. PTA funds provided after-school test prep courses for children in the grades that take the New York State educational exams, which are a determining factor in middle school placement in New York City's competitive and high-stakes school environment. Most of the additional enrichment activities provided by the PTA—activities such as track and field, theatre, music, chess, and robotics—may not have such an explicit academic component, but will still help students to appear 'well-rounded', a characteristic that can be an advantage for students in competition with other academically qualified peers (Dumais, 2006).

Within-school opportunity hoarding is evident in the way these activities were often directed towards the 'gifted' students. In an interview, the PTA treasurer, Nora, describes ongoing challenges in ensuring that the immense resources of the PTA are used to benefit all the children at Bricks, not just the children in the 'gifted' program:

We try very hard to make grade-wide enrichment, but the problem, for example, is CloudPerfect [a large technology company] comes in for robotics in the 3rd and 4th grade. The GenEd teachers just don't want it. They are so focused on getting their students to pass the [basic New York State] tests that they just don't have time. So, enrichment sometimes steers more to the "gifted" kids...

Opportunity hoarding was also evident in the way parents who were active in the PTA expected that their ability to leverage their economic,

social, and cultural resources on behalf of the PTA and the school would yield influence and preferential treatment. For example, Nancy is a wealthy parent in her late 40s. She has two children who attend the 'gifted' program at Bricks and another child who attends an elite private school. She and her husband have brought significant money to the school through direct donations and their influence in another school-supporting private foundation that awarded a substantial grant to Bricks. She acknowledges that their status in the school is elevated by these financial inputs, and this means they have greater access to the school principal and receive preferential treatment. According to Nancy, this is to be expected. She told me, 'Yeah, you do get extra because you are doing more. Yeah, the people at the PTA should get their ticket first, and if you want your ticket first, show up'.

Elite People Become Elite Volunteers

In reality, it was not the simple 'do more, get more' conversion of inputs into 'do good' capital, as Nancy described. Among the parent volunteers at Bricks, it is the social, cultural, and economic elites who become PTA elites. Although all parents are members of the PTA and many Bricks parents make substantial commitments to the school, boundary processes produce a stratified membership. Parent inclusion in the PTA leadership, networking, and friendships develop unevenly, reproducing the boundaries of class and race.

Forming friendships and building networks. Many parents expressed a strong sense of collectivism. They referred to the school as a 'community' or a 'family'. But this sense of community was different from the establishment of friendships among parents in a position to volunteer more. According to Nancy, PTA 'involvement is a way to figure out who you are going to be friends with. One of the things I really appreciate about the school is I have made friends with people that I just so admire'.

The limits of inclusion for involved parents who were not from the elite are most clear in the case of Nicole. A native New Yorker in her mid-30s, Nicole is a single parent and college graduate with health issues that keep her from working. She and her son live in public housing, and

she collects welfare and child support to make ends meet. Her child is a GenEd student. In her first year at Bricks, Nicole was encouraged by some of the board members to run for a leadership position. She was elected and served in different capacities for many years, often as the self-described ‘unicorn’ standing out as the only GenEd parent, black parent, and resident of public housing in the PTA leadership. After her first year on the PTA, Nicole was asked to run for a position on the School Leadership Team (an elected representative of Bricks parents who deals with curricular issues at the school level). She was elected to that position. At the time of our interview, Nicole was also on the citywide ballot for the Community Education Council (CEC, an elected representative of parents in the school district parents). She was not elected to the CEC, but would consider running again in the future.

Nicole says she is too involved at school. When she described her volunteer work, she listed her tasks:

I go [to the PTA office] probably like two or three times a week, and then if I don't have a doctor's appointment or if there are other things going on, then more. Like if there is the bake sale, then I have to take care of that. And if people are dropping off money, I have to collect the money, and I have to email parent reminders. We have the PTA meeting at the beginning of the month. I prepare for that and help out with that. We have executive board meetings. Prepare for that and be there for that. And then, of course, if we need to backpack anything [sending home notices], I'll have to make copies and backpack them out... Sending out emails. Reminders, reminders, reminders: make sure the kids have their money, because if they don't bring their money, how are you going to sell? Then I have the school leadership team meeting every third Wednesday.

Nicole struggled to estimate her time commitment to the school but noted that on a busy week she spent nearly as many hours there as her son did.

We see in Nicole's case that volunteerism provided some benefits for parents who are not members of the elite. Nicole's involvement connected her to other parents and facilitated further civic engagement in the school and potentially in the district. However, there were limits to

Nicole's inclusion. Her volunteer commitment did not allow her to enter the elite circles that were being reproduced among the elite parents. When I asked what friendships she had formed through the PTA, she mentioned that she felt Nancy was a great friend. However, when I asked Nancy this same question, she did not say she counted Nicole as a friend. When I asked specifically about Nicole, Nancy said that Nicole is 'a good person, but not someone I have much in common with'.

Fundraisers vs Friendraisers. The PTA's emphasis on fundraising also helped ensure the reproduction of status hierarchies among the parents. 'Fundraiser' and 'friendraiser' were terms used by PTA leaders to designate the purpose of activities. Friendraisers had the primary purpose of fostering community. Even though those events included things like bake sales and coin drives that also focused on raising money, the income from friendraisers was not substantial enough for them to be considered fundraisers, which brought in much more revenue. Although members of the PTA leadership reported being concerned by the organisation's lack of inclusivity, considerations of inclusivity and equity were sidelined for fundraisers. In my early days at Bricks, I met with Clara, the PTA vice president. Clara explained that the PTA leadership would let me observe them, but I could not attend the gala unless I purchased a \$150 ticket. There were limited tickets, she explained, and the revenue from the event was crucial to the liquidity of the PTA. It was difficult to deny people the opportunity to attend, she said, but it was necessary.

The division between fundraisers and friendraisers produced a clear boundary between elite and non-elite parents and shaped their volunteer work in the PTA. Namely, the gala was just for the elite. Nicole, the 'unicorn' of the PTA, explained that the gala set the limits of her substantial participation. When asked in an interview what events she participates in, she replied, 'everything, but not so much the gala cause I don't have connections [laugh]' 'so they are covered with that... If you have connections, you should be on the gala'. The boundary extended to her attendance at the gala as well. 'I went to the gala once', Nicole said wistfully as we chatted one day. In her first year in the PTA leadership, a 'gifted' parent gave her a spare ticket she had purchased. Nicole had a great time and would love to go again, but the \$150 cost of the ticket was beyond her. Every year she hoped someone would give her another ticket, but, apart

from that first year, Nicole's tireless efforts on behalf of the PTA and the school had never been recognised with a ticket to the gala.

Leadership. There were no other parents like Nicole in the PTA leadership because the emphasis on fundraising led parents with social, economic, and cultural capital to acquire and hold on to the positions in PTA leadership. It was widely acknowledged that there was a tremendous representation gap in the Bricks PTA. Many PTA leaders described efforts and planned efforts to encourage more involvement among GenEd parents. However, during PTA elections each year this research was ongoing multiple GenEd parents ran for PTA leadership positions but very few were elected.

Observing just one election match-up demonstrates the reality of elite integration in PTA leadership. On the day of the Spring 2015 election, approximately 90 parents were seated in the auditorium as candidates for PTA leadership stood before them. In the first four rows, centre, a group of about 30 parents, the existing networks of PTA leaders and their friends, sat closely together. Other parents were scattered throughout the auditorium, mainly sitting alone or in pairs.

When she was announced as a candidate for the entry-level member-at-large position, Victoria approached the microphone. She had been sitting alone at the side of the room. A Latinx woman in her late 60s, Victoria read a prepared statement, her eyes rarely rising from the paper:

My name is Victoria Gonzalez. I'm a mother of 3 and a grandmother of 7. I have 2 grandchildren that I have full custody of that are here at Bricks. I also have two kids who are 27 and 28 and they also graduated from Bricks, so that makes me a little familiar with Bricks. So, this year I am running for member at large. I know that some of you may probably be wondering why it took me so long to join the PTA. One answer would be that I had no time to come to any of the meetings let alone to join the PTA. I've worked so much and I have always had two, three a few or several jobs at a time. I lived around this neighbourhood for around 24-25 years. I've been involved in the community, and I am a fast learner. What I don't know I will learn. I have more time now because I am retired. The time I have I can use to be helpful to the PTA...

Next up was Victoria's competitor, Jamie. A white woman in her mid- or late 30s, Jamie had been sitting with the PTA group, front and centre. She rose, stood tall, spoke without notes, and mostly trained her eyes on the crowd at the front of the auditorium. She said, 'I'm Jamie Mellan and I know most of you down front'. She smiled at the PTA leadership.

I am very committed to this school, and I want it to be as good as it could be. I have a first grader in this school and next year my middle son will be in kindergarten G&T [gifted and talented] as well. A bit about myself: I'm [in television] and I serve on the board of [an important organisation for people in the entertainment industry]. I also run a charity that works to bring the arts to children. I've been very active in the school. I try to fund-raise for Teaching Assistants and think we should have full-time TAs for every class. Regardless of how things go today, I will be involved with the school. I will fundraise and I will be there for events.

Later, when I asked members of the PTA leadership why Victoria was not elected and Jamie was despite the lack of GenEd representation on the board, I received a variety of responses such as it being safer to choose the person you knew, differences in style of addressing the audience made Jamie look more like 'leadership material', and Jamie's experience with fundraising and outside connections would be an asset to the organisation as it pursued its fundraising goals. When you plan to raise \$450,000 with a team of volunteers, considerations of inclusivity only carry so much weight. In general, elite parents chose other elite parents for leadership roles.

Although they recognised their exclusion from the PTA elite, parent volunteers like Victoria and Nicole rarely complained. I asked Kayla, another very involved GenEd parent from a less privileged background, if she had ever been encouraged to run for a position on the board. She said she had not, but she didn't mind. Because she did not know a lot about running an organisation; she thought it was best to stick to volunteering. Xenia, a GenEd parent who was elected to a leadership position when a space opened unexpectedly at the beginning of the school year, was not re-elected to the position the following year. When I asked her why she was not re-elected, she shrugged, 'They have already told us our

money isn't good enough, so why should I be surprised if my work for the PTA wasn't good enough?

Conclusion

In recent decades, civil society scholars have noted the concentration of power and resources in select civil society organisations taking a 'seat at the table' with the state and the business sector in assessing and addressing societal needs (Johansson and Meeuwisse, Chap. 1, this volume). In this chapter, I have described a case of the integration of civil society elite—first through the concentration of influence and power in civil society organisations that benefit from the political and economic resources of their members, and second through the increased influence and power that members of the economic, social, and cultural elite gain when their volunteerism makes it possible to convert economic, social, and cultural capital into 'do good' capital (Dean, 2020).

The integration of civil society organisations into government is an outgrowth of policy changes. In the case of PTAs, shifting educational policy in the United States emphasised parental participation in schools. In New York City and New York State, this policy position was reinforced by local decisions that gave PTAs a central role in school funding and in assessments of school performance. PTAs, which had once been independent civil society organisations made up of parents and teachers, are now school-based conduits of elite parent's labour, skills, and money into the school.

As a result, PTAs and other school-supporting civil society organisations supplant the democratic civic goals of volunteerism and public education, resulting in elite reproduction through volunteerism. Parents from the social, economic, and cultural elite use involvement in the PTA to convert their social, economic, and cultural resources into influence within the school. They leverage their influence to establish and maintain the reputation of the school, to access advantages for themselves and their children, and to build networks with other elite parents. The civil society elites of the PTA engage in exclusionary boundary processes that ensure that non-elite parents, even those who also take on volunteer work in the

school, are not fully included in the circle of elite PTA parents. These developments centralise the power and influence of parents from the economic and cultural elite and supplant the PTAs' stated purpose.

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7

Reproduction of Elites in Hong Kong through the Hong Kong Jockey Club

Pui Chi Lai

Introduction

This chapter analyses the historical development of the reproduction of elites through a quasi-political organisation. The research specifically focuses on the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), encompassing a timespan from the mid-nineteenth century until the present. This study shows how an elite civil society organisation (hereafter CSO) can play a key role providing a platform for the elite to meet and to reproduce.

While the HKJC is a well-known organisation in Hong Kong, vividly active and noticeable across the territory throughout its existence, there are no existing studies on the role and influence of the organisation in Hong Kong. Because of the absence of political development plans in this colonial territory, other than the colonial bureaucracy, there were no significant political institutions in Hong Kong. The absence of political parties in colonial Hong Kong has been taken for granted by existing studies

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on the governing of Hong Kong (e.g. Harris, 1978; Lau, 1982; Ma, 2007; Scott, 1989). This chapter will show that the HKJC found the ability to fill this institutional void in colonial Hong Kong and functioned as a mechanism of elite consolidation. Subsequently, it not merely functioned as an instrument, but it also benefited from the mechanism of elite reproduction itself, achieving a powerful elite position and influencing significant political and economic decisions in society. Eventually, the HKJC had the ability to become one of the world's largest providers of charity funding.

Furthermore, the analysis on the composition of the top elite members of the HKJC gives insight into the reproduction of the elites through a CSO in a political transitional society. The aim is to gain an understanding of important influential factors on the elite reproduction process. The following research questions will be answered in this chapter: How does an elite CSO influence the mechanism of the reproduction of the elite in society? What factors have a decisive impact on the position of the elite in a CSO?

This chapter will show how a charitable organisation serves as a place for the reproduction of elites and how this mechanism also impacts the social status of the organisation itself in society and the organisation's clout. While this chapter is thus mainly focused on the reproduction of elites, the analysis of the top elite membership at the HKJC will show that this also touches upon the integration of the elite from several sectors within this organisation.

Methodology

This study is based on analyses of empirical and archival data. Direct entrance into the HKJC network and its archives was impossible, as requests for interviews with members were either ignored or declined and several requests for access to its archival data were dismissed with a simple reference to their website. This study is therefore based on analyses and comparison of sources such as interviews with journalists, academics, and (former) employees of the organisation, audio recordings and transcripts

of interviews, official government records, minutes, letters, ordinances, statements from officials, newspapers, bye-laws, and the annual reports of the HKJC.

Theoretical Framework

Mills (1956/2000) argues that political power in modern societies is controlled by a group of political, military, and corporate leaders who occupy key positions in governmental and societal organisations and who share interwoven interests. Most of the power elite come from the upper social hierarchy, have a similar education, have a high degree of social cohesion through personal networks and intermarriage, are member of the same social clubs, and occupy top positions on interlocking boards of powerful institutions. Here they can exercise their power to run the state, while they also enjoy privileges and wealth. Their position in these institutions is crucial for having money, power, and prestige, and at the same time these privileges are also required to have access to the powerful institutions. Wealth is indistinguishably bound to positions in powerful organisations. However, decisions of the ruling elite are motivated by their overlapping and common goals, and their power position leads to and maintains wealth inequality. But as Mills also points out, in order to actually have power, the elite also need to have a stable and unchanging mass society to secure their power position. As this chapter will show, this perspective largely applies to the elite members of the HKJC.

Fogarty and Zimmerman (2019) explain that elites need to legitimise their position for future generations. This legitimisation comes with the admittance to an exclusive group, where they enjoy certain benefits and privileges, which will also lead them to an advantaged position. The rules and conditions for admission to the particular group are created by the elites themselves and may be based on several different factors. Furthermore, legitimisation of the reproduction of the elites can also be achieved through an existing elite institution that favours particular elite members to be accepted into the group. This exclusiveness creates a unique position of symbolic capital for the institution, and subsequently

gives a certain status to the individual because of the particular relationship with this institution. This case study on the HKJC will provide a further understanding of the importance of an institution for enjoying exclusive benefits and the legitimation of elite reproduction.

According to Szélenyi and Szélenyi (1995), the elite reproduction theory explains how the elites uphold their position at the top, despite changes in society. The elite can still reproduce if they adjust their principles to legitimate their power and privileges. A higher success rate may be achieved in a technocracy where the elite enjoy the cooperation of people with key positions in the administration, or when the elite do not have to face a counter-elite. Consequently, political changes may not lead to a revolutionary change in the composition of the elite, other than causing a setback of the social structure in society. In addition to the cooperation and relationship with key figures, other factors that may also influence the legitimacy of power and privileges of the elite, and therefore their reproduction process, are having a specific educational background, political connections, wealth, personal qualities, and involvement in certain marriages, but also skin colour and luck (see also Chen, 2012; Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 2006, for influential factors on elite formation). However, the analysis on the HKJC in Hong Kong shows how a transitioning society can have an impact on the elite position.

The study of Lu and Fan (2021) describes the legitimacy of state power in a transitional society that is faced with two types of ideals: namely, one that believes that political power is useful and one that relies on economic power. They argue that interaction between the elite groups and the rest of society influences whether the elites will incorporate or remain separated from each other. Subsequently, the reproduction of the elites also depends on their control and distribution of resources. As Lu and Fan further argue, when political power is dominant in a society, there will be a reproduction of political/state elites, and when economic power is dominant, market elites are reproduced. However, cross-sector reproduction will not happen because both have fundamentally different perspectives. When political power is dominant, it will not be overthrown by the reproduction of economic elites, simply because the economic elites are not given the opportunity to gain the ruling position. This chapter applies

this approach on the changing role of the HKJC for the elite following the transition of Hong Kong.

Hung (2008) argues that elite reproduction entails more than simply maintaining the elite position, as it also requires the expansion of their size and power over generations. The analysis of the interrelated elite network through the HKJC supports this perspective. However, what is generally missing in these existing studies on the mechanism of elite reproduction is the perspective of how an elite institution profits from elite reproduction in order to uphold its own status and existence in society.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club: Sports, Gambling, and Charity

The British colonised Hong Kong in 1841 (see e.g. Endacott, 1964, for the historical development of Hong Kong), and a few years later the Happy Valley Racecourse on Hong Kong Island was inaugurated for horse racing (Adams, 2010, p. 84). In 1884, 34 elite members from the business and governmental sector established the HKJC to pursue improvements in horse racing in colonial Hong Kong (Moss, 2000, p. 12). In its first 40 years, the races were arranged by the Racing Committee (Somers, 1975, p. 34) Then in 1930 the HKJC was incorporated under the Hong Kong Companies Ordinances 1911 (applicable to every company registered in Hong Kong before or after the commencement of this Ordinance (see Article 2 of the Hong Kong Companies Ordinance, 1911), making it a 'limited organisation'. However, because the HKJC did not pay dividends or bonuses to organisation members, the word 'limited' was not actually added to the name. It was established as a non-profit organisation, and its profit from its gambling activities was designated for charitable projects and activities (The Hong Kong Jockey Club, 1955). Consequently, in 1959 the organisation established the separate company the Hong Kong Jockey Club (Charities) Ltd. to better manage and distribute donations to charitable and community projects (The Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, 1996, p. 4).

The separation between the racing activities and the charitable activities may also be seen as an effort to keep these two moral areas separate so that the elite could have the option of being specifically affiliated to the charitable branch of the organisation in order to maintain a good image. In 1960, the HKJC was granted the Royal prefix, and it held the name Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club until 1996, one year before the handover of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese (Moss, 2000, p. 41).

However, the HKJC was not the only organisation that arranged sports and charitable activities and offered exclusive membership (Knowles & Harper, 2009). Compared to other large and well-known institutions in Hong Kong,¹ the HKJC was the most open organisation, as it accepted both British and Chinese business elite members (Adams, 2010, p. 90). It was also not restricted to elites from specific sectors (such as the business, banking, or sports sector), as required by other organisations. This openness made it attractive for the elite to join the HKJC in order to be integrated in an extensive elite network. In addition, because it provided entertainment for the public with its horse races and gambling activities, and because it also contributed to the social and cultural development of the public and Hong Kong society through its charitable projects, the HKJC also gained respect from the public (Lai, 2021).

Elite Formation in Colonial Hong Kong

The elite in colonial Hong Kong had diverse backgrounds, and they could be divided into two camps. On the one side, the elites were formed by members of Johnson, Stokes & Master (a full-service law firm that acted on behalf of the Swire company), the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), and all the businesses that sided with this camp. On the other side, the elites were formed by Deacon (another full-service law firm that acted for the company Jardines), the Standard Chartered Bank, and the businesses which lined up along with this camp (England,

¹ Comparable organisations to the HKJC are, for example Jardine, Matheson & Co. (respectively Jardines), Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), John Swire & Sons (the Swire company), Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Hong Kong Club, the Kowloon Cricket Club, and the Tung Wah Hospital.

2016, p. 187). Common characteristics of the elites from both camps were that most of them had the same prestigious Oxbridge educational background, which is consistent with Fogarty and Zimmerman's (2019) study, and they were also members of the HKJC (Welsh, 1993, p. 495). What made the HKJC attractive for both camps? To understand how the HKJC gained this respected position and eventually provided the elite the opportunity to achieve a certain status, a brief elaboration on the emergence of the elite in Hong Kong is needed.

The arrival of the British in Hong Kong brought with it the emergence of the elite in this territory. The elites were socially and politically segregated wealthy expatriates, generally bureaucrats, senior civil servants, and business leaders. They also had a seat in the Executive Council (Exco), a policymaking organ, and the Legislative Council (Legco), an advisory body to the legislature, which were set up to advise and assist the governor of colonial Hong Kong. The British government went into negotiations with members of these councils. The elites were aware that having a seat in one of the councils would give them the ability to influence government policies and law-making decisions that could benefit their own interests (Chui, 2000, p. 379). The council members only interacted with other wealthy people in the territory, and they kept their distance from the Chinese public (Davies, 1977, p. 61). One of the reasons why the British did not interact with the Chinese was that the British did not have the intention to expand their empire and exploit the territory, and they foremost wanted to use Hong Kong as a trading port and gateway to China. There was one exception, as there was a strong business collaboration between the British and the Chinese merchants during the colonial rule of the British in Hong Kong. With the Chinese merchants serving as middlemen, the British had easier access to businesses in China, while at the same time the Chinese merchants had the opportunity to develop business experiences and gain material privileges and social welfare, thus providing them with an elite status in colonial Hong Kong (Carroll, 2007; Lau, 1982).

While the elites developed the desire to have a higher degree of self-governance, Colonial Secretary Lord Ripon noted that the Chinese community was not represented by the powerful British merchant elites. However, it was not until after the General Strike in 1925–1926 that the

Chinese were acknowledged and became involved in the governance of Hong Kong. The General Strike from 1925 to 1926, which is also known as the Canton strike-boycott, was fuelled by the violence of the Sikh police under British command towards Chinese demonstrators in Shanghai on 30 May 1925. The local Chinese in colonial Hong Kong became aware of this event, and they joined the strike against the British in the occupied territory. During the strike, local people fled colonial Hong Kong following the boycott against the British colonials, but the Chinese business elite stayed behind and actively battled against the strike to secure their own position in the colony (Welsh, 1993). Subsequently, their battle also kept the colony functioning. The British then saw the value of the Chinese business elite, and they started to reward them with the opportunity to represent the Chinese within the colonial administration in Hong Kong (Loh, 2004, p. 6). Additionally, the HKJC, membership in which was previously reserved for the British elites, also opened up its membership to the Chinese to show its appreciation for their support during the General Strike (Adams, 2010, p. 90). The expansion of its membership network could also be seen as a great opportunity for the HKJC to grow and obtain a firm position relative to other comparable organisations.

With the acceptance of the Chinese business elite into the membership of the HKJC, the colonial government also saw the opportunity to control the Chinese masses in Hong Kong society. It was thus important to have Chinese elite members in the HKJC who supported the ideals of the colonial government. The opening up for the Chinese business elite cemented the support from and relationship between the colonial and British governments and the HKJC, and it may be argued that this provided the organisation a privileged position to become an important player in Hong Kong society. Subsequently, Colonial Governor Sir John Davis and the British government in the United Kingdom saw the races at the HKJC as great opportunities to provide a platform to facilitate a network for commerce and trade in the colonial city (Adams, 2010, p. 86; Ching, 1965, p. 39). This practice was consistent with Mills' (1956/2000) theory that political power comes from occupation of key positions in governmental and societal organisations with shared

interwoven interests. Thus, in order to have a stable mass society and to secure their power, the British elite shared key positions with Chinese elite members, which also expanded the reach of the power of the British elite.

The Entangled Network of the Top Elite Members

Membership in the HKJC indeed became very popular among both the British and Chinese business elites because of its open and extended network, and the horse races developed into a venue for the Hong Kong community for socialisation, which selected elite members could be part of. Because the colonial government and the HKJC were in line with each other in creating strong relationships with each other, they had a similar pool of networks of elite members. Consequently, it may be argued that the HKJC served as a platform for the government where it could select political members into the governmental apparatus because the organisation had already selected and screened its elite members. Membership in the HKJC thus paved the way for leading elite figures in the business or banking sector to gain a powerful political position in Hong Kong (Lai, 2021, pp. 163, 166, 201). As Fogarty and Zimmerman (2019) have noted, the elite seek acceptance through an existing elite institution that favours particular elite members being accepted into the group.

The entanglement between the elite members of the HKJC and the governmental apparatus can be seen in membership data for this organisation and involvement in the Exco and Legco. Table 7.1 shows an overview of the chairmen of the HKJC and their membership in the Exco and/or Legco. The chairman heads the Board of Stewards, which is elected from among the voting members of the HKJC and develops the strategy of the organisation (The Hong Kong Jockey Club, 2023). Looking at the dates of affiliation with one or more of these institutions, it can be concluded that prior to their positioning as a chairman of the HKJC the majority of them had already been members of the Legco and/or Exco.

Table 7.1 Chairmen of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and their membership in the Legislative Council/Executive Council

Period	Name	Chairman (years)	Member of Legislative Council (years)	Member of Executive Council (years)
Colonial	Phineas Ryrie	1884–1892	1867–1891	
	Paul Chater	1892–1926	1886–1905, 1919, 1925	1896–1926
	Henry Percy White	1926–1929		
	Charles Gordon	1929–1935	1928, 1930–1935	1930, 1930–1931, 1933, 1934
	Steward Mackie			
	Marcus Theodore Johnson	1935–1939	1936–1938	
	Thomas Ernest Pearce	1940–1941	1939–1941	
	Percy Tester	1945–1946		
	Arthur Morse	1946–1952		1946–1953
	Donovan Benson	1953–1967		
	John Saunders	1967–1972		1965, 1966–1972
	Douglas Clague	1972–1974	1956–1960	1961–1974
	Peter Gordon Williams	1974–1981	1972–1978	
	Transitional	Michael Sandberg	1981–1986	
Oswald Cheung		1986–1989		1974–1986
Gordon Macwhinnie		1989–1991		
William Purves		1991–1993		1986–1993
John J. Swaine		1993–1996	1980–1985, 1985–1988, 1991–1995	1988–1991
Handover	Wong Chung Hin	1996–1998		
Post-colonial	Alan Li Fook-sum	1998–2002		
	Ronald Arculli	2002–2006	1988–1991, 1991–1995, 1995–1997, 1996–1998, 1998–2000	
	John Cho Chak Chan	2006–2010		1992–1993
	T. Brian Stevenson	2010–2014		
	Simon S.O. Ip	2014–2018	1991–1995	
	Anthony Chow Wing Kin	2018–2020		
	Philip N. L. Chen	2020–2022		
	Michael T. H. Lee	2022–present		

Source: Author's calculation based on Lai [2021](#)

There have been some chairmen who were not affiliated with the Exco and Legco, and they held their posts at critical junctures in the HKJC's historical development. Henry Percy White (1926–1929) had his seat just after the General Strike, Percy Tester (1945–1946) just after the Second World War, Donovan Benson (1953–1967) during the industrial growth in Hong Kong, Gordon Macwhinnie (1989–1991) when the Basic Law was about to be accepted, and Wong Chung Hin (1996–1998) during the handover in 1997. It may be interpreted as a strategy to uphold the neutral image of the HKJC during sensitive periods by having a separation between this organisation and the government. Furthermore, Table 7.1 also demonstrates that during the transitional period there were either overlaps or consecutive periods of affiliation with the institutions, while in the postcolonial time the affiliation periods with the HKJC and the councils were separated, thus reflecting political developments in Hong Kong society. It is arguable that in the transitional and post-colonial period the organisation has been wavering a bit more as it still has not figured out what position it should take in the newly political environment in Hong Kong, thus explaining the inconsistent link of the chairmen with the Exco and Legco.

Overall, Table 7.1 shows the interaction between the recruitment and membership of the HKJC and the government apparatus in the colonial period as the periods of affiliation with both institutions overlap. According to Dalton and Wattenberg (2000), recruitment of political leadership is one of the most basic functions of a political party. It includes the search for and formation of political elites to lead the political party to control the governing apparatus. It may be argued that the HKJC functioned as a mechanism for political recruitment in Hong Kong society through its entangled network and exclusive membership. This made the organisation valuable to the colonial British government, putting it in an important and respected position where it could govern society (Lai, 2021, p. 258).

However, unlike Mills' (1956/2000) theory of who maintains political power in society, this case study of the HKJC shows that it may be argued that the political power is not controlled by a group of top elite members, but rather by the organisation itself. The status and power of the HKJC in Hong Kong society is the crucial point. Thus, not only did the

government rely on the HKJC, but the HKJC also benefited from its close connection with the colonial government. Both may deem the pre-selection done by the other party sufficient to meet its own high standards for membership. Furthermore, looking more closely into Table 7.1, during the colonial period the chairmen only held British names, but a shift to chairmen with Chinese names is noticeable from the transitional period onwards. This reflects the change of political influence from the British to the Chinese in Hong Kong following the handover of Hong Kong in 1997 that also affected the elite composition in society. Nevertheless, the connection between the governmental apparatus and the HKJC remains (Lai, 2021, pp. 166–169, 201–202).

The World's Largest Provider of Charity Funding

The HKJC developed into an elite organisation, and analysing the role of this organisation as an elite consolidation, meaning an organisation that is functioning as an instrument to form a platform for the elite where they can forge alliances with each other (Scott, 2008), provides us with new insights into the reproduction of elites through a CSO.

The HKJC earned respect from the elite not only because it could gain them a seat in the governmental apparatus and achieve certain power in society but also because it gave the elite the occasion to show their wealth, because wealth is an important condition to be admitted to the HKJC. Indeed, wealth is often considered to be an important characteristic to determine elite status and give access to powerful institutions (Mills, 1956/2000; Pareto, 1897). But there could also be a practical reason for the HKJC to have wealthy members, namely for the maintenance and status of the organisation. The lowest membership fee is HK\$148,000 (US\$19,000), paired with a monthly subscription of HK\$1400 (US\$180) (reference date 2 January 2023). Nomination from voting or club members is not required for this level of membership. This hints that wealth is more important than being part of a certain network

because nomination for other membership levels of the HKJC is necessary (The Hong Kong Jockey Club, 2022).

Ching (1965) believes that the HKJC members may have felt embarrassed about their wealth and therefore devoted the surpluses of this organisation resulting from its gambling activities to charitable projects beneficial to people in need in colonial Hong Kong (p. 217). However, it may be argued that instead of easing the conscience of the rich, the investment of the revenue in Hong Kong society can also be regarded as another way for the elite to show their power, as they contributed to the social welfare development of society, receiving respect from the public (Lai, 2021, pp. 226–227). In addition, this acknowledged their affiliation with the HKJC, confirming their wealthy elite status. It is also in line with Mills' (1956/2000) perspective that wealth is indistinguishably bound to positions in powerful institutions.

The HKJC worked closely together with government departments for consultation in the judgement of the practicality and value of charitable projects. This may not be surprising considering the interlocked positions of the chairmen of this organisation with the Legco and/or Exco, as Table 7.1 shows. Financial investments were made in many projects from the colonial government in areas such as medical and health care, family values, education and training, sports, and recreation and culture that targeted the well-being of the general community (Lawrence, 1984, p. 14). Additionally, some charitable projects of the HKJC also supported the geographical expansion of Hong Kong as they made urban development financially possible (Somers, 1975). Not only the government benefited from the charitable support of the HKJC to develop Hong Kong and keep the masses satisfied, but also the business sector, CSOs, district organisations, and other parties. The funded projects created opportunities for them to expand and reach certain results and profits (School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong, 2014, p. 5). The HKJC thus played a crucial role in the development of other actors in Hong Kong.

Through its charitable donations to social welfare projects in Hong Kong, the HKJC also fulfilled the interests and needs of the local community. Therefore, it contributed to political stability in Hong Kong, but it may also be argued that this provided stability for its own further existence in Hong Kong society. According to Mills (1956/2000), the elite

need to have a stable society to secure their power, and this is supported by Adam and Tomšič (2002) and Parry (1969), who argue that there indeed must be a certain power relation between the elite and the public to sustain the existence of the ruling elite in a society. Subsequently, representing the mainstream norms and values and expectations in the community is an important characteristic for an organisation to become a strong institutional base in society (Lee, 2006).

Consequently, the success of the colonial government had become very dependent on the financial support from the HKJC for civic and social developments in Hong Kong society (Lawrence, 1984, p. 14). The charitable need of both the government and the society paved the way for the HKJC to become one of the world's largest providers of charity funding (Moss, 2000, p. 37).

The crucial role and position of the HKJC for the elite and Hong Kong society did not go unnoticed by the organisation itself. The organisation has adhered to the philosophy that if children are introduced to the HKJC when they are young, they will have fond memories of the organisation and it will unconsciously become an important element in their lives and membership in this organisation will become a desire when they are adults (Weldon, 2007, p. 183). This stimulation of participation in the activities of the HKJC at a very early age may be regarded as a commencement of the reproduction of the elite, but also as a strategy to generate symbols of identification and loyalty. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) argue that political parties use this function to find political stability in a society. It thus may be argued that in the embryonic civil society of colonial Hong Kong the HKJC functioned as a quasi-political party in society, as it was not a formal political party but it did take up some of the functions of a political party. Besides supporting political stability in society, as argued earlier, the HKJC also recruited political leadership for the colonial government. It filled the institutional void, which was needed for the body politic to work effectively (Lai, 2021, pp. 58–59, 254).

In the run-up to the handover of Hong Kong in 1997, the stability of society faced disruption due to the forthcoming political and economic changes. In anticipation of this, Li Ka-Shing and Stanley Ho, well-known

business tycoons in Hong Kong, established the Better Hong Kong Foundation in 1995, a new elite organisation seeking to boost the economy of post-colonial Hong Kong (Higgins, 1995). Contrary to the HKJC, this establishment is seemingly more focused on international rather than internal perspectives, anticipating a possible broader development of Hong Kong after the handover (The Better Hong Kong Foundation, 2023). This may indicate a disruption in the trust of the elite in the HKJC and the legitimacy of the organisation in Hong Kong, thus jeopardising its role for elite reproduction. As the next section of this chapter will show, the role of the HKJC to fill the institutional void in Hong Kong society has indeed become more disputable since the transitional period. The changed political situation in Hong Kong analysed against the elite membership of this organisation will provide us with a deeper understanding of the mechanism of the reproduction of the ruling elites in a changing society.

The Changing Role of the HKJC for the Elite

The elites in colonial Hong Kong played multiple roles as social and economic leaders-cum-politicians in the oversimplified state-society dichotomy. However, in the run-up to the handover of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese in 1997, the elite formation and composition in Hong Kong society started to change along with the political situation in the territory. The emergence of political parties and a more politically involved public challenged the role of the HKJC in contemporary society, thus questioning its value for further existence in Hong Kong.

The planned handover of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese in 1997 also had an impact on the HKJC, and this in turn had an effect on both officials of the governmental apparatus and the top elite membership of the HKJC (see again Table 7.1). However, wealth remained an important element for gaining access to the exclusive services and facilities of the HKJC (The Hong Kong Jockey Club, 2022). Despite the changes in society, wealthy business elites indeed can still uphold their position at the top (see Szelenyi & Szelenyi, 1995). However, at the same

time the political changes in Hong Kong society also affected the role of the HKJC to function as a legitimated platform for elite reproduction in Hong Kong, and other institutions/political parties have been established where the elite may have better chances to retain their elite status in society. This may be interpreted as the HKJC on the one hand having lost its value in providing the elite with access to a network through which they can influence government policies and on the other hand having to face a counter-elite, thus challenging the HKJC to remain attractive for the elite to reproduce via the organisation.

It may be argued that in colonial Hong Kong the elite relied on both economic and political power, which they could achieve through their membership in the HKJC. However, with the emergence of political parties and the growing interference of Beijing in contemporary Hong Kong, enjoying political power is limited. This is an interesting development impacting the HKJC because the HKJC claims not to be involved in politics (Taylor, 1995, p. 10). The question is then whether the HKJC can still reproduce elite members and influence state power as its role of filling the institutional void in Hong Kong has become unnecessary, thus undermining its role to expand the elite group and power over generation, following Hung's (2008) study. The position and status of the HKJC depends on its plans to cooperate with the Hong Kong and Chinese government to expand its reach and power in contemporary and future Hong Kong and China. The HKJC also faces the challenge of a legitimacy crisis in Hong Kong, where it no longer represents the public anymore, as it indirectly did during the colonial period through its charitable projects, thus losing support to uphold its stable position in society. All of these changes may affect the ability of the HKJC to integrate and reproduce elites through its organisation. However, the neutral position of this organisation may also be seen as an advantage and strength. Setting the political affirmations aside, the elite can still use it as a platform to mingle with other elite members and continuously focus on their mutual economic aims (Lai, 2021, p. 203). Following the theory of Lu and Fan (2021), this brings a split-off of the elites with economic power from elites with political power. The question is whether economic power is stronger than political power.

Conclusion

This case study on the HKJC shows that an elite CSO can influence the mechanism of the reproduction of the elite society because it has achieved the most powerful position in society. Through the political recruitment for the government and its charitable projects, the HKJC fulfilled an important function in the political, economic, and social development of Hong Kong society. Even though the HKJC did not have ambitions to take up political and ruling power in colonial Hong Kong, taking the above characteristics and developments into account it did fulfil the role of a quasi-political party, structuring the societal development by providing elites with a prominent political, economic, and social position in society and by controlling the public to safeguard a peaceful public order (Lai, 2021, pp. 103–104, 128). This powerful position of the HKJC made it an important and steady organisation where the elite members could uphold their position at the top. In other words, through political, economic, and social power, an elite CSO can influence the mechanism of the reproduction of the elite in society.

Because the HKJC had a strong and unique relationship with the government, it became desirable for the elites to be affiliated with it. This relationship gave the HKJC a respected image and a crucial role as a platform for both the British and Chinese elite to gain business and/or professional benefits. The elites could build and facilitate interrelated networks with members scattered across different sectors, professions, government offices, and ethnic groups, which stimulated the integration of elites. It also gave them the opportunity to seek and maintain their status in society, providing them with institutional privileges and powerful positions. This case study shows that different factors such as wealth, occupation, academic achievements, and social capital may have a decisive impact on the position and reproduction of elites in a CSO.

The case study of the HKJC shows that this organisation gained a powerful position in society and enjoyed high status. The colonial Hong Kong government became dependent on the economic success of the HKJC because of its gambling and subsequent charitable activities. Despite inequality of wealth and status, the mass society could be kept

satisfied by the elite members of the HKJC because the organisation invested in charitable projects beneficial for the social welfare development of Hong Kong society. It was therefore respected by the public, thus bridging the gap between the ruling regime of the British colonials and the public. The HKJC was thus actively involved in the development of Hong Kong society. This contributed to the status and development of a strong and powerful position of the HKJC in society.

However, the HKJC is facing a legitimacy crisis since the handover in 1997. Consequently, the role of the HKJC is balancing on the edge to, on the one hand, continue to act as a CSO for the masses in Hong Kong, or, on the other hand, to become more supportive of the Chinese and Hong Kong government in order to secure its position in Hong Kong. Considering the current political developments in Hong Kong, it seems that the Hong Kong government is rapidly adopting the political perspectives of mainland China. According to Lu and Fan (2021), this implies that political power has become dominant in Hong Kong. This means that there will be a reproduction of political elites, and the economic elites will no longer gain a ruling position in society. Whether the HKJC can still function as an institutional base for the elite in Hong Kong depends on the selection criteria for its membership and whether it is still in accordance with the government's conditions. This will have an impact not only on the HKJC itself but also on the social structure in Hong Kong. Hence, will membership of the HKJC remain interesting and stimulate the integration and reproduction of the elite, and will it continuously contribute to the political stability in Hong Kong through its charitable projects? That will depend on the strategic plans and implementation agenda of the HKJC in contemporary and future Hong Kong.

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Part III

Civil Society Elite Integration



8

Civil Society Boundary Crossing and Elite Integration

Malin Arvidson and Anders Uhlin

Introduction

It is common to conceptualise civil society as a societal space analytically distinct from the public sector (the state) and the private sector (business). Boundaries between sectors are both conceptual and tangible, and such boundaries may demarcate opposing approaches to societal challenges and different rules and regulations governing the sectors. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon that people cross sector boundaries. David Lewis (2008a, b, 2012) has termed this kind of movement between civil society and other sectors “boundary crossing” (see also Haryanto, 2020; Norén-Nilsson & Eng, 2020). In this chapter, we use this term to

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refer to the case of elite actors in one sector moving to take up leading positions in another sector. Such boundary crossing may involve political and economic elite actors being recruited to leading positions within civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as civil society leaders taking up leading positions in politics or business.

Elite integration makes up an important research tradition within elite studies. For example, the question of how and to what extent political elites are integrated with business elites has generated a wealth of research over time and in different national contexts (Hoffman-Lange, 2018). Elite integration may imply both similarity between elite groups and interdependence between elites (Engelstad, 2018: 441). Elites are considered integrated when they have similar characteristics, for instance in terms of shared class and educational background, and when they interact in the same networks. Elite integration can also be understood as shared values. Through similar upbringings people come to share cultural capital, and through professional experiences based on leadership in high positions people come to develop a common frame of reference around leadership and organisation. Within elite integration studies, the exclusivity of the elite is also assumed to form the basis for value congruence, which can be understood as a common interest in preserving the status and power enjoyed by the elite group. What can the study of elite boundary crossing between civil society and other societal sectors—such as the state, party politics, and business—tell us about the possible integration of civil society elites with elites of other societal sectors? How do civil society elite individuals, whose careers include boundary crossing, contribute to elite integration? Researching elite integration is, we argue, particularly pressing for civil society because it concerns the formation and maintenance of structures of power and inequality. Elite integration both contributes to and can be seen as an indicator of the consolidation of horizontal, exclusive networks, which creates social distance and exclusion.

In this study we explore the topic of elite integration in a novel way, namely through work-histories of civil society elite actors with careers that include the crossing of sectoral boundaries. Complementing extant, mainly quantitative, research on elite integration, we suggest that in-depth qualitative interviews with prominent boundary crossers can help

us shed new light on what processes might contribute to elite integration. More specifically, we understand inter-elite integration—that is, the integration of different distinct elite groups—to be related to social networks and value congruence based on power, privilege, and sovereignty linked to an elite status. Concerning elite integration as networking, we discuss how elite-level boundary crossing can be interpreted as either constituting or leading to elite integration. We argue, however, that networking in the form of boundary crossing in itself is not sufficient for elite integration, and instead we have to examine whether or not such elite-level contacts across sector boundaries lead to value congruence.

It is important to point out that a claim that sectors differ in terms of values regarding leadership and organisation is not only based on a theoretical model that identifies politics, business, and civil society as three distinct sectors. In all interviews, it is clear that civil society is experienced as a sector characterised by different ideals and practices compared to whatever sector from which the interviewees have moved. Exploring experiences of boundary crossing is therefore a highly relevant and valid approach to gain insight into different perspectives of value congruence.

We inductively identify three types of boundary crossers based on their motives for cross-sectoral movement and assess to what extent they are likely to contribute to value congruence, and thus elite integration, between sectors: (1) boundary crossers driven by professional motivations who move to another sector to impose values from their sector of origin; (2) boundary crossers driven by personal motivations who leave a sector where they no longer feel at home and seek out new and more attractive values in another sector; (3) boundary crossers driven by political motivations who move back and forth across sector boundaries to gain as much influence as possible on “their” issues. We assess the likelihood that these types of boundary crossers contribute to value congruence and elite integration.

The chapter is organised in the following way. After this introduction follows a theoretical and conceptual section situating our study in relation to research on elite integration and, more specifically, on civil society elite boundary crossing. Then follows a section on methods and data in which we discuss our methodological approach centred on biographical work-history interviews. The analysis explores how the practice of

boundary crossing may contribute to elite integration through social networks and value-congruence, distinguishing between three types of boundary crossers. Finally, we offer some conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Points of Departure

In his seminal study of the American power elite, Mills (1956) argued that economic, political, and military elites constituted one cohesive power elite. Mills was not alone in arguing for this among classic elite theorists, but this perspective has been questioned. Taking a pluralist perspective, we assume that in today's societies we can find several different elite groups. These elite groups are formed by their respective institutional residency resulting in quite distinct bases for power, status, and values (e.g. Dahl, 1963). However, while they are different, and may represent conflicting interests, they are not separate from each other. Researchers have long debated how and to what extent elite groups are interconnected, resulting in a wealth of research looking into different dimensions of elite interaction and integration (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018). The degree of elite unity however varies between different countries and therefore should be a question for empirical research.

Elite individuals can be identified based on their superior abilities, extraordinary wealth, privileged positions, or social status. Moreover, elites refer to those with disproportionate power to influence politics (Engelstad, 2018: 440). However, already at the stage of defining elites the concept of integration is central because it constitutes a prerequisite for a group to be regarded as an elite: an elite is not simply a collection of individuals but a group of people who “act together” as a “unified body” (Ruostetsaari, 2015: 19), with the view to protect “the privileges associated with their positions of power and influence” (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018: 55). Hence, integration is central both to the definition of an elite and to our understanding of how elite interrelations are structured.

Elite research has explored different forms of elite integration (Engelstad, 2018: 439–440), including between elites and society at

large, within elite groups, and between elite groups. In focus for this chapter is integration *between* elite groups, that is, inter-elite integration. This may imply both similarities between elite groups and interdependence between elites (Engelstad, 2018: 441). The experiences that come with a professional career, including movement across societal sectors, contribute to value congruence and consensus among elite actors from different sectors (Gulbrandsen & Engelstad, 2005; Miller-Stevens et al., 2015). However, elite integration also implies that elite actors complement each other and depend on each other for maintaining elite status. While a level of competition over power may be recognised, integration with other elite groups is also sought “by elite persons and groups to contain or offset power dispersion” (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018: 57). Cooperation across sectors serves the purpose of building trust among “heterogeneous elites” and thereby preventing “conflicts of interest from turning into violent power struggles” (Hoffmann-Lange, 2018: 56) that may jeopardise existing power structures. Although some types of elite integration are seen as normatively problematic because they may involve conspiracy and lead to corruption, elite integration is also seen by elite theorists as something normatively good and even necessary for a functioning democracy. In the words of Engelstad (2018: 454), “[e]lite integration is a *sine qua non* for stable, reasonably peaceful political governance”.

Engelstad (2018: 447) identifies a network model of elite integration that relies on elite interaction in committees, commissions, and boards. This is often referred to as “interlocking directorates”, a concept that captures interaction between individuals occupying multiple organisational memberships (Ma & DeDeo, 2017; Messamore, 2021; Mizruchi, 1996; Moore et al., 2002). Dogan (2003: 2) defines elite interlock as “movements from one power summit to another, not movements within the same sphere”, and hence emphasises that it assumes a society that contains several different elite groups and refers to interactions that go beyond a close circuit of organisations. Such interlock is also defined as different from elite interchangeability, which suggests “a common stock of undifferentiated elites” (ibid.). Interlocking directorates is mainly a business practice wherein a member of one company’s board of directors also serves on another company’s board. However, there are also

interlocking directorates related to CSOs. Messamore (2021: 147) shows that interlocking directorates among community-based organisations is indicative of integration among civil society leaders, which may lead to the emergence of a “civic elite”.

Networks in themselves do not necessarily imply elite integration. In the literature on elite interaction and integration, the concept of value congruence is often used. The concept refers to both objectively and subjectively defined values that form the basis for group unity. One assumption is that value congruence follows early socialisation in similar environments, typically a privileged upbringing and private, elite schooling. This kind of value congruence is amply captured by Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital”, that is, capital that is fostered through the inclusion in privileged groups, by inheritance (family background), or by schooling (elite schools). Value congruence from this perspective is not measured directly, but is simply assumed based on objectively observed indicators such as socio-economic background (based on parents’ income, for example) and school careers (private schools and elite universities). The socialisation that follows from growing up under privileged circumstances and exclusive schooling has a profound effect on the cultural capital of the individual, both in terms of taste and cultural preferences and as a basis for expectations that guide career choices and how ambitions are pursued. Value congruence forms the basis for a sense of belonging based on distinctiveness and exclusivity. This may translate into a common interest to preserve the status quo regarding exclusivity, which in turn forms the basis for the maintenance of social structures characterised by principles of inclusion/exclusion.

Values can also be shaped through elite interaction later in life (professional career and leisure activities and networks associated with these). Shared values are formed by similar career experiences and through individuals moving in the same circles. Individuals are fostered by institutional logics that determine what gives status and power in different sectors such as politics, business, public administration, and the media. Hence, we use the term “values” in a broad sense alluding to the idea of overarching sector values; for example, justice and charity are assumed to be strong values in civil society, while efficiency, effectiveness, and market values are associated with the private sector (cf. Brandsen & Karré, 2011;

Lipsky & Smith, 1989). More specifically, we refer to sector values that are translated into norms of leadership such as top-down management in commercial competitive business organisations versus collegial and participatory approaches in voluntary-based CSOs (cf. Miller-Stevens et al., 2015).

Our approach to studying civil society elite integration is to explore boundary crossing between civil society and other sectors. The concept of boundary crossing assumes that civil society is different from other sectors in society because boundaries are believed to distinguish civil society from other spheres of human activity (cf. Khalil, 2013). The literature on non-profit organisations conventionally distinguishes between the public, private, and third sector (Anheier & Seibel, 1990). Civil society theorists commonly construct boundaries between civil society on the one hand and the state and political and economic society on the other (Cohen & Arato, 1992). The boundaries of civil society are “conceptual boundaries”, but people may still experience boundaries as very real, with distinct rules of the game in different sectors (Lewis, 2008b: 139).

This chapter addresses core issues in the elite integration literature, namely how integration is indicative of networks and the nature of boundaries between different sectors and elite groups and how integration is implicated with the forging of value congruence across elite groups. From the perspective of civil society studies, these issues are of particular interest because institutional closeness and interaction across sectoral boundaries are linked to organisational isomorphism, implying that civil society values may be at risk of becoming diluted. This kind of reasoning resonates with theoretical assumptions in elite integration studies, where elite movement between different spheres of power is seen as indicative of institutional closeness and where such elite integration is expected to lead to value congruence across elite groups.

Methods and Data

Elite integration has typically been studied based on large datasets, often gathered through surveys (e.g. Edling et al., 2014; Gulbrandsen, 2012; Higley et al., 1991). Quantitative methods for analysing elite integration

include multiple correspondence analysis (Bühlmann et al., 2012) and various forms of social network analysis (Edling et al., 2014; Larsen & Ellersgaard, 2017). While such studies offer valuable comparative overviews, they cannot provide more in-depth and nuanced accounts of the diversity of boundary crossing experiences. As a complement to established quantitative approaches, we rely on qualitative interviews.

In order to identify individual interviewees, we used a mix of positional and reputational methods. Our starting point was the identification of major CSOs in three countries (Italy, Sweden, and the UK) (see Appendix, this volume). We examined the career trajectory of presidents and directors of organisations with the highest “elite score” (ibid.) to find people with a background in leading positions in the public or private sector or in politics. In order to also capture civil society leaders who had moved into leading positions in the state, business, or politics, we compiled a list of key figures with these characteristics frequently occurring in the media. In selecting interviewees, we aimed at diversity in gender, age, and civil society sector. For this chapter, we draw on eight interviews (two in Italy, four in Sweden, and two in the UK). Our sample is obviously not representative of any larger population, and this explorative study does not aim at empirical generalisations. The interviewees were selected because we believed that they could provide important and unique insights into the experiences of boundary crossing to and from civil society.

We conducted life-work history interviews (Lewis, 2008b: 127), which are defined as a retrospective account of (part of) one’s life with a particular focus on a person’s professional career. Life histories have the advantage of providing historical depth and ethnographic detail (Lewis, 2008b: 561). Care had to be taken, however, to strike a balance between the need to focus on the boundary crossing experiences and the aim to create a narrative that is the interviewee’s own with minimal researcher influence. The way to do this was to design semi-structured interviews that explored personal and professional perspectives on motivations, values, and experiences from engaging with different sectors. The interviews began by introducing the research problem to the interviewee and asking about childhood experiences that motivated engagement in CSOs and then moved on to the interviewee’s first job (in civil society or other sectors)

and continued to cover the interviewee's professional career. Our life-work history interviews lasted around 60 minutes.

While members of elites are typically not seen as being vulnerable in the same way as non-elite individuals, this kind of interview still requires important ethical considerations. The disclosure of information and reflections provided in the interviews could potentially be damaging for the interviewee. This could cause embarrassment, compromise professional relationships, and even lead to the loss of a job (Lancaster, 2017: 99), and hence it might make sense to speak about "vulnerable elites" (Smith, 2006: 650). In the case of civil society elites, some accounts linked to a specific person could have damaging effects not only for the individual but also for the organisation they represent and possibly for the whole civil society sector. This kind of sensitivity or vulnerability is particularly acute in a time of strong populist anti-elite sentiments. We carefully considered such potential risks concerning each interview, and all interviewees were informed about the research and how we planned to use the interviews. While all of them gave their oral or written consent to be quoted in research publications, we still decided to not refer to them by name.

The narratives created through the life-work history interviews were transcribed. We coded the data in order to map different aspects of boundary crossing, including motives behind the movement, views on networking and cross-sector contacts, and perceived differences and similarities between sectors, especially in terms of dominant values. The interview data were contextualised against a review of primary and secondary literature, including CVs and bios found on the internet when available (cf. Lewis, 2012: 161).

Our interviewees had different career trajectories, including movement both to and from civil society. Two persons had successful careers in business before taking up leading positions in civil society (Interviewee 1 and 2). One of our interviewees started a legal career, then switched to jobs in local and national government and took up leadership positions in several major CSOs (Interviewee 3). Another person started as a journalist, then joined the local and national government before moving on to become a leader of a major CSO (Interviewee 4). One civil society leader started her career as a student activist, then joined different CSOs

before joining a political party and being elected to the national parliament. After serving as a parliamentarian, she returned to civil society as the president of a local branch of a major CSO while also being elected to a local parliament, and finally became president of a major national CSO (Interviewee 5). Following a similar trajectory, another person served on leading positions in several development-oriented and international solidarity-oriented CSOs on the national and EU levels while also being active in a political party and being elected to the national parliament (Interviewee 6). One of our interviewees started his career as a leader of the student branch of a political party, then was elected to the national parliament. Temporarily stopping his political career, he became president of a major CSO, moving on to leading another major CSO before returning to party politics as a member of the European Parliament, while also serving in leading positions within national and international public authorities as well as an international think tank (Interviewee 7). Yet another person had a similarly varied career path, beginning in civil society, then moving to the public sector as a politically recruited government official, then moving into the business sector when joining a PR company, to then be recruited to work at the EU Commission, and then back to civil society before being appointed as director of a new public authority (Interviewee 8).

Analysis

Networks and Elite Integration

Social networks across sector boundaries appear to be important in all of our interviews. First, the act of crossing sector boundaries in itself is an example of cross-border networking. Second, the most important enabling factor for boundary crossing appears to be personal contacts. All interviewees mentioned this when explaining why they were recruited to a leading position in a societal sector different from where they previously resided. What is stressed is informal personal networks. Third,

cross-sector networks are important not only for facilitating boundary crossing but also for the ability of the boundary crosser to lead in a new sector. For example, when entering formal politics, one boundary crosser believed that his networks and experiences from civil society were very important and gave him “disproportionate influence” in the European Parliament (Interviewee 7). CSOs “saw me as a very important person in European politics. [...] There you can really see the usefulness of networks and experiences [from civil society]” (Interviewee 7). Another interviewee stressed the advantages of bringing one’s civil society networks to the state sector. When taking up the position as director of a public authority, the former civil society activist engaged civil society actors in various forms of cooperation with the public authority, including joint conferences and publications. She described this civil society participation as very valuable (Interviewee 8).

The centrality of social networks and contacts across sector boundaries in the narratives derived from life-work history interviews with civil society elite boundary crossers is, however, not enough for us to conclude that networking in itself is indicative of elite integration. Networks between elite groups are a necessary condition for elite integration, but they are not sufficient. In order to draw (tentative) conclusions about elite integration, we also have to explore to what extent key values of the different elite groups converge. Does boundary crossing lead to elite-level value congruence? And if so, what kind of boundary crossers are likely to contribute to elite integration through value congruence? These are the questions addressed in the remaining part of this chapter. In the analysis of our interview transcripts, we identified three types of boundary crossers with different motives for their cross-sector movement. First is the leader driven by professional motivations trying to impose values associated with her sector of origin in a new setting. Second is the leader driven by personal motivations whose boundary crossing is triggered by a wish to escape old values and embrace new ones. Third is the leader driven by political motivations who moves back and forth between sectors navigating value differences as he seeks to maximise influence in a specific issue area. We consider these types in turn.

Imposing Values in a New Setting

Coming from the business sector to take up a leading position in a major CSO, a new leader applied business practices to the civil society sector.

We had to lay off and get rid of that administration. We were sitting with a financial management with far too low risk so we needed to increase the risk and think strategically. We had to get an external financial council that was qualified and not only a bunch of [activists in the CSO in question] who had been in [the organisation] for four decades. (Interviewee 1)

This civil society leader noted many differences between business and civil society, mostly, in her view, to the advantage of business. The slowness and anchoring processes in civil society is a difference compared to the business sector. “Companies are quicker and more efficient” (Interviewee 1).

There is probably more tolerance of hierarchies and power in the business sector. You look up to and respect the bosses more. [...] I think that [in civil society] there is actually alarmingly low respect for the bosses. (Interviewee 1)

According to this boundary crosser, many principles and practices from the business sector are applicable in civil society. “Debit and credit are the same in the [name of the CSO] as anywhere else. Having sound finances is as important there, if not even more important” (Interviewee 1). However, there are also sector differences that make it difficult to simply transfer practices from one sector to another. How to handle all the volunteers was described as very frustrating by this leader coming from the business sector. “In organisations where volunteering is big you have another type of leadership. There you have to add something to your leadership” (Interviewee 1).

While acknowledging that leadership values and practices cannot easily be transferred from one sector to another, this interviewee is a clear example of the type of boundary crosser who is primarily driven by

professional motivations and who tries to impose values from their sector of origin to the new sector. Acting as a “value entrepreneur”, this type of boundary crosser might contribute to value congruence between elite groups in different sectors, but only to the extent that efforts to impose values from another sector are successful. In this specific case, there are indications that the former business leader managed to lead the large CSO at least partly based on leadership values from the business sector. Hence, this is a case of possible inter-elite integration that deserves more attention in future research.

Escaping Old Values and Embracing New Ones

Sometimes elite-level boundary crossing is mainly driven by personal motivations, for instance a move away from a sector where the leader no longer feels at home. One civil society leader with a career background in politics and government reflected on the “formalised and bureaucratised” ways of operating within state departments. He explained that “I didn’t think I could express myself in that language” and made the decision to move away from politics and public administration (Interviewee 4).

For some of our interviewees, the move into civil society was prompted by a wish to move away from the values dominating the profit-seeking business world. They perceived civil society as a sector where one can make a meaningful and valuable social contribution. One interviewee expressed dissatisfaction with his business career: “I got to a point with private equity, where I felt I’d sort of done enough, you know, I wanted to do something that had greater social value” (Interviewee 2). This combination of dissatisfaction with the current career and a will to “do good” was also expressed by another boundary crosser:

About five years into my legal career I just thought I’m not enjoying this and so just gave up and sort of at the age of twenty-six started thinking, you know, what do I really want to do. And at the time I was earning quite a lot of money with the prospect of earning a huge amount of money, but I just wasn’t particularly interested in it and I was a bit bored. (Interviewee 3)

However, moving to civil society is not always easy for a business leader. “It was difficult to take a charity salary, with having four kids and quite a lot of dependants... I didn’t feel I could take what would have been such a dramatic cut in salary” (Interviewee 2). Also, in spite of an outstanding career as a business developer, he felt rejected by charities on the ground that he was not a “good fit” (Interviewee 2). “There are certain charities that I reached out to, that I basically got a flat no from” (Interviewee 2). Hence, this type of boundary crosser has to overcome considerable hurdles in order to get into a leading position in civil society. This means that they have a strong motivation to embrace or at least adjust to key values in the civil society sector. One interviewee said that while the CSO that took him on as its new director was keen to invite new perspectives, including commercial skills, he himself had to adapt his leadership style:

Some of the things that have worked very well in the commercial sector, I’ve had to modify, adjust, be more patient about. [...] The language of ‘servant leadership’ is used quite a lot here, and I see myself more like that. It’s not my role to stand at the top as the big person who tells everyone this is what we are doing as an organisation, and everyone just jumps. (Interviewee 2)

Sympathising with the general values of the CSO made it easier to adapt to its leadership values. “One of the reasons I came to [name of the CSO] is because I really like our values. I didn’t create them, so they’re open, fair, connected, pioneering, and courageous” (Interviewee 2).

This type of boundary crosser, to the extent that old values are left behind and new values are embraced, does not contribute to value congruence between sectors and thus does not lead to the integration of different elite groups. However, in real life one is not likely to leave all previous values behind, even if the main driver behind boundary crossing is a personal dissatisfaction with the values dominating one’s sector. As one interviewee put it, “As a leader you never stop learning, so each new environment you come into brings new perspectives” (Interviewee 2). This suggests that boundary crossing always entails some merging of values, even when the boundary crosser intends to escape old values and embrace new values.

Navigating Value Differences when Seeking Issue-Specific Influence

A frequently mentioned driver behind boundary crossing both to and from civil society is to gain political influence, “to make a difference” concerning issues that one finds very important. This might be a particularly strong incentive to move from civil society to politics, but some also find that they can actually make more of a difference when moving to civil society. Several of our interviewees also moved back and forth between civil society and other sectors in order to maximise their influence on their key issues.

One civil society leader who was also at times a leading politician valued the “greater freedom in civil society” (Interviewee 7). He viewed the benefits and challenges of party politics differently depending on if he was in or out of politics:

When I have been outside of politics, then I have often felt that now I have to enter politics and fight and do something about this. And when I have been in politics I have just felt, oh God how narrow this system is. [...] It is very difficult to get things done. (Interviewee 7)

Another boundary crosser expressed that a major difference between party politics and civil society activism is that the latter is more direct and practical:

I want to protect the environment and so I do “recycling”, I don’t use mineral water. [...] I say that I defend Kurdistan, so we organised dinner in which we send money to Kurdistan. I say that I struggle against poverty, so I offer dinner to poor people. This is the difference I think. (Interviewee 5).¹

When moving across sector boundaries, one has to navigate value differences. In civil society, one must adhere to the values of the organisation and of civil society at large. In the public sector, there is a form of “public authority integrity where you show that you do not allow yourself to be guided by your own feelings” (Interviewee 8). An advantage of moving to the public sector is that one typically has access to more resources than in civil society. “There are very different opportunities to develop leadership

issues, employee issues, there are other resources” (Interviewee 8). Moving to the public sector is also a way of gaining more political influence. “You don’t have to stand on the barricades, you know, now there are other ways to gain influence” (Interviewee 8).

Boundary crossers, especially those moving back and forth across sector boundaries or simultaneously holding leading positions in more than one sector, are manifestations of cross-border linkages. One boundary crosser who was both a civil society leader and a member of parliament expressed that she could act as an “intermediary” between civil society and party politics (Interviewee 6). For this type of boundary crosser, sector boundaries appear permeable. When moving across sector boundaries, the leader has to navigate value differences. However, being active in more than one sector, the boundary crosser is also likely to contribute to the weakening of such value differences, which might lead to value congruence between elite groups and, hence, inter-elite integration.

Conclusion

Drawing on life-work history interviews with boundary crossers who move between civil society and other sectors, we sought to complement existing, mainly quantitative, research on elite integration. We considered that boundary crossing in itself could be seen as an expression of elite integration. If elites frequently and easily move between sectors, this could be seen as an indication that elite groups are relatively integrated. Moreover, boundary crossers bring values related to the principles of leadership and organisational operation from one sector to another, thus contributing to increasing cross-sector integration. However, we argue that while the networking indeed appears to be open for cross-sector integration of organisational or sectoral principles, this is not sufficient for elite integration. We have to examine whether or not such elite-level contacts across sector boundaries actually contribute to the convergence of elite values. By this, we mean not (only) the integration of sector values but also the development and consolidation of values that only concern elite groups and that, as Hoffman-Lange (2018) suggests, relate to the exclusivity of their “positions of power and influence” (p. 55).

The interviewed boundary crossers share some important features, and they have for some time moved in the higher echelons of their respective societies, and although their motives for moving across sectoral boundaries vary, they experience how sectors represent different values, or institutional logics, that guide core attitudes regarding organisational management, power, status, and hierarchical orders. In their stories, we see how they reflect on these differences and make individual decisions regarding how to deal with institutional value conflicts and the fact that their elite attributes do not easily fit into a new context. Based on their motives for cross-sectoral movement, we identified three types of boundary crossers: (1) boundary crossers who move to another sector to impose values from their sector of origin; (2) boundary crossers who leave a sector where they no longer feel at home and seek out new and more attractive values in another sector; (3) boundary crossers who move back and forth across sector boundaries to gain as much influence as possible on “their” issues.

The first type of boundary crosser is driven mainly by *professional* motivations. This leader (often from the business sector) believes that the management values of the sector of origin are superior and can be fruitfully applied in another sector (typically civil society). This boundary crosser has a mission to transform the CSO she is now leading into a more professional and efficient organisation. We argue that this type may contribute to value congruence if the boundary crosser succeeds in imposing values from their sector of origin on another sector. Moreover, beyond the integration of business sector values into the context of civil society, the boundary crosser creates an exclusive position for herself by forwarding leadership principles that she masters particularly well. This potentially gives the leader a role where bonds of loyalty and interest with other elite leaders are forged, rather than relations of affinity within the organisation.

The second type of boundary crosser has *personal* motivations for moving across sector boundaries. Experiencing a discrepancy between personal ethical and political values and those prevailing in the sector where he is active (typically business or politics), this person moves to civil society, a sector believed to be shaped by values more in line with the individual’s preferences. The second type does not immediately contribute to

value congruence, as old values are set aside, although over time we may expect a merging of principles that guide leadership and organisational operation. Because these boundary crossers seek to subsume to the values of civil society, they also appear to renounce their membership in an elite whose community of interests aims at preserving elite exclusivity.

The third type of boundary crosser is driven by *political* motivations when seeking to maximise influence through mobility across sector boundaries. From an elite integration perspective, this type is difficult to interpret. On the one hand, frequent mobility generates multifaceted and exclusive experiences and provides good insight into the essence of elite community values. On the other hand, this boundary crosser is also at risk of being a constant outsider.

Our analysis both confirms and problematises the idea of clear boundaries between civil society and the state, political parties, and the market economy. Boundaries are at once permeable and distinct. All interviewees perceive obvious differences between sectors, suggesting that the boundaries of civil society are not just academic constructions. Although one of our interviewees noted that some boundaries can only be crossed once (from media to politics), the boundaries appeared relatively permeable, at least for this group of elites. Although frequent boundary crossing of elites suggests that boundaries between civil society and other sectors are permeable, this does not necessarily mean that the nature of boundaries are similar for all groups in civil society. Rather, this may be an expression of *elite* and not sector integration. Civil society elite actors may experience integration with other elite groups and therefore see sectoral boundaries as permeable, while for other, non-elite individuals, the boundaries remain distinct and difficult to cross and therefore the integration of values appears to be quite different.

The importance of making a distinction between levels of integration lies in the possible implications for civil society. Integration at organisational and sectoral levels is captured in the research theme of isomorphism, that is, the mainstreaming of civil society as a result of institutional closeness. Such integration affects more or less all those involved in civil society. However, elite integration refers to a process of differentiation within the sector, where a group of highly influential people in positions of power can be considered part of a social elite rather than part of civil

society. This prompts questions regarding loyalties and solidarity within the sector because such horizontal integration risks increasing social distance between the majority of members, volunteers, clients, and employees of civil society and organisational leaders. While the integration of society's different elite groups may lay the foundation for a stable democracy (cf. Engelstad, 2018), elite integration that also incorporates civil society's elite leaders becomes problematic for a sector whose independence from dominant power structures is central. Furthermore, the permeability, or lack thereof, of civil society boundaries might lead to different patterns of civil society elite integration in different countries. We suggest that these are important topics for future research because characteristics of boundaries and integration are indicative of how power and influence are dispersed in civil society.

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9

The Interstitial Elites of the Italian Foundations of Banking Origin

Paola Arrigoni

Introduction

The foundations of banking origin (Fobs) are among the key sites where political, economic, and financial power is concentrated in present-day Italy. The Fobs' growing influence on public policymaking, their crucial role within the Italian financial system, and the profiles of the individuals called to direct them make them a worthy focus for the study of elites, whether from a positional, decision-making, or reputational perspective. Nevertheless, Fobs have never been investigated in their own right, either as organisations or in relation to the actors who govern them.

Indeed, although the debate on Fobs' ambiguous positioning—between the private and the public, between banks and electoral politics, and between philanthropy and business—has been raging since the foundations were first brought into existence (e.g., Boeri, 2013; Guiso, 2013), it is only in the legal literature that they have been investigated more

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closely (Pastori & Zagrebelsky, 2011). In contrast, political and sociological studies of Fobs are rare and mainly focus on how they operate (e.g., Barbeta, 2013; Burrioni et al., 2017; Polizzi, 2021; Ravazzi, 2016), while failing to scrutinise their origins, development, and senior members. Thus, the aim of my own research has been to fill this gap by focusing on the leadership group of a specific Fob, the Compagnia San Paolo (CSP) of Turin. Specifically, this work considers the following questions. What are the features of the people who have been called to lead Fobs from their origins (1992) until today? Do they constitute an elite and, if so, what kind of ethos do they express? I use the term ‘elite’ operatively, critically, and flexibly, following a socio-historical approach informed by the Anglo-American pragmatist tradition of C.W. Mills (1956). Ethos is understood here as a grammar of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991) and as an expression of the spirit of capitalism as defined by Boltanski and Chiapello (1999).

This chapter illustrates how a set of people, who are already powerful in other fields (i.e., already belonging to elite formations in other contexts) can constitute themselves as a new political elite or a ruling group that seeks to establish itself as a legitimate actor in the domain of policy-making by virtue of its membership in a civil society organisation (CSO) with a specific ethos.

I conduct my research from a socio-historical perspective, following tradition of C.W. Mills (1956) and adopting an interpretive framework informed by the principles of *histoire croisée* (Werner & Zimmermann, 2006). Indeed, the relational and processual framework of *histoire croisée* seems particularly suited to studying a multidimensional object such as the CSP and its elites. Combining diachronic and synchronic perspectives, this approach attributes a dynamic and active role to both the object under investigation and the researcher’s intersecting of scales, categories, sources, and viewpoints. My study draws on original empirical material comprising (i) an analysis of documents such as the annual reports and financial statements of the CSP itself and Acri (an association that represents the Fobs) and legislation concerning Fobs; (ii) 36 semi-structured interviews with individuals both inside the CSP/Fobs (20) and external to them (16); (iii) ethnographic data gathered at public events organised by the CSP or attended by representatives of the CSP (2017–2021); and

(iv) a prosopography based on 16 socio-demographic and other variables (e.g., types and number of fields worked in during their professional career and years of service in the CSP or affiliated institutions) inferred from the career histories of the 129 members of the seven most recent boards of directors of the CSP (1991–2019). To assemble this information, I mainly draw on official biographies such as CVs, post-appointment press releases, and accounts published in the media. After constructing the variables, I analysed them longitudinally, using the term of office (four years) of the seven boards as the independent variable.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I present the main characteristics of Fobs (and the CSP) while outlining how the theoretical underpinnings of interstitiality (as conceptualised by Eyal, 2013) helps me to unpack my object of inquiry. Next, I present and discuss my empirical findings in relation to the rise and key features of the CSP's elite group and their associated ethos and the practices of integration and the role played by this kind of elite group 'in-between' the state, markets, and civil society. Finally, in the concluding section, I raise questions surrounding the social and analytical implications of my findings.

Fobs as Interstitial Organisations

We should feel proud to have been among the pioneers, to have opened up a path that abroad is seen as a model from which to learn about various aspects. We have done this not without difficulty (...) as I think happens everywhere when you try to create something new. One might joke: while we may have been Frankenstein, the name we were called when the foundations of banking origin were created, today we are aware that we have 'clones' all over the world. (Giuseppe Guzzetti, 'The humanism of philanthropy', *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 2 October 2014)

In this statement, Guzzetti—one of the most emblematic figures in the history of the Fobs as a former president of Acri and of Cariplo Fob in Milan—brilliantly summarised the complex essence of the banking foundations. It is indicative of the Fobs' fuzziness that the first person to coin the label 'Frankenstein' was Giuliano Amato, the main proponent of the

reform from which the foundations were born (Corsico & Messa, 2011). Although it is not easy to sum up banking foundations, I will provide the reader with some key information before advancing my line of argumentation further: What are Fobs, where did they come from, and why is the concept of interstitiality useful in decoding them?

Perceived as ‘strange creatures’ from the outset, Fobs are an unforeseen outcome of the complex process of privatisation of the Italian banking sector that was initiated in the 1990s (Pastori & Zagrebelsky, 2011). More specifically, in order to privatise the Italian public credit system—which historically did not have a clear owner (Fiordiponti, 2013)—the Amato-Carli law (1990) assigned ownership of the shares of the former saving banks to new public subjects termed ‘conferring bodies’, which also inherited the philanthropic mission of the former public banks, while the banking business itself was entrusted to a ‘conferee’ joint-stock bank.

Shares had to be created in order to privatise and had to be sold, but if you do not have an owner for the shares, how on earth can you do this? So, they split off another entity from the bank, which would later become the Fob, then called the conferring body. (Interview with Professor Emeritus of Administrative Law, University of Bologna, 2017)

The privatisation of the banks initially only took place at the ‘formal’ level. This was because, at first, control over their resources was left in the hands of political leaders via the conferring body. Otherwise, the politicians would have obstructed the reform. Only in 1998 (Ciampi Law No 461, 23 December 1998), following a further legislative process that was not without controversy, was the conferring body obliged to forgo control of the banks, shedding its original role of steering the privatisation process and becoming a private foundation.

From a legal perspective, Fobs are spinoffs of public institutions. Thus, they have no founder other than an act of law, and this makes them unique compared to all other kinds of foundations in the world (corporate, familial, individual, communitarian). Legislation endowed the newly constituted Fobs with ‘third-party’ resources, namely the savings of investors who did not have any say in the setting up of the foundations

nor in their subsequent activities (Pastori & Zagrebelsky, 2011). Essentially, the law replaced the investors with local communities (*'il territorio'*). The core characteristics of the Fobs reflect this origin—they are private but obliged by law to invest their assets in specific policy areas that largely overlap with the brief of local government, they are independent of the banks they originated from, yet in many cases remain among their main shareholders, and both public actors (e.g., elected bodies, universities, and hospitals) and private bodies (e.g., chambers of commerce, foundations, and Catholic Church authorities) contribute to appointing their boards.

The origin of the Fobs explains why they cannot be reduced to a single field as conceptualised by Bourdieu and why, even today, they continue to be hybrid in nature, spanning the state, markets, and civil society. Indeed, they intercept multiple fields. First are the financial and business sectors, by virtue of their shares in the banks and the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP, a publicly controlled joint-stock company and traditional channel for financing public bodies), and their non-banking investments. This combined set of holdings makes them the leading investors in Italy's real economy (Greco & Tombari, 2020). Second are the political and public administration sectors. This is because a set number of Fob board members must be appointed by local authorities and because Fobs are required by law to invest their assets in policy areas that significantly overlap with those under the responsibility of local authorities such as social services, education, research, art, and culture (Ravazzi, 2016). Third are the organised civil society and university sectors, which are involved in the appointment of the Fobs' governing bodies and can receive grant funding from the foundations. Fourth are Italian and European philanthropy sectors via the Fobs' links with Philea (Philanthropy Europe Association) and their networking with other types of foundations. Furthermore, over the past two decades Fobs have consistently occupied a key role in Italian policymaking—whether alongside, as equals to, independently of, and sometimes even in a position of supremacy over, 'traditional' elected or appointed political actors (Arrigoni, 2021). This position has been legitimised over time thanks to the Fobs' legislative underpinnings, the fact that they can make free use of their assets because they are private, their 'new' philanthropic nature, and last

but not least the participation in their governing bodies of figures who already enjoyed elite status in other fields and who circulate in and around the foundations, thus providing access to other resources (Khan, 2012). This mix of factors has enhanced the Fobs' capacity to steer the debate concerning problems and solutions of public interest, including via the dissemination of 'vehicular ideas' (Osborne, 2004), that is to say, discursive elements with the power to 'make things move' through the coalitions that adopt them. This is reflected at the empirical level in the affirmation of imaginaries of 'social cohesion' and 'resilience' in which the Fobs have played a role (d'Albergo & Moini, 2018).

There are currently 86 Fobs in Italy (Acri, 2020), which vary greatly in terms of size, territorial scale, and the composition of their boards. A total of 77.4% of their assets are owned by only 16 Fobs, of which the two largest—Cariplo and the CSP—hold 32.7%. The foundations are concentrated mainly in Northern Italy, with almost none based in the South. A diverse range of bodies appoint the members of their boards, and half are nominated by the banks that the foundations originated from while the other half are chosen by local community organisations or are co-opted by the CSP Board of Directors itself. At the end of 2019, the Fobs reported a joint worth of EUR 40.3 billion (Acri, 2020). Between 2000 and 2019, they distributed over EUR 22 billion in grants, mainly to fund the arts, culture, social services, research, and education. Furthermore, MRIs—mission-related investments—represent 11.2% of their assets (with a monetary value of EUR 4.4 billion). These take the form of equities, bonds, and fund shares concentrated in the transport infrastructure, energy distribution, and construction sectors. Social housing falls under this last category and indeed is the only example of strong financialisation in Italian social welfare. In other words, the Fobs' housing policies in addition to actors and narratives also involve technical instruments, assets, contracts, and flows of money dictated by financial market logic (Chiappello, 2019). A narrative is here understood as a form of human understanding that, by connecting different events and giving them an argumentative coherence, produces the meaning that the narrator wants to communicate to the outside environment (Moini, 2013).

As mentioned at the outset, my research is focused on the elites that may be observed in the CSP. I do not generalise from this case study, but

rather propose it as an emblematic instance among the 86 contemporary Fobs. The CSP comes from a long history, dating back to 1563, and the current foundation has played and continues to play a key role in local urban governance (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013). However, its sphere of influence goes beyond local borders; together with Fondazione Cariplo in Milan, it remains the main shareholder in the leading Italian banking group Intesa Sanpaolo and plays a decisive role in the appointment of the bank's top management. It is recognised as one of the most dynamic foundations in terms of its networking with other European foundations and is one of the largest foundations in Europe in terms of grants and assets (Salamon, 2014).

The Notion of Interstitiality

Given that Fobs are located in a murky space that straddles finance, business, politics, philanthropy, and academia, it is not surprising that Eyal's (2013) notion of interstitiality—understood as a vector for the hybridisation and circulation of logics, grammars of justification, devices, and actors across fields—proves to be an excellent heuristic tool for studying the CSP and its leadership group. First, because unveiling the nature of these strange creatures requires us to consider the fuzziness of our object of inquiry right from the conceptualisation and design of our research. Second, because CSP elites draw their unique power precisely from their location at the crossroads between different fields in 'a space that is underdetermined, where things can be done, combinations and conversions could be established, that are not possible to do within fields. In short, it is a space that has been opened up by some abrupt change, and that can generate even more changes' (Eyal, 2013, p. 177).

I wished to assess interstitiality in the CSP as an organisation and, innovatively, directly in relation to its highest-ranking members. Indeed, not only do interstitial spaces appear increasingly key to the exercise of power by elites—see Dakowska (2014) on German political foundations and Medvetz on American think tanks (2012)—but also, expanding the original concept of interstitiality, I attribute an interstitial quality to the CSP elite per se. More specifically, this group is not only situated in an

interstitial space, but its influence is legitimated by an interstitial ethos. This evocative ethos appears to be an intrinsic characteristic of an elite, given that the power of any elite grouping relies on a shared ethos or vocabulary of motives, to cite Mills (1940), as a basis for seeking consensus and status. The next section illustrates the emergence of this elite and ethos.

The Emergence of an Interstitial Elite (and Ethos) Via Civil Society

The CSP is linked to, but also independent of, the fields it stemmed from (politics and finance), and those it has interacted with throughout its evolution (philanthropy and academia). While its connections situate it within an *interstitial* humus that is propitious to the generation of *new things* that would be impossible to achieve in any individual field, it is the CSP's positioning within the policymaking process that best enables it to leverage its interstitiality.

Indeed, in seeking to position itself as independent of politics and of the bank from which it originated, the CSP has configured itself as a 'private' actor that takes part in policymaking in domains of public interest, thus legitimising its role via an interstitial ethos that mixes discursive regimes and financial, economic, and philanthropic logics. In other words, it is an ethos in which the values of altruism and voluntaristic solidarity are intertwined and confused with economic and financial value, and which, thus combined, guides or is said to guide the CSP's actions. This stance is complemented by the presumed neutrality of the technical knowledge generated by the CSP (which is why it is also a depoliticised ethos) and an insistence on the importance of using metrics to evaluate the policies the foundation finances or implements.

How did the CSP's philanthropic-financial ethos and elite come to the fore? As summarised in Fig. 9.1, in the 1990s the CSP had not yet developed a distinctive ethical stance, but the bank's cultural legacy—which came with a staff that had been transferred entirely from the bank—featured discursive and justifying regimes surrounding finance, which also

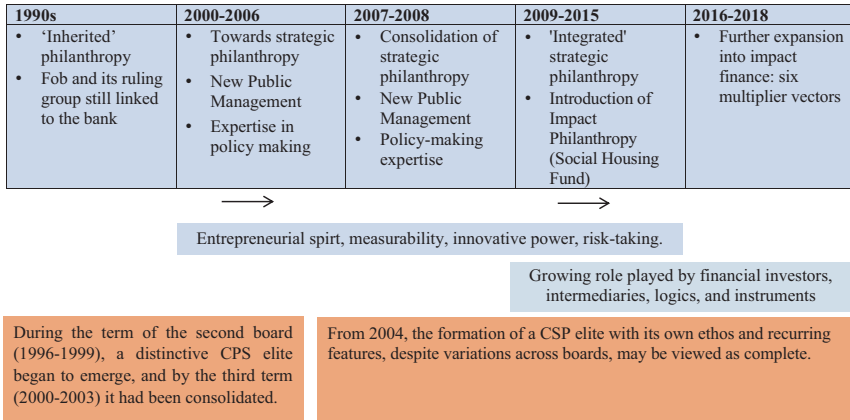


Fig. 9.1 The CSP's ethos and elite formation at a glance. (Source: Figure made by the author)

touched loosely on philanthropy. Only between 2000 and 2006, when the CSP became a private body, did it begin to express its own ethos informed by strategic philanthropy and seek to establish a reputation for itself in the domain of public policy expertise. As stated by a former top executive in both the CSP and Intesa Sanpaolo: 'A fusion took place between those who came from the bank and those who came from other fields, a mix of cultures that created a new professional figure, different from the classical politician-administrator' (Interview with the first director general of CSP, 2017).

From 2008 onwards, the CSP began to recruit staff with diverse career backgrounds from outside the bank, while before they had hired school-leavers or graduates with no prior work experience and trained them internally or hired people who were already employed by the bank. This process of professionalisation was given a boost around 2012 via the recruitment of new figures more in tune with the new positioning of the CSP.

In the meantime, the CSP's ethos was becoming increasingly informed by new philanthropy principles, shifting—in discourse more than in policies—towards an impact finance framework that added financial logics and instruments to those of New Public Management and strategic philanthropy (Greco & Tombari, 2020; Quaglia & Rosboch, 2018).

The interplay of charity and business has been at the heart of contemporary philanthropy since the spread of venture philanthropy in the US in the 1990s (Frumkin, 2003). Its key traits—entrepreneurial dimension, measurability, capacity for innovation, and risk-taking—are captured by a new, and creative, set of labels, namely Effective Philanthropy, Catalytic Philanthropy, Strategic Philanthropy, or Philanthrocapitalism (Bishop & Green, 2008). ‘New philanthropy’ may be viewed as combining the logic of grantmaking with the logic of investment (Guillhot, 2006; McGoey, 2015), with ‘philanthrocapitalism’ as perhaps its most complete expression. The inventor of the term has claimed:

Historically, many philanthropists have engaged in giving primarily to win public approval or to appease consciences guilty about how they made their money... Philanthrocapitalists ... are different because they combine their head and their heart when they give. They don't feel guilty about how they made their money but realize that those same entrepreneurial skills that helped them thrive as capitalists can play a crucial role in helping to solve societies' problems... They don't do charity; they drive social change. (Bishop, ‘Philanthrocapitalists needed in India’, *Mint*, 17 March 2011)

This phenomenon has prompted conflicting interpretations. Lester Salamon (2014), an enthusiastic supporter, calls philanthrocapitalism a revolution, and—in a similar vein—several other scholars hold a favourable view of the links between philanthropy, social justice, and social innovation (Moody & Breeze, 2016; Mosley & Galaskiewicz, 2015). On the other hand, equally numerous are those who criticise philanthrocapitalism as a self-reproducing strategy that serves the expansion of elite economic interests (Barman, 2017; Sklair & Glucksber, 2021), as dangerous to democratic processes (Guillhot, 2006), and of questionable effectiveness, for example, with regard to the deployment of distributive interventions to address poverty (Iason, 2017). Philanthrocapitalism was also the framework within which the CSP (in keeping with Fobs more generally) developed its current emphasis on social innovation. More specifically, this is a frame whereby the financial ethos (debit/credit constraints) has entered new areas such as welfare, drawing on a set of devices to transfer competence acquired in the fields of finance, marketing, and business to the domain of social policy (Arrigoni et al., 2020).

Although from a discourse and justification regimes perspective the CSP and the Fobs more generally have been anchoring themselves in developments in new philanthropy since the late 1990s, the financialisation of philanthropic policies still seems to be at the embryonic stage. Nevertheless, to date the Fobs remain the leading proponents and pioneers of the financialisation of social policies in Italy (Arrigoni et al., 2022). Specifically, at the policymaking level they wield control via their earlier-mentioned social housing programme (Dagnes & Salento, 2022).

The formation of a CSP elite is an emergent aspect of this process, and in the early 1990s, just as there was no distinctive positioning of the CSP, so there was no specific CSP elite or associated ethos. The people who were called to lead the foundation were closely linked to the bank, and it was not yet even clear whether or not the institution's lifespan would continue beyond the conclusion of the privatisation process. Next, between the second (1996–1999) and third (2000–2003) boards, as the CSP began to construct an identity of its own, a foundation elite emerged, which acquired 'fully fledged' status following judgements handed down by the Constitutional Court in 2003, which definitively confirmed the foundation's private nature.

While interstitiality does not account for all of the characteristics of the CSP and its elites, I hypothesise that it is one of the foundation's most distinctive and original features. Furthermore, this process of hybridisation between fields, as we shall see shortly, is facilitated by some of the characteristics of the members of the CSP's steering group.

CSP Elites Between Civil Society and Other Fields: Interstitial, Political, and 'Solid'

The governance of the CSP comprises three distinct boards with the respective functions of steering (general council), management (board of management), and control (auditors). My analysis concerns the members of the general councils and boards of management.

What are the distinguishing characteristics of the CSP elite? In terms of their function, we are dealing with a new political elite. Indeed,

although hardly any of the board members are professional politicians, the most senior individuals in the CSP engage in policymaking as a primary activity. Furthermore, although CSP (and Fob) elites are today relatively independent from politics in the strict sense, they are nevertheless linked to it—sometimes conditioning it, sometimes being conditioned by it—via appointments, subsidies, memorandums of understanding, the CDP, and Intesa Sanpaolo, as well as via prior relationships among the various elites circulating both inside and outside the foundation. To offer numerical evidence for this, a high proportion of CSP board members—between 70% and 83%—may be defined as policymakers, in other words, as people who are typically not professional politicians but are or have been significantly involved in public policymaking via their membership in government or para-government agencies, including relatively lengthy affiliations with the CSP.

In terms of board members' demographic profiles, their mean age is around 60 years and most are local. The women appointed to the governing bodies—who were non-existent up to 2000 and few in number between 2001 and 2007—have accounted for almost a third of the General Council since 2008, while there are still only seven on the Board of Management. It should be noted that the members of the latter are predominantly economists or lawyer-economists who previously held leading positions in politics and/or business and finance: for example, Professor Elsa Fornero, former minister of welfare in the Monti government, 2011–2013, and the jewellery entrepreneur Licia Mattioli, former president of Federorafi and the representative association of Italian goldsmiths.

Examination of the board members' 'affiliations' to different areas reveals the unquestionably 'broker-like' profiles of individuals who are capable of bridging multiple fields, thus facilitating hybridisation between logics, discourses, practices, and actors from different spheres, organisations, and networks. On all the boards, the majority of appointees are affiliated with three or more fields, while some 78% of all board members have been affiliated with four or more fields in the course of their careers (see Key to Career Fields in the Appendix to this chapter).

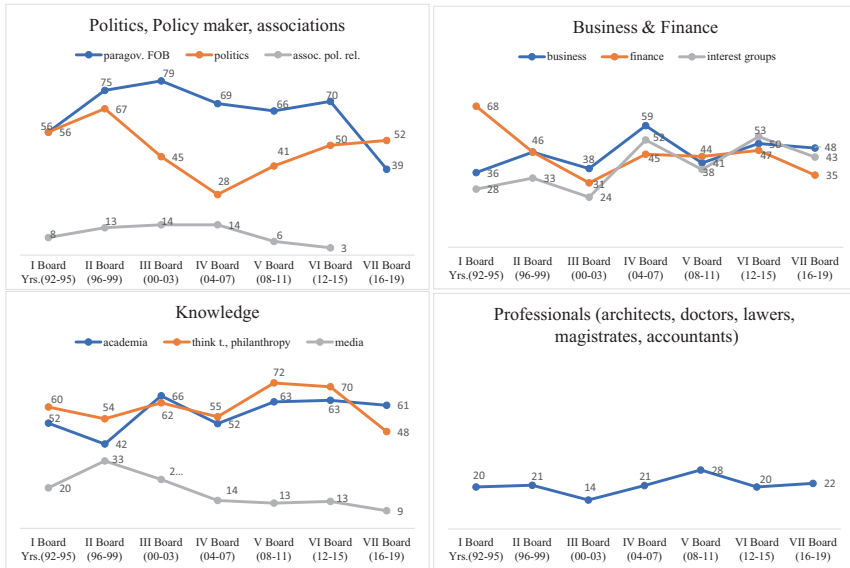


Fig. 9.2 Breakdown of affiliations by macro area and individual field (% of board members). (Source: Author’s own calculation. Prosopography database made by the author)

Figure 9.2 represents the board members’ total associations with the pinpointed ten fields, grouped by macro-area, over the seven council terms. This means that all the fields in a board member’s career are included here, not just the main field. The plurality and consistency of the pattern of affiliations displayed by the CSP elites is immediately apparent. Besides the political and the financial-economic fields, which are always relevant, the figure further illustrates the importance of the domain of knowledge. This includes, in addition to academia, key positions in think tanks/research institutions, other cultural, artistic, and political foundations, and, to a lesser but non-negligible extent, the media sector. In contrast, political or religious associations have never constituted an elective pool for CSP board members.

In my analysis, I inferred a first field of affiliation from the profession publicly attributed to each individual board member at the time of his or

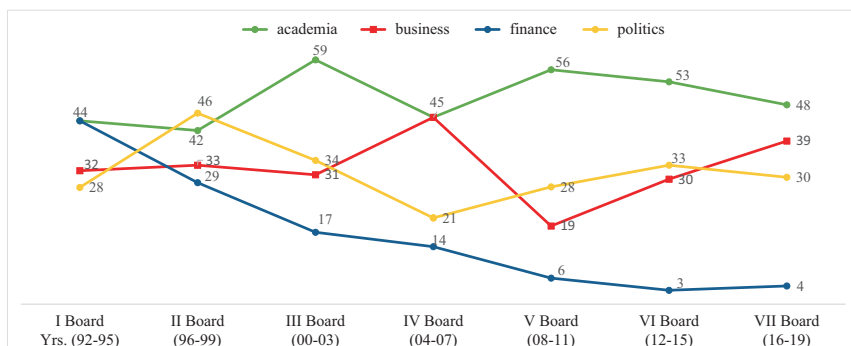


Fig. 9.3 Breakdown of first and second career field affiliations (% of board members). (Source: Author's own calculation. Analysis of the prosopography database)

her appointment¹ and a second data point by selecting a second field that appeared to have been key to this board member's career in the first field. This was necessary because the first field did not always accurately reflect board member's actual profiles. For example, the first president of the CSP, Gianni Zandano, who also chaired San Paolo Bank, was billed as an academic in the statement announcing his appointment. However, it was crucial for the purposes of my analysis to acknowledge his affiliation with the field of finance. In this regard, comparison of the declared field and the attributed second field suggests that those who hold an academic position, although they may be primarily engaged in other activities, tend to report their academic work as their main occupation, likely because of the high standing associated with it.

Figure 9.3 offers a summary of the four main fields identified following the above procedure, rendering a more accurate picture of the board members' professional profiles. The pattern reflects—due to the CSP's progressive independence from the bank—a weakening in its affiliation to the financial sector over time. Nevertheless, finance, far from disappearing, is still present but is camouflaged by the board members' other affiliations and, above all, culturally diffused among the organisation's permanent staff.

¹These data concern the first six boards of directors as listed in 'La Compagnia di San Paolo. Volume secondo 1853–2013', ed. Einaudi, 2013. For the last board, (2016–2020), the data were drawn from the press release issued by the CSP when the appointments were announced.

However, an even more relevant issue is the predominance of economist or lawyer-economist board members (46 out of 129), who are often also university professors. This seems to reveal the extent to which academia, in its more mainstream economic version (utilitarianism, marginalism, new public management), has acquired a pervasive role in the broader organisation of knowledge (in this case, the knowledge required for policymaking) and the extent to which academic economists place themselves at the service of everything that concerns the sustenance of humans and the ecosystem. More generally, this presence seems to signal how, even here, insofar as economists have been ‘central actors’ since the 1980s (Joignant, 2011), they also have been far more frequently integrated into the political elite. In practice, they endow strong legitimacy upon the organisations that recruit them, even more so if they are academics. The affinity of the CSP’s philanthropic discourse with the economic paradigm is therefore not a matter of chance. Vice versa, by bringing its economic-financial ethos under a new philanthropic guise, the CSP makes it more presentable.

The CSP elites are brokers with a high degree of mobility across fields, but they may be also described as ‘solid’ (vs ‘liquid’ as defined by Bauman, 2007). This is because they tend to occupy permanent leadership positions in national or local policymaking bodies and/or within the San Paolo banking group. Their solidity is borne out by the high proportion of members of the ‘San Paolo circuit’ among their ranks, meaning individuals who have served for periods ranging from 5 to 27 years in institutions that are closely affiliated with the CSP (average 78%). It is also reflected in the previously mentioned ongoing links of the majority of board members with public policymaking, especially via leadership positions in the governance of Turin. Due to generational turnover, the last board is the exception to the rule, with ‘only’ 35%. It is not yet clear whether this marks the beginning of a new pattern, and it will only be possible to establish this by monitoring the composition of future boards.

Interstitiality—which is broadly represented by individuals who simultaneously or consecutively belong to several fields and/or are members of an interstitial organisation and, above all, who function as agents of hybridisation among the logics, norms, tools, and practices of the different fields—thus appears to offer an ideal interpretative key for this

specific elite segment. It is of particular value in reconstructing the *modus operandi* of an elite that, by virtue of being simultaneously both everywhere and nowhere, builds its power independently of its members' social backgrounds and official positions. Such a group has the capacity to rapidly change its tactics and style in response to fluctuations in the new financial capitalism and, therefore, may also be ready to abandon its traditional communities and loyalties without too many regrets (Bauman, 2007). Such an elite also speaks to Simmel's (1908/2006) figure of the stranger—someone who is here today and may remain again tomorrow. It is a potentially nomadic, interchangeable, and fluid elite, yet paradoxically, precisely due to its interstitial, connective, and anarchic nature, an elite whose occupation of key posts of command appears increasingly stable and solid.

A TwoFold Integration in the Blurring of Boundaries Between Fields

The CSP formally belongs to civil society, but it is also a point of convergence between elites from different fields and is a well-established player in Italian public policymaking. This begs the question: Who integrates whom? We might posit that the elites of civil society are assimilated into the political sphere as, for example, in the case of the philanthropic or CSO professionals appointed to the more recent boards. However, we might also speak of—and perhaps this more accurately describes the leading pattern to date—the political reintegration or integration of old and new political, business and finance, and academic elites via philanthropic organisations. Unquestionably, it has been a success story, and overcoming early uncertainty surrounding its role as a Fob the CSP has gradually taken on increasingly political functions without giving the impression of doing so, thus replacing the mechanisms of representation with those of finance and philanthropy, and becoming a key player in the policymaking arena (see, for example, its social housing policies). Concomitantly, an insider ruling group has formed and become hegemonically integrated into Turin's elites, legitimising itself by donning a new philanthropic

guise and in exchange offering the CSP the multiple capitals (professional, relational, positional, economic, cultural) of an elite formed by individuals who are already powerful in other fields.

This calls into question the political dimension taken on in recent decades by organised philanthropy (Skocpol, 2016), which is sheltered from the requirement of accountability proper to politics, but yet capable at times of exerting an influence equal to or greater than that of public servants (Callahan, 2017; McGoey, 2015). Currently, the elites called to oversee the CSP enjoy the social legitimisation associated with contemporary philanthropy as discussed earlier, while they may further benefit from what McGoey (2015) terms ‘perpetual immunity’ from criticism due to the beneficiaries’ need for their financial support. In addition to this added ‘philanthropic’ value, a Fob, by virtue of its position in-between fields, amplifies its elites’ social networks, making it easier for them to move from one field to another in times of crisis via the conversion of capital from one form to another (Bourdieu, 2010), or, in the absence of alternatives, offering itself to them as a safe and prestigious ‘refuge’.

Furthermore, the peculiar nature of this philanthropic organisation invites us to reflect on the radical change in modes of governing that has occurred over recent decades. Indeed, the CSP and Fobs more generally seem to exemplify a growing set of non-elected authorities resulting from a process of depoliticisation whereby political issues are redefined as technical issues and transferred from the government arena to non-democratically elected bodies and technocratic structures (Mastropaolo, 2011).

The elites who belong to more than one field (not a new phenomenon) and their interstitiality (arguably more novel) may also be read in relation to the dismantling of vertical power and the blurring of the boundaries between fields that is ongoing today. Across the flat horizon of a ‘network’ and within a strongly depoliticised scenario, being interstitial and institutionally fickle, rather than only one requirement among others, may actually be the quintessential quality of a power elite. Indeed, independently of the forms that depoliticisation can take, it should first and foremost be seen as the outcome of undermining the vertical institutions of the modern era while advancing the metaphor of the network as the form

of society itself (de Leonardis, 2007). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that within the flat landscape of the network, collective actors (organisations) and individual actors (elites) located in hybrid or interstitial spaces seem to gain in importance. This is a dynamic that could also be part of a more general shift from a ‘government by laws’ to a ‘government by men’ (Bobbio, 2005), within which ‘the law continues to pursue its incessant claim to be valid as law, equipping itself to impose order on the “hybrid networks” that unceasingly form and unravel in the “brave new world” of globalized capitalism’ (de Leonardis, 2007).

Conclusions

Choosing large banking foundations as a site to observe elites allowed me, first, to reconstruct the radical change in modes of governing that is underway in our contemporary era and, next, by focusing on a specific Fob, to study its leading members. Ultimately, my study raises crucial questions concerning the future of democracy and of the state in light of the rising influence on public affairs of private authorities such as foundations, think tanks, and expert networks. The new institutional scenario that has been shaped by the passage from government to governance (Stoker, 1998) and by the blurring of boundaries between state, capital, and civil society (Wolin, 2008) seems to foster, as suggested by Wedel (2009, 2017), the emergence of a new elite of influence—fragmented, varied, disintermediated, and fuzzy in nature—among whom position still matters but networking matters even more so. The CSP ruling groups seem akin to this new kind of elite. They are flexible, they bridge and blur logics and actors from different fields, they exert their influence by operating both within and outside of formal structures, they establish, mobilise, or adapt entities to structure their mode of influence on policy and public opinion, and their power remains partly hidden because their ‘in-between’ essence tends to make them and their actions less immediately visible and somewhat elusive. Wedel’s overall argument is that ‘another kind of power related to mobility of roles within and through command posts has arisen, and sometimes is the way policy is enacted’ (2009, p. 157).

This final point obliges us to seriously engage with at least two further questions. First, how and to what extent has the power of relationships and the influence of networks become central to understanding the functioning of elites in the twenty-first century? Elites—we might add—that seem inherently characterised by the dimensions of interchangeability, interstitiality, and ‘revolving doors’. Second, while there has been a revival of research interest in elites, it still appears to be a minor field of inquiry within the social sciences, and the issue of *how* and, above all, *where* to study elites remains under-debated. Regarding ‘where’, so-called civil society offers extraordinary opportunities for identifying observatories on the elites involved in policymaking, which fall outside of the classic institutional sphere and which deserve to be further explored. This is because within the rescaling of public authorities that has been ongoing since the late twentieth century (King & Le Galès, 2017), the state has outsourced government functions to civil society as well.

As for ‘how’ to go about studying elites, aside from the different methods and techniques available (Cousin et al., 2018), Mills’ counsel remains of the utmost salience—it is vital that we focus our inquiry on ‘flesh and blood’ historically situated elites so that we will not fall into the trap of (re)producing caricatured images of them, as all too frequently occurs in the mainstream debate (Davis & Williams, 2017).

Acknowledgement Clare O’Sullivan is thanked for proofreading the English text.

Appendix

Key to Career Fields

1. Academia: full professors and top position-holders at universities
2. Finance: bankers, analysts, and financial advisors
3. Business: CEOs, presidents, managers of companies in sectors other than finance

4. Politics: elected politicians; holders of public para-government positions (political appointments excluding Fobs; utility companies); public executives; government/ministry/public body advisors
5. Fob para-government: those who have held a position within the Fob and its organs for longer than one term of office
6. Media: columnists with a relatively stable position in the main national media or those who, although they are more heavily involved in other fields, have held a top position here, for example board members
7. Think tanks, research centres, other foundations, including political ones (not Fobs)
8. Representative groups: confindustria, CCIA; trade unions and similar
9. Political or religious associations: for example, Giustizia e Libertà; UCEI; ACLI; ARCI
10. Other: (a) professionals such as lawyers, architects, accountants; (b) magistrates; (c) doctors/hospital directors

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10

Networks of Interlocking Leaders: Exploring the Links and Identifying the Elites in four European countries

Jayeon Lee, Daniel Platek, and Roberto Scaramuzzino

Introduction

A myriad of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) of various sizes and characteristics constantly interact with each other, for instance in building alliances and coalitions for policy work, collaborating for public campaigns, and coordinating for mobilisation of the masses (protests, petitions, etc.). The organisational ties established by top-level leaders with multiple organisational affiliations are crucial in that they mediate

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interpersonal connections and interactions among the leaders of different organisations who are involved in strategic decisions (Willems et al., 2015). Yet, the leaders interlocking multiple CSOs through cross-representation in decision-making bodies, such as boards, have seldom been studied when it comes to the question of power and influence in civil society (see a recent review by Yoon, 2020).

While there is a view of CSOs as ‘diverse, highly specialised and horizontally integrated organisations’ (Messamore, 2021), recent scholarly work has highlighted increasing hierarchisation in terms of resource concentration, as well as formalisation and centralisation within the institutionalised field of civil society (Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021; Scaramuzzino & Lee, *forthcoming*). By studying the networks of interlocking top-level leaders in the most resourceful CSOs operating at the national level, this chapter addresses the question of who the power elites are in the organisational field of civil society in four European countries and how we can understand the connections between them.

We aim at identifying the most powerful actors in the networks of CSOs at national level, and also across different national contexts. By comparing four different countries we also want to understand differences in networks across contexts. An underlying assumption in our approach is that the individual leaders who are in leading positions in more than one civil society organisation are conceived as central agents that facilitate information exchange and transmission of knowledge between the organisations (Haunschild & Beckman, 1998). The information and knowledge, as well as the personal ties that are established through these agents by holding multiple positions in different organisations are deemed to generate strategic advantages for the organisations’ capacities to be influential within the field of civil society as well as vis-à-vis external actors (Granovetter, 1985). This perspective is in line with elite theory where access to resources, occupying strategic positions, and operating in networks of influence are all considered as sources of social power (Domhoff, 2002; López, 2013; Mills, 1956; Yamokoski & Dubrow, 2008).

Previous studies looking specifically into the phenomenon of leader interlock in the civil society sector have found empirical evidences for the

positive impact of board interlocks among CSOs and the likelihood for organisational collaborations (Guo & Acar, 2005; Ihm & Shumate, 2018), and that for instance such collaborative relations can lead to better organisational performance, such as accessing larger public grants (Faulk et al., 2017; Paarlberg et al., 2020). Others have found that organisations relying on similar funding sources, of similar sizes, and sharing similar operational activities, are more likely to be connected via interlocking boards (Willems et al., 2015).

In our study, we approach the networks of interlocking leaders among CSOs with a more agnostic position as to the reasons why the interlocks exist. We argue that there could be other than strategic reasons (i.e., that the interlocking leaders can lead to better organisational performance via networks) for the leader interlocks to emerge among CSOs. It could for example be historical or ideological bonds among certain organisations that lead to leader interlocks (Messamore, 2021), or simply by chance, through interpersonal networks where people invite others to be part of a board based on personal trust and confidence or people having interest and being engaged in multiple issues.

Once they are formed, however, the existence of multiple interlocking leadership positions among major CSOs could function as a way of coordinating a given civil society field, a field populated otherwise by a wide range of organisations with diverse characteristics. Studying the organisational links established through leader interlocks at the top level can therefore tell us something about how a civil society field is structured and who the most powerful actors are, by means of occupying central positions in a network. Moreover, studying interlocking leaders can help us identify which organisations and individual leaders have strategically favorable positions, for instance by occupying broker positions.

This chapter aims at addressing the following research questions by studying a cross-sectional picture of organisational links among CSOs from a network perspective: (i) What network structures do we observe among the interlocking top-level leaders of the most resourceful CSOs in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK? (ii) Who are the most powerful actors based on their network position?

The top-level leaders in our study include the board members, chairs (including vice-chairs), and also the executive leaders (e.g., CEOs, chief

directors and their deputies). As to the first question all four country contexts are included, while regarding the second research question we delve into the two country contexts where we observe giant component network structure (i.e., a connected component of a network that includes a significant proportion of the entire nodes in the network) of interlocking leaders among CSOs: Sweden and the UK. The four national contexts included in the study allow us to explore similarities and differences across the contexts.

The chapter is structured as follows. After the introduction, the next section includes our argument and purpose for country selection, the methodology used in identification of the most resourceful CSOs, the description of data for interlocking leaders, and the analysis methods used. The chapter proceeds with a result section consisting of a first part summarising basic network structures of the Italian and Polish cases, where we do not observe any giant components, and a second part where we identify the most central actors occupying the power positions in the networks in the Swedish and the UK cases. In the concluding section, we summarise the findings and discuss possible interpretations of the findings across countries.

Data and Method

Country Cases and Sampling Elite Organisations

Our study explores interlocking leaders between resourceful CSOs at national level in four different countries: Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK. These four countries have been associated with different 'civil society regimes' in previous research (e.g., Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018). Italy, an example of Continental or corporatist regime, is mostly service-oriented with a large share of paid staff. Poland, as an example of the Eastern or post-communist regime, is also service-oriented, yet with smaller workforce and with a very small share of paid staff. Sweden, as an example of a Nordic or Social democratic regime has a mostly advocacy-oriented civil society sector with a relatively large workforce mostly made

up of volunteers rather than paid staff. The UK, as an example of Anglo-Saxon or liberal regime, is characterised by the prominent role of civil society as service provider, with a large proportion of paid staff (Archambault, 2009; Salamon et al., 2017; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2018).

This regime-typology has been developed comparing the role of the civil society sector in each country and predominant resources that the organisations are equipped with. The extent to which the interlocking leaders among CSOs and the networks they produce would differ following different civil society regimes is not self-evident. The organisations in our sample, as will become evident in the following, are not representative of the whole civil society sector in each country. They are resourceful organisations in the sense that they control disproportionately large amounts of resources, both economic and political ones. They are also national-level organisations involved in coordination of regional and local actors, political representation of segments of civil society vis-à-vis the national government, as well as in service and capacity-building activities involving their members and constituencies.

For a systematic comparison, the populations of CSOs in all four countries have been identified and delimited by a set of indicators of financial and political resources, while considering the contextual specificities. The organisations were identified through a series of systematic screening procedures for each country, using the indicators measuring different types of financial and political resources according to the Multi-dimensional Measure of Resource Stratification in Civil society (MMRSC) (Scaramuzzino & Lee, [forthcoming](#), see also Appendix to the volume).

Based on this sampling procedure, different internal structures in terms of coordination and resource stratification within the communities of national elite organisations in each country tend to appear. The Italian and Swedish elite organisations follow a pattern of different levels of coordination with many umbrella organisations representing organisations active within specific policy areas and even representing the whole civil society sector. This “Russian doll” structure corresponds to higher resource stratification with a few organisations controlling many types of resources and the majority controlling fewer resources. A less hierarchically structured pattern of coordination is observed in Poland and the

UK, with fewer networks and umbrella organisations. This less hierarchical structure corresponds to a pattern of resource stratification with no organisations (or very few as in Poland) controlling all types of resources used in our method (Scaramuzzino & Lee, [forthcoming](#); see also Appendix).

Mapping Boards and Interlocks

Based on the systematic mapping method of CSOs (see Appendix, this volume), we identified 293 national level CSOs for Italy, 447 for Poland, 394 for Sweden, and 434 for the UK. In the next step, we collected the names of leaders occupying the top-level positions in the identified organisations, such as board members, chairs, and also the executive leaders. The data was collected in 2019 for Italy, Sweden, and the UK and in 2020 for Poland. The following table (Table 10.1) presents the sampling of data and the number of CSOs and leaders that were found to be interlocking different organisations in each context. Some patterns are evident. In Sweden and the UK, a substantial share of the organisations are interlocked by the leaders; 48% of the organisations for the UK and 40% for Sweden. For Italy, only about 28% of organisations were connected via interlocking leaders while for Poland even less, 17%. It is also relevant to notice that the share of leaders interlocking different organisations among all identified leaders is even smaller, ranging from about 5% of the leaders for Sweden to 2% for Italy.

Multiple affiliations among the top-level leaders of the most resourceful CSOs that we identified in each country context is in other words a

Table 10.1 Multiple affiliations in four countries

	Italy	Poland	Sweden	UK
Number of organisations	293	447	394	434
Number of leaders	2632	2294	3153	5198
Number of organisations interlocking (% of sample)	83 (28%)	78 (17%)	161 (40%)	210 (48%)
Number of leaders interlocking	63 (2%)	56 (2,4%)	175 (5,5%)	219 (4,2%)

Source: Civil society elite database. Authors' own data

phenomenon concentrated to a rather small clique of the civil society leaders, yet in the case of Sweden and the UK involving nearly half of all identified CSOs. In the UK we find a particular type of leader that is not present in the other contexts. They tend to have the role of ‘ambassadors’ or ‘patrons’, not least including some individuals in the British Royal Family occupying positions in the boards of ten or more organisations.

Multiple affiliations that a given individual leader has in more than one organisation are the basis of the data for bipartite networks for each country, entailing two types of nodes (organisations and leaders). From this we create one-mode networks, where the links between the organisations via interlocking leadership positions become the main data.

Analytical Strategy

Identification of power elites or leadership groups, whether local or national, has traditionally followed one of four distinct strategies: the positional, the decisional, the reputational, and the relational approach (cf. Hoffman-Lange, 2017; see also chapter by Santilli and Scaramuzzino in this volume). In this chapter we employ the K-core algorithm, a method used to identify groups that can be considered elite in a relational perspective using social network analysis.

The relational approach draws on the notion of social circles to find a central circle of actors within the elite. The circle is identified by prominent members naming others as key partners, thus allowing the inclusion of power brokers. Inclusion in the central circle of these power networks is viewed as an indicator of the power structure and membership of the elite social circle. For example, this method was used in the identification of Danish elites (Grau Larsen & Ellersgaard, 2017), where they constructed a list of state organisations, parliamentary circles, NGOs, corporations, and foundations which were connected through participation in events and used a special weighted version of the k-cores algorithm, taking into account the relationship values between individuals and comparing the integrative effect of their different heterogeneous affiliations.

In this chapter, alongside other network centrality measures we employ the K-core algorithm in order to identify the organisations occupying the

most powerful positions in the networks of interlocked leaders in Sweden and the UK. K-core measure is frequently used in identifying power elites in studies of elites (Corominas-Murtra et al., 2014; Huijzer & Heemskerck, 2021; Young et al., 2021). We apply this approach for studying the UK and Swedish cases in our study, where we can identify substantial network structures emerging from interlocking leaders among the CSOs. The K-core algorithm locates parts of the graph that form sub-groups such that each member of a sub-group is connected to a given number of the other members. That is, groups are the largest structures in which all members are connected to all but some number (K) of other members. Each individual is assigned a 'coreness score' corresponding to the minimum degree of individuals they are connected to. By decomposing an entire component, or progressively removing individuals with the lowest degree until further removal of individuals from the component leads to a decrease in the minimum degree, we eventually arrive at the core group. For example, to construct the four-core of a network, one first eliminates all nodes with three or fewer connections; this in turn leaves some nodes with fewer than four connections, so the process is iterated until those that remain have at least four connections each.

Besides the K-core algorithm we employ centralisation measures such as 'degree centralisation'. We employ this measure to demonstrate the degree of internal cohesion and top-down integration of actors. Centralisation 'measures the dispersion of centralisation scores relative to the most central score in the network' (Sinclair, 2011, p. 30). According to this notion, a star-shaped network is the network with the most unequal degree of centralisation for any number of actors. In such a network, all actors except the central actor have a relationship degree of one, and the central actor has a relationship degree equal to the number of all actors minus one. In the operationalisation adopted here, we use this understanding of centralisation to demonstrate the degree of organisational connections through leader interlocks. We use also the measure of 'betweenness centrality' (Freeman et al., 1991). Centralisation of this type is based on the assumption that the actors will use all the links that connect them, proportionally to the shortest paths between organisations. The coefficient of centralisation of a given actor within the network is measured by the proportion of each pair of actors in the entire network (i.e., flowing through the shortest paths) (Borgatti, 2005). In addition,

‘eigenvector centralization’ (a measure of the influence a node has on a network) will tell us about the extent to which a network is dominated by a single node (Borgatti et al., 2018, p. 184). We use normalised measures to be able to compare the two country contexts.

For Italy and Poland, instead of employing the K-core approach and the network measures introduced above we opt for focusing on qualitative commentaries in order to understand the relatively fewer ties we find among the organisations via leader interlocks. We explore possible mechanisms behind the observed organisational connections through leader interlocks, focusing specifically on policy areas in which the organisations are active.

Results and Analysis

The comparative analytical lens through which we study the networks of interlocking leaders of CSOs provides an opportunity for understanding the different extent to which a given field of national CSOs is consolidated (better connected) or fragmented (loosely connected). As it turns out, among the four countries we include in our study, we observe relatively loosely connected networks of CSOs linked through interlocking leaders in Italy and Poland, and relatively densely connected networks in Sweden and the UK. Only 4% of organisations are connected in the Polish case (Connectedness = 1 minus proportion of pairs of vertices that are unreachable), while 8% of organisations in the Italian case are connected. When it comes to Sweden 47% of all organisations in our sample are connected and 63% in the case of the UK. We therefore apply partly different approaches in understanding the networks of interconnected CSOs among our empirical contexts. We start first with the Italian and Polish cases.

Italy

Looking at the network of Italian CSOs (Fig. 10.1), we find some components of organisations. In the following, we comment on the four components that have at least eight organisations linked to each other

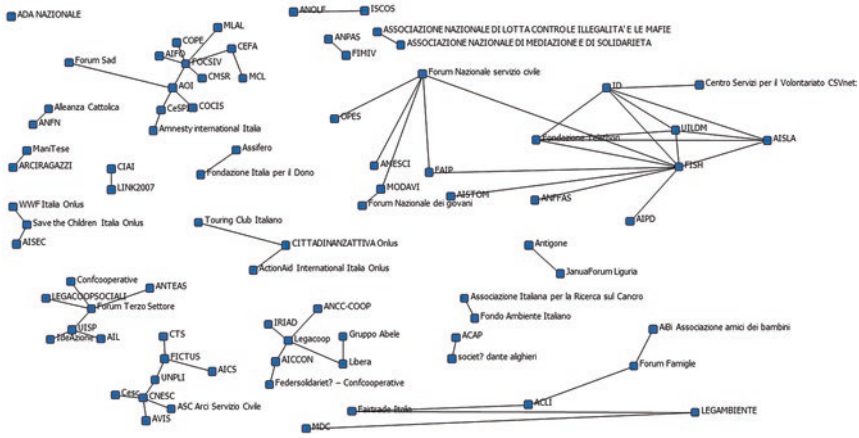


Fig. 10.1 Network of interlocking leaders in Italy. (Source: Authors’ own analysis)

and try to explain these links focusing on policy areas, membership-based relations, and cultural/ideological affinity.

One of the components is clearly connected by the common policy area of “international cooperation” which is how international aid and development often is framed in Italy. Central for this component are two organisations: AOI and Focsviv. They are both umbrella organisations but AOI is at a higher organisational level. Hence, Focsviv is member of AOI. Focsviv is the umbrella organisation for CSOs working with international cooperation and that have a common cultural/ideological point of reference in the Catholic movement. In fact, all CSOs linked to Focsviv (except for AOI) are members of this umbrella organisation. On the other side of AOI we find another umbrella organisation for international cooperation, namely COCIS, which is the umbrella organisation for CSOs that belong to the secular post-communist tradition. Also Forum SAD is a member of AOI while CeSPI is not. However, CeSPI as a study centre for international politics is involved in international cooperation and linked to a humanitarian organisation like Amnesty. Another organisation in this component is MCL which shares with its link CEFA the common Cristian catholic culture/ideology.

Another component includes FISH, an umbrella organisation for disability organisations, and the disability movement linked with the civil service organisations and the volunteering organisations. FISH is a central actor here with nine links which can be understood in different ways. Some organisations are clearly representing people with specific disabilities: AISLA, UILDM, FAIP, AIPD, and ANFASS. Many of these organisations are also members of FISH. Three other links can be understood in terms of common policy area or interest. The Theleton Foundation is funding research on rare diseases which would be relevant for FISH. ID is an organisation for control and accountability of the non-profit sector and in particular concerning private donations. Forum Nazionale Servizio Civile coordinates the civil service that conscientious objectors do instead of the military service. Many of these objectors are traditionally involved in volunteering. In this constellation, we also find CSV net, an organisation involved in organising volunteers. Forum Nazionale Servizio Civile is the other central actor in this component with five links (including FISH and one of its members). Linked to this organisation we find a sports organisation like OPES, and two other organisations mobilising volunteers and civil service, MODAVI and AMESCI. In the same constellation we also find an umbrella organisation for youth organisations, Forum Nazionale dei Giovani.

Another cluster revolves around the cooperative movement with Legacoop as the central organisation. Legacoop is an umbrella organisation for the cooperatives traditionally linked to the secular post-communist tradition. Many of the links are with organisations for the cooperative movement's different sectors: a member of Legacoop such as ANCC-COOP (for consumer cooperatives), an organisation for the Promotion of the Culture of Co-operation, and of Nonprofit (AICON) research center for the cooperative movement (IRIAD), and lastly an organisation that promotes cooperatives using properties confiscated from the organised crime (Libera). In the same constellation we also find the organisation for political and trade unionist representation of the cooperative sector (Federsolidarietà Confcooperative). Linked to Libera we also find Gruppo Abele, an organisation working against drug addiction and social exclusion with strong historical ties to Libera. In the same

constellation we also find an institution for studies of peace and disarmament.

The remaining larger component of Italian CSOs seems to be held together by a common focus on culture, tourism, and hobby. A central organisation holding together two smaller components is UNPLI an umbrella organisation for local associations for development, culture, and tourism. Linked to UNPLI we find an organisation for culture, tourism, and sports (FICTUS), which in its turn links to an organisation for culture and sports (AICS) and another for tourism (CTS). To UNPLI we also find a link to the civil service movement with organisations such as CESC, CNESC, and ARCI Servizio Civile as well as the volunteering with AVIS for volunteers for blood donors.

Poland

The network of Polish organisations via leader interlocks is the most fragmented, compared to the other three contexts in our study (Fig. 10.2). There is also a tendency to homophily at the global level of the entire network in terms of policy areas, and it is the only statistically significant

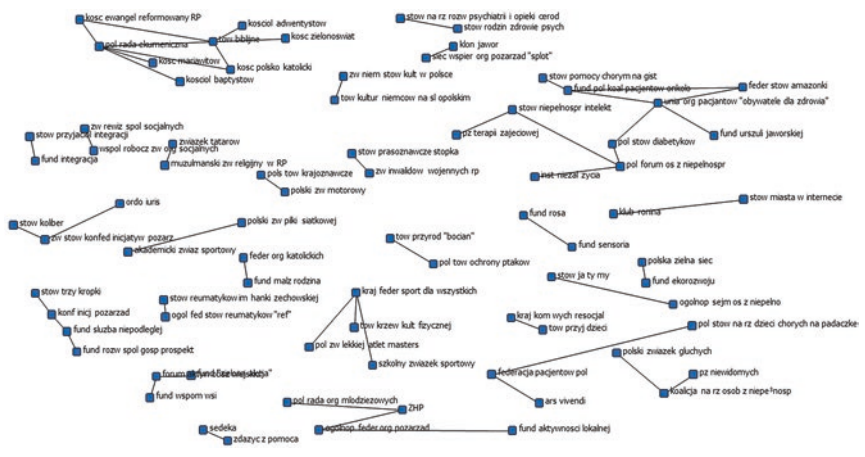


Fig. 10.2 Network of interlocking leaders in Poland. (Source: Authors' own analysis)

result among our cases. In relation to policy area categories there are more of them, but Environment, Sport, Coops are very much responsible for the effect, as some of them are simply in 'diads', which means that if one node from a given category is connected with another node in the same category and there are no other nodes from the same category, we have 100% homophily. It concerns mainly Disability and Health, Environment, Sport, Coops, Religious organisations, and to a lesser extent Ethnic and Cultural organisations.

The Polish network thus resembles many archipelagos of islands of organisation and they are integrated within separate components. These groups are connected mainly by the policy areas they occupy. The largest of these components belongs to the evangelical church. There we have, for example, actors such as the Polish Evangelical Church, Pentecostals and the Ecumenical Council. The largest group of actors revealing homophily in the policy areas are patient advocacy and health organisations. These include intellectual disability organisations, breast cancer associations, and deaf associations (the Polish Association of the Deaf), associations which advocate for people with diabetes, and many more. However, this may mean that our sample did not include the organisations through which the organisations shown in the graph are connected, and therefore due to this missing data we should treat the conclusions here with caution.

In other small components of the Polish network, we also find organisations promoting sports and ethnic minority organisations grouped around the same policy areas. The largest component of sports organisations includes four actors—the National Federation of Sports for All, the Society for the Promotion of Physical Culture, the Polish Association of Athletics, and the School Sports Association. Within the ethnic minority organisations we find the Union of Tatars in Poland—a Muslim minority and several German minority organisations.

Sweden and the UK

In this part of our analysis including the cases with relatively better-connected networks ('giant components', a connected component of a network that includes a significant proportion of the entire nodes in the

Table 10.2 Giant components in networks of leader interlocks in the UK and Sweden

UK		Sweden	
Number of nodes	166	Number of nodes	110
Number of edges	784	Number of edges	292
Density (valued data)	0.032	Density (valued data)	0.026
Density SD	0.27	Density SD	0.22
Avg. degree	4.723	Avg. degree	2.655
Avg. distance	4.79	Avg. distance	5.91
Degree centralisation (binarised data)	0.12	Degree centralisation (binarised data)	0.07
Betweenness centralisation (binarised data)	0.21	Betweenness centralisation (binarised data)	0.38
Eigenvector centralisation (binarised data)	0.43	Eigenvector centralisation (binarised data)	0.66

Source: Civil society elite database. Authors' own data and analysis

Note: The centralisation of the network was done on binarised data, because it can be represented as a normalised measure. The interval is from 0 to 1 and can be interpreted as a percentage

network) of CSOs through interlocking leaders, we address the following question: *Who are the most powerful actors based on their network position?* Here we make comparative commentaries on Swedish and British cases instead of presenting the networks separately (see Table 10.2).

When it comes to the global network level, the British network is a bit denser, meaning that there are more connections between the organisations via leader interlocks compared to Sweden. Also, the average degree (the average number of connections each node in a network has) is twice as high in the UK. Average distance tells us the average path between every pair of nodes in the network and nodes are slightly farther from each other in Sweden. While the British network is more strongly centralised in terms of degree, the Swedish network has stronger Betweenness centralisation, because paths between the nodes are longer, meaning that there are organisations occupying stronger betweenness positions. This can be also seen in individual measures below.

Regarding the eigenvector centralisation, it should be explained that Eigenvector centralisation is high when positions with high-degree centrality are connected to each other. Eigenvector centrality is increased by connections to high-degree neighbours, so when high-degree nodes are

preferentially directly connected to one another, and low-degree nodes are preferentially connected to one another, eigenvector centralisation will be high. In other words, increases in assortativity—a preference for a network's nodes to attach to others that are similar—are reflected in increases in eigenvector centralisation. This type of centralisation is higher in Sweden, because there are more such nodes that link to other nodes with the same number of links. Compared to the pure 'star' network, the degree of concentration in the Swedish sector is 66% of the maximum possible. This means that Swedish organisations are more than British ones concentrated around a few actors, who are the center around which other actors are concentrated.

Comparing the K-scores, we see that they are much stronger in the UK than the Swedish ones. The strongest red cluster contains actors that have twelve connections each, followed by the orange cluster containing eleven connections and then the yellow with nine connections (Fig. 10.3). However, the network in the UK has weaker assortativity than the Swedish network. This means that although there are strong K-cores they tend to connect to weaker nodes. So, in the English case there are strong

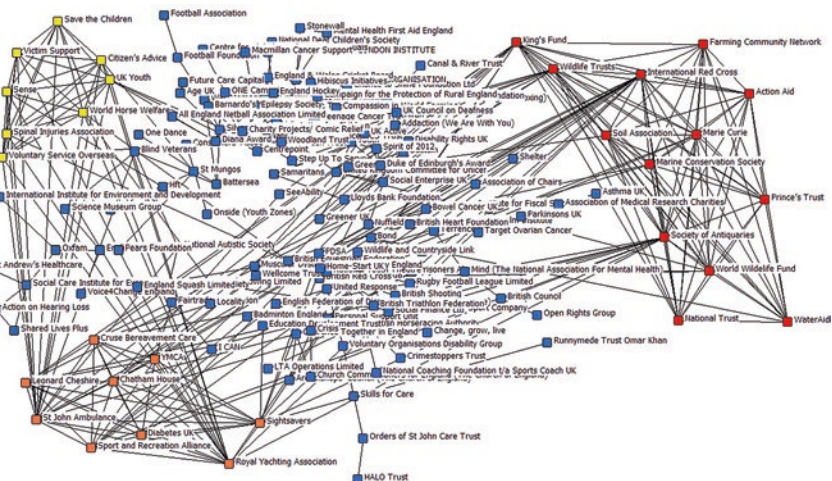


Fig. 10.3 Network of interlocking leaders in UK. (Source: Authors' own analysis)

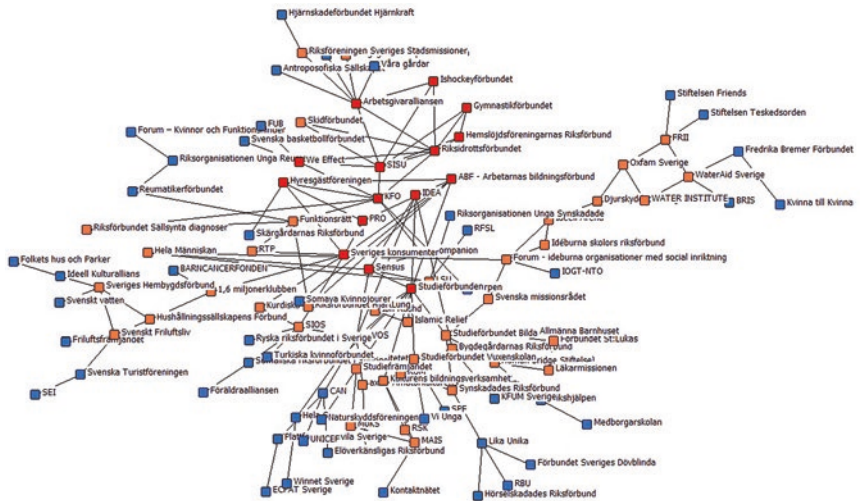


Fig. 10.4 Network of interlocking leaders in Sweden. (Source: Authors' own analysis)

elites within elites, but they do not claim exclusivity for their elitism, or at least to a lesser extent than the Swedish network.

In the Swedish case we have much weaker K-cores, the strongest links are three—red, two—orange and one link—blue (Fig. 10.4). But nevertheless, this network has a stronger tendency for elites of elites.

We now turn to the analysis of characteristics at the node level using individual measures such as betweenness centrality, degree centrality and eigenvalue. These measures have been normalised so that they can be compared across the two country contexts (Table 10.3). For example, the strongest Swedish actor in Betweenness is almost twice as strong as the English actor, etc. Of course, the group of actors distinguished here are also identified in the K-core measures.

In other words, these are the organisations in Sweden and in the UK who occupy the most powerful network positions. There is relatively high variability in betweenness centralities among organisations occupying the strongest network positions in Sweden (standard deviation 7.09) around the mean (27.3) in relation to the British sector (mean 17.6, standard deviation 4,1). This suggests that, overall, there are great inequalities in

Table 10.3 Organisations occupying central network positions in the UK and Sweden

UK (binarised data)		Sweden (binarised data)	
	<i>Normalised betweenness</i>		<i>Normalised betweenness</i>
Wildlife trusts	24.00	Studieförbunden	41.95
World Wildlife fund	20.99	Sensus	31.15
St John ambulance	20.29	KFO	30.42
Tusk trust	17.29	Sveriges konsumenter	23.04
International red cross	16.55	ABF—Arbetarnas bildningsförbund	21.84
Blind veterans	12.46	Forum—ideburna organisationer med social inriktning	21.68
National Youth Theatre	11.65	CIVOS	21.47
	<i>Normalised degree</i>		<i>Normalised degree</i>
International red cross	0.15	Studieförbunden	0.10
Society of Antiquaries	0.12	Riksidrottsförbundet	0.07
King's fund	0.12	SISU	0.07
St John ambulance	0.12	Arbetsgivaralliansen	0.07
Royal Yachting Association	0.11	KFO	0.07
Wildlife trusts	0.11	CIVOS	0.06
Tusk trust	0.09	Sveriges konsumenter	0.06
	<i>Normalised eigenvalue</i>		<i>Normalised eigenvalue</i>
International red cross	44.11	SISU	64.88
Society of Antiquaries	42.89	Riksidrottsförbundet	64.88
King's fund	42.89	KFO	46.72
St John ambulance	29.18	Arbetsgivaralliansen	43.18
Royal Yachting Association	28.87	We effect	38.88
Wildlife trusts	28.54	Ishockeyförbundet	34.98
World Wildlife fund	28.02	Gymnastikförbundet	32.90

Source: Civil society elite database. Authors' own data and analysis

actor centrality or power, when measured in this way. The same applies to the eigenvalue measure (Sweden: mean 46.6, st. dev. 12.3, Britain: mean 34.9, st. dev. 7.2) but not the degree centrality measure which is almost the same within the most central actors in both countries (Sweden: mean 0.07, st. dev. 0.012, Britain: mean 0.11, st. dev. 0.016). Among elites of the elites, betweenness and eigenvector significantly differentiate the two countries studied here.

The Swedish side is more strongly varied in terms of organisational strength but also has stronger organisational actors at the top overall. However, this does not apply to the measure of degree, where there is no inequality between major organisations in our countries, but British organisations have, on average, more connections to other organisations in the network.

Looking at the identified organisations in the UK, using the three measures in Table 10.3 there is a consistent overlap between them. One important group includes the charities active within disability and health care (Blind Veterans, King's Fund, St'Johns Ambulance and International Red Cross). We find also a group of charities involved in environment issues (Tusk trust, Wildlife Trusts and World Wildlife Fund). Other actors work with historical conservation (Societies of antiquities), culture (National Youth Theatre) and sports (Royal Yachting Association). Interesting to notice is that what these actors have in common is to have members of the royal family in their board as patrons or other honorary positions (e.g., honorary vice president).

Looking at the identified organisations in the Swedish case in the same table, we find a large number of umbrella organisations organising and representing CSOs across policy areas (Forum—ideburna organisationer med social inriktning and CIVOS) or as employers (KFO and Arbetsgivaralliansen). Another important group of actors is engaged in adult education with the umbrella organisation Studieförbunden and some of its members (ABF—Arbetarnas bildningsförbund, Sensus). Another relevant group is active in sports with the umbrella organisation Riksidrottsförbundet and its partner working with training and capacity building (SISU) and some of its members (Ishockeyförbundet and Gymnastikförbundet). Two other actors are involved in international development (We Effect) and consumers' rights (Sveriges konsumenter).

Also here we find an interesting pattern that these organisations tend to be linked by membership in each other.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have analysed the networks emerging from interlocking leaders among the most resourceful, national-level CSOs in four European countries. The analysis focused on the observed organisational links via interlocking leaders and we have identified primarily those related to communities of tightly connected organisations and the organisations that seem to bridge different communities of CSOs. The analysis included different national contexts, aiming to draw comparative insights informed by contextual knowledge.

For Italy and Poland, we found fragmented networks comprising of smaller components. While in Italy policy areas and ideological affinities between organisations explain the links between CSOs, in Poland we only find policy areas as a possible mechanism behind the organisational links. Contrast to the cases of Italy and Poland, in Sweden and in the UK we found giant components connecting a significant number of CSOs in each context. For Sweden we find that it is through the membership relations the leader interlocks occur, which means that the actors occupying the most powerful positions are the ones that have interest representation for the civil society sector either as a specific type of employers or as an agent for interest aggregation and political participation of CSOs at the national level for various issues. This interpretation rhymes well with the corporatist tradition of Swedish interest representation and advocacy culture (Arvidson et al., 2018). For the UK case we find that the network of interlocking leaders is upheld mainly by a particular type of leaders in this context, namely the ‘ambassadors’ and ‘patrons’ who have a rather symbolic function in the leadership of organisations and with a wider reach to multiple organisations, compared to the leaders with executive or representative roles. The organisations that occupy the central network positions in the UK are thus connected by these symbolic leaders with frequent linkages to the British royal family, an important source of power for accessing funding and other opportunities despite certain

reluctance and ambivalence expressed around it by civil society leaders (Johansson & Ivanovska Hadjievska, 2022).

The case of the UK opens up of course for an understanding of linkages more related to the individuals than the organisations. Although our analysis has been mostly focused on the organisations, the symbolic role of the patrons and ambassadors in the UK seems almost self-evident due to membership in a high number of boards in combination with royal titles.

Based on our analysis, the civil society field in the UK and Sweden seems to be more consolidated and integrated via interlocking leaders compared to the Italian and Polish civil society with more fragmented characters. However, one important limitation of our study is that the organisations are selected using a set of criteria in identifying the most resourceful CSOs in each context, and therefore we do not capture potentially existing leader interlocks between the organisations included in our analyses with smaller organisations or organisations active at local/regional level or those with fewer resources. The fragmented characteristics of the Italian and Polish networks compared to the Swedish and British cases, which tend to mirror that fewer organisations are interlocked by leaders with multiple affiliations, might be understood as a consequence of other practices being employed for connecting organisations in civil society. In the Italian case, for instance, the presence of one large umbrella organisation for the whole civil society sector recognised both in civil society and by the state (Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021), might reduce the need of creating networks through cross-representation of leaders. These types of ties are not captured by our research method, whereas our method allowed us to identify the mechanisms of leader interlocks among the organisations in the Swedish and British cases.

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Part IV

Contestation of Civil Society Elites



11

Contestation of Civil Society Elites: Targets, Sources, and Depths in Four National Contexts

Sara Kalm and Anna Meeuwisse

Introduction

Conditions for civil society actors have changed markedly in recent decades in most countries in Europe and beyond. After a period of rapid growth in both scale and scope during the 1990s, accompanied by growing political expectations, resources, and capacity, the environment for civil society organisations (CSOs) has become more complex and challenging since the turn of the millennium (Anheier, 2017; Poppe & Wolff, 2017).

These changing conditions are the subject of an emerging literature on the ‘shrinking space’ for civil society. Researchers have shown that in many countries, governments now use legal and administrative means to

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diminish the influence of CSOs, and they often try to delegitimise them (Chaudhry, 2022; Glasius et al., 2020; della Porta & Steinhilper, 2021). A parallel trend affecting civil society is marketisation, which has led to new demands and tougher competition for resources among CSOs (Harris, 2018; Maier et al., 2016). While these macro trends indicate that the role of civil society is now questioned in more ways than one, so far few have studied how its key representatives experience these challenges.

In this chapter, we turn to the civil society leaders themselves. That is, instead of investigating macro-level developments, as most of the literature does, we focus on how the current situation for civil society is experienced by some of its key leaders—with the ambition to contribute to a more multifaceted understanding of the trends mentioned above. The leaders of resource-rich CSOs are the target of much of today's questioning of civil society. They operate in a sector that is sensitive to social, economic, and political challenges, where they must respond to and navigate the various drivers of change (Hodges & Howieson, 2017). It is therefore important to understand how these 'civil society elites' (see Chap. 1 in this volume) experience contemporary developments and challenges. Here, we want to find out about their experiences of being contested, specifically what the points of critique concern, from where they originate, and how thoroughgoing they are.

We have two interrelated research aims. One is empirical, to map experiences of contestation among civil society elites in four different European countries with a view to trace similarities and differences among the countries. To our knowledge, no such study has been conducted. We want to examine both challenges directed at civil society elites in their capacity as leaders and the challenges directed at the organisations that these elites represent. In order to fulfil our empirical aim, our other ambition is to create an analytical framework for studying instances of civil society elite contestation because we have not been able to find one that is readily available. As will be detailed below, we will distinguish between the *target of contestation*, the *source of contestation*, and the *depth or degree of contestation*.

The data that we use have been generated by a large survey conducted with civil society elites in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom

(UK) (see Appendix in this volume). As we will explain below, these countries represent different civil society regimes and have distinct political histories and cultures with regard to civil society.

The outline of our chapter is as follows. First, we describe the current macro-level civil society processes (shrinking civic space and marketisation) in some detail. We then move on to briefly present the different national contexts. Next, we introduce the analytical framework, followed by a brief methods section. We then present the findings of our empirical study. In the concluding section, we discuss the main results and possible avenues for future research.

Current Macro-Level Trends Affecting Civil Society

Shrinking Space for Civil Society

In the last 10–15 years, civil society has been hit by intensified ideological resistance from outside actors. From having been accepted and even celebrated political actors at both the national and international levels, leading CSOs are now often the targets of different forms of contestation (Chaudhry, 2022; Ruzza & Sanchez Salgado, 2021). CSOs in countries around the globe are accused of not representing the will of the people and are experiencing a shrinking civil space (Bill, 2020; van der Borgh & Terwindt, 2012; Howell et al., 2008; Toepler et al., 2020). Some of the CSOs' leaders experience threats and harassments, particularly those who are young, female, or foreign-born and those who are active in gender policy areas (Scaramuzzino & Scaramuzzino, 2021). Moreover, many governments have taken steps to limit external resources and support for CSOs, dismissing such aid as foreign political interference (Carothers, 2016). This is mainly done through legal measures to restrict or ban foreign financing of domestic CSOs (Rutzen, 2015). Such campaigns can be understood as part of a broader trend of attacks on independent civil society and the contraction of political space for activism (CIVICUS, 2016; Poppe & Wolff, 2017).

Glasius et al. (2020) investigated the situation in 96 countries in different world regions in 1992–2016. The researchers found that restrictions against CSOs began to rise in 1997 and have continued to grow since then. In autocracies and hybrid regimes, restrictions have increased fourfold. In democracies, restrictions have also increased, but more modestly. They see this development of restrictive and repressive measures as an ‘illiberal norm cascade’ as states learn from each other’s practices and over time come to regard it as legitimate to restrict the activities of CSOs (Ibid: 466).

CIVICUS, a global alliance of CSOs, monitors the space for civil society and each year classifies countries’ civic spaces. Among the four countries that we compare, Sweden is the only ‘open’ one. In Italy and the UK, civic space is ‘narrowed’, which means that while ‘the state allows CSOs to exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression, violations of these rights also take place’. In Poland, civic space is classified as ‘obstructed’, meaning that it ‘is heavily contested by power holders, who impose a combination of legal and practical constraints on the full enjoyment of fundamental rights’ (CIVICUS Monitor, 2022).

The loudest attacks on liberal civil society are mobilised by right-wing populists who have gained ground in a number of countries in Eastern Europe and elsewhere (Brechenmacher & Carothers, 2018; Graff & Korolczuk, 2021; Kravchenko et al., 2022; Ploszka, 2020). Such attacks do not, however, affect all CSOs to the same extent (Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021). According to Suparna Chaudhry, ‘[s]tates would not be repressing NGOs if these groups were not successful in spreading democratic norms by challenging electoral irregularities, corruption, and a lack of rule of law and respect for human rights’ (Chaudhry, 2022: 36). While such CSOs are increasingly silenced, other parts of civil society may instead experience an expanding space, for instance, the more apolitical actors whose services are needed to deliver welfare services and the CSOs that voluntarily align with illiberal regimes for religious or nationalistic reasons, providing a hotbed for ‘uncivil’ society (Toepler et al., 2020). Some scholars therefore now talk about a ‘shifting’ or ‘changing’ space for civil society rather than just a shrinking space (Anheier et al., 2019; Toepler et al., 2020).

Marketisation, Professionalisation, and New Roles for Civil Society

Conditions for CSOs have also changed in other ways. The economic crisis in 2008 contributed to austerity measures, reduced resources, and increased competition for financial resources among CSOs.

The waves of privatisation and the introduction of new public management principles in many countries has led to tougher competition for resources and new demands and expectations on CSOs (Hvenmark, 2013; McMullen, 2020; Maier et al., 2016). The roles of CSOs have become more complex as they are expected to fulfil different, sometimes contradictory, roles. In addition to increased expectations that they will contribute to welfare service delivery, they are expected to partner up in solving societal challenges through partnership arrangements (Aiken & Bode, 2009). Such partnerships are often justified by CSOs' contributions to democratic and civic renewal, but they have also raised concerns about governmental co-optation and a de-radicalisation of the sector (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Howell et al., 2008).

In some countries, the civil society sector has developed into its own labour market, with internal career opportunities and specialised services and positions. Concepts such as 'professionalisation', 'bureaucratisation', and 'NGOisation' capture current trends towards widening distances between CSO leaders and their members and between major CSOs and grassroots organisations (Eagleton-Pierce, 2018; Hwang & Powell, 2009; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; see also Heylen et al., 2020).

Four Civil Society Contexts

While most of the challenges mentioned so far are present across Europe (and beyond), the political and cultural context in which national civil society is embedded influences how these tendencies and debates are played out and what consequences they have. Countries have different types of 'civil society regimes' that are distinguished, among other things, on the basis of the kind of welfare state they are part of and differences

with regard to the role of CSOs in service production and advocacy (Anheier & Salamon, 2006).

The *liberal* civil society regime, represented by the UK, is characterised by a strong tradition of charity, low government spending, and a large civil society sector. The sector has a service-provision orientation and is dominated by large charitable organisations with professionalised management boards (Maclean et al., 2021) that have significantly greater access to political and economic resources compared to other civil society actors. Today, many CSOs in the UK are struggling with the impact of shrinking government funding and sharply increased competition for these funds. UK CSOs are also subject to tighter regulation along with pressure to adopt more formal organisational structures and more business-like management systems (Harris, 2018).

Sweden represents the *social democratic* civil society regime type, traditionally characterised by broad popular movements in collaborative arrangements with the state. Service provision is mainly provided by the state while CSOs have traditionally fulfilled expressive and advocacy functions, including a watchdog task in relation to public policy (Lundström & Wijkström, 1997; Meeuwisse & Scaramuzzino, 2017; Mota & Mourao, 2014). However, Swedish civil society is increasingly professionalised and is engaged in service provision to a greater extent than before—and this has been described as a shift ‘from voice to service’ (Kings, 2022; Lundström & Wijkström, 2012). This is partly an effect of the privatisation and deregulation of care services that has taken place in Sweden (Feltenius & Wide, 2019; Petersen & Hjelm, 2014), which has also intensified competition between CSOs and between for-profit and non-profit organisations.

Italy is usually considered a *corporatist* civil society regime type, distinguished by many welfare services carried out by CSOs through collaborative agreements and contracts with the state. Many CSOs combine advocacy with social services (Borzaga, 2004), and the civil society sector has a pillarised structure marked by ideological affiliation at the local and national levels (Bassoli, 2017; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2021). The sector is shaped by CSOs belonging to either one or the other of two main cultural and political groups, or pillars, namely the Catholic group and the post-communist secular group. The political climate has heated up in

recent years as populist parties have gained more influence in government, and some CSOs have been subjected to delegitimisation campaigns. Italian civil society has also been affected by a national reform in which only a few meta-organisations are to represent the entire civil society sector.

Like in Italy, Poland's civil society is polarised in ideological terms with the Catholic church playing a significant role in this battlefield. The country has a recent past of a repressive political system and is considered to be marked by low levels of civic participation as well as dependence on public funding. It is therefore generally regarded as a *statist* or *post-communist* civil society regime type (Cinalli & Giugni, 2014). However, the number of CSOs increased rapidly after 1989, as did more informal forms of activism (Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a polarisation between conservative and liberal civil society has gradually intensified (McGee, 2020). When the populist Law and Justice Party (PiS) came to power in 2015, it developed strategies to replace the so-called liberal 'establishment elite', allegedly representing foreign interests, by what was called the 'counter-elite' who are committed to the promotion of national interests (Bill, 2020; Korolczuk, 2022 and Korolczuk in this volume). The new government's policies and the shrinking civic space have been met with a series of large-scale demonstrations.

Analytical Framework: Three Dimensions of Civil Society Contestation

The objective of this section is to elaborate a model for analysing civil society elites' experiences of contestation in civil society. We have identified three main dimensions to this question, which we refer to as the target, the source, and the depth of contestation.

The *target of contestation* concerns, quite simply, who is on the receiving end of the critique. In the literature on social movements, CSOs are approached as being engaged in 'contentious politics' targeting governments and other power holders (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). But here they

find themselves at the receiving end of critique—themselves being the targets. We distinguish between challenges directed at individual *leaders*, and the challenges aimed at the *organisations* that they represent.

The *source of contestation* concerns from where the contestation is articulated. There are three main categories of contestation sources that seem relevant in our case. The contestation may be *internal* and directed from people within the same organisation. It may also be *sectorial*, that is, directed from people and organisations outside one's own organisation but inside the civil society sector. Finally, contestation may be *external* to the sector, as is the case with critique directed by the media, by the government, by politicians, and so on.

The *depth of contestation* has to do with how thoroughgoing the contestation is. The legitimacy of civil society rests on a great number of grounds (Matelski et al., 2021), and CSOs and their leaders can be accused on just as many grounds for failing to live up to expectations. For analytical purposes we differentiate between three different levels of contestation—drawing inspiration from Robert A. Dahl who distinguished between different types of political opposition in a similar fashion (Dahl, 1966: 341–344; cf. Kalm & Uhlin, 2015: 48–49). What we refer to as *minor* degree of contestation has to do with competition over resources or positions, disappointments with leadership, etc. Such struggles can be tough indeed, especially if resources are limited, and the word ‘minor’ is not meant to trivialise but to indicate the type of contestation that is more or less part of the normal operation of civil society. A *medium* degree of contestation refers to deeper-going dissatisfactions that nevertheless do not amount to wholesale delegitimation of the leadership or the CSO. Examples may include disagreements over policy positions or accusations of the leadership for deficient representativeness or tenuous bonds with their constituency. *Major* contestation, finally, refers to ideological delegitimation and wholesale rejection of an organisation, or even of civil society as a whole.

Method and Data

We examined the experiences of leaders of resource-rich CSOs operating in different social and political national contexts. The data were collected through a cross-country survey ('The Civil Society Elite Survey') with leaders of prominent CSOs, as defined by elite scores (see the Appendix in this volume). The leaders who responded to the survey were from Italy (N = 133), Poland (N = 175), Sweden (N = 308), and the UK (N = 123). While the leaders all represented organisations of some significance, these were diverse in terms of issue areas, missions, constituencies, and relations with public authorities and other stakeholders.

For our analysis, we focused on the answers to a set of closed and open-ended survey questions about the leaders' experiences of contestations of their leadership position and of contestations directed at the organisation. For the questions with fixed response options, it was possible to enter more than one answer and to provide additional or alternative answers. The questions are presented below:

1. *Have you ever experienced that your position as a leader in the organisation was questioned? (Yes/No)*
2. *If yes, who questioned your position?(four response options)*
3. *In your view, on what grounds was your position challenged?(six response options)*
4. *Are there organisations, institutions, or groups that challenge the position of your organisation in civil society? (Yes/No)*
5. *If yes, could you specify which? (open-ended question)*
6. *On what grounds is your organisation challenged? (five response options)*

We coded the data using our analytical framework in which experiences are examined in terms of the target, the source, and the depth of contestations, and we also paid attention to whether experiences differed across countries. In the following, we report on our main findings and begin with contestations directed at the leaders of resource-rich CSOs.

Challenges Aimed at Civil Society Elites in Their Capacity as Leaders

One of the dimensions of our model for analysing experiences of contestations among civil society elites concerns the *target* of contestation, that is, to whom the criticism is directed. The majority of our respondents answered that they had never experienced that their position as a leader in the organisation was questioned. However, slightly more than 40% of the leaders in Italy and Sweden and just over a third in the UK answered that they had such experiences (Cramer's $V = 0.181$). Among the Polish leaders, only one-fifth agreed with that statement.

Is it a high figure if up to 40% of the civil society elites in three out of four countries have experienced questioning of their position as a leader? Does this indicate a shrinking civil space and/or lack of legitimacy? Reasonably, the answers depend on the type of objections directed at the leaders and if they come from within the leaders' organisations or from the outside. The answers to the follow-up questions contributed with some clarifications.

Mainly Internal Opponents and Contestations at a Minor Level

The response options to the question concerning the *sources* of contestation were based on the premise that it makes a difference whether the criticism is internal (stemming from within the same organisation), sectorial (from elsewhere within the civil society sector), or external (from outside actors). The literature on shrinking civil space focuses mainly on outside actors such as governments, public authorities, and news media (see, e.g., Ploszka, 2020; Toepler et al., 2020), while we wanted to capture a wider range of potential challengers.

As shown in Table 11.1, the civil society elites in all of the surveyed countries perceived themselves to be questioned primarily by people from *within* their own organisation (categories mentioned were individual employees, office staff, union representatives, board members, and the founders). However, the UK leaders stood out from the others by

Table 11.1 Sources of contestation of leadership positions. Answers are in percentages among civil society elites in the four countries (N = 264)

	Italy (%)	Poland (%)	Sweden (%)	UK (%)	Measure of association
Internal	91	86	84	67	0.196*
Sectorial	21	20	16	39.5	0.199*
External (public organisations, politicians, civil servants)	12.5	17	9	19	n.s.
External (news media, journalists)	4	6	13	23	0.200*

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey (see Appendix)

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. (Sig. t : $P = <0.1$ *: $P = <0.05$ **: $P = <0.01$ ***: $P = <0.001$, n.s. = not significant)

more often claiming to also be questioned by other CSOs, news media, and representatives of public organisations.

The question concerning the grounds on which the leadership position was challenged is related to the *depth of contestation*. The response options available to the survey respondents were based on previous research on the reasons for questioning the legitimacy of civil society leaders, which in Table 11.2 are categorised in accordance with our three levels of contention as minor, medium, or major.

As can be seen from Table 11.2, the civil society elites in all four countries indicated that they were mainly challenged on grounds that we have described as minor levels of contestation, that is, the type of contestation that can be expected in most organisations and which does not mean that the very basis for the operation is called into question. It is also clear that the leaders more often perceived themselves as challenged because of decisions they had made or their ideas about organisational development than because their expertise was called into question. It can furthermore be noted that leadership style was more often cited as a reason for challenge among Polish and Italian civil society leaders than among the others.

Many of the responses to the open-ended question about possible other reasons for challenging the position of leaders can also be considered minor levels of contestation, for example, competition due to different perceptions of recruitment policies or 'jealousy'. These answers reflect tensions and value conflicts about recruitment principles within many

Table 11.2 Grounds for contesting leadership positions (N = 262)

	Italy (%)	Poland (%)	Sweden (%)	UK (%)	Measure of association
MINOR					
<i>Ideas about organisational development</i>	61	46	45	26	0.215**
<i>Personal decisions</i>	46	34	44.5	51	n.s.
<i>Leadership style</i>	39	40	18	21	0.228**
<i>Lack of expertise</i>	2	14	6	9	n.s.
MEDIUM					
<i>Discrimination</i>	2	6	16	28	0.252***
<i>Lack of representation</i>	12.5	9	12.5	23	n.s.
MAJOR					
<i>Personal ideology</i>	11	17	17	12	n.s.

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey (see Appendix)

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. (Sig. †: $P < 0.1$ *: $P < 0.05$ **: $P < 0.01$ ***: $P < 0.001$, n.s. = not significant)

CSOs today, reinforced by an increased degree of professionalisation. Should the leaders represent the constituencies and be recruited from within the (member) organisation, or should they be recruited in open competition and selected based on their professional skills? These are two different types of leaders based on different sources of legitimacy (Meeuwisse & Scaramuzzino, 2023). Both externally recruited civil society leaders and those who were internally recruited reported that they had been questioned for obtaining their position in the 'wrong' way.

The UK leaders claimed more often than the others (especially in comparison to Italian and Polish leaders) that their position had been challenged due to contestation at a medium level, such as discrimination. They were also more likely to say that their leadership position had been challenged because of a lack of representativeness. In the open-ended answers, some of the leaders mentioned ageism or that their position as a leader was challenged by virtue of being 'an outspoken working-class woman', while another claimed that it was because 'I had a leadership style that was more inclusive than the other senior managers'. Issues of discrimination and representativeness (for instance, related to race, gender, or age) are currently the subject of heated debate in the UK, and the

civil society sector in several reports has been found to be lacking in these respects (Chapman, 2020; Estwick, 2021; Ivanovska Hadjievskaja, 2022). Leaders of key CSOs have been accused of being a closed group with a similar background through the #charitysowhite Twitter campaign. The civil society elites in the other national contexts did not (yet) seem to be subject to such scrutiny and criticism, although there may be grounds for this in some countries (e.g. in Italy, see Chap. 3 by Lee and Scaramuzzino in this volume).

Overall, relatively few of the civil society elites in the four national contexts surveyed had experiences of being challenged on ideological grounds, which we categorise as major contestations.

Challenges Aimed at the Organisations that the Elites Represent

More than half of the Swedish respondents (55%) answered yes to the question whether there were organisations, institutions, or groups that challenged the organisation that they represented, while only one fifth of the Polish leaders (Cramer's $V = 0.270$) answered yes. In Italy and the UK, about a third of the leaders answered the question in the affirmative. It is important to remember that the survey was aimed at leaders of organisations in civil society who have a strong position (in terms of resources, members, access to policy processes, etc., i.e. those with high elite scores) in their respective countries. From that point of view, it is quite remarkable that such a large proportion of leaders—not least in Sweden—perceived that their organisations were challenged from the outside.

A Mix of Opponents and Contestations at Both Minor and Major Levels

A total of 198 respondents specified who the challengers were, and this testified to both sectorial and external sources of contestation. The type of challengers most often reported by elites in all the countries surveyed

were either rival organisations (other CSOs or private organisations) competing for resources, members, or attention, or ideological opponents of various kinds (politicians, social media actors, or CSOs with other values). Government agencies were also mentioned, but it was primarily Polish leaders who singled out the government as the main challenger of their organisations' position. Nationalist, populist, and right-wing extremist groups of various kinds were the most frequently stated as ideological opponents.

The Swedish leaders testified to fierce sectorial competition for resources and members between CSOs, and to an increasing degree with for-profit actors. Some also stated that the competition had increased because the state subsidy had decreased or was becoming more and more uncertain. Ideological divisions within different movements were also addressed. Furthermore, some representatives of religious organisations stated that they were opposed in Swedish society at large by both secular organisations and by the state and the general public 'in the form of opposition to everything religious, such as independent religious schools and clerical education'. Some external sources of contestation were also mentioned. Several Swedish leaders of CSOs advocating for rights and justice stated that the position of their organisations was being challenged by right-wing nationalist actors. Some Swedish leaders also reported that their organisations were challenged by government agencies that seized upon CSOs' issues:

Actors who believe that the issues we work with and for, above all with a focus on women's rights to participate on equal terms and with the same conditions as men, are not needed today in Sweden, but are better managed by them, such as bureaucracy and administrative authorities who want to steer these issues from the top down without dialogue with knowledgeable civil society actors.

The answers from the UK leaders were similar to those from Sweden, that is, the positions of the CSOs were reportedly challenged by competitors within or outside the civil society sector as well as by ideological opponents. Here, too, religious organisations were said to be opposed by 'secularists'. One leader claimed that the conflicts were about 'disagreements

on the veracity of climate change, moon landings, and other conspiracy theories'. Some leaders perceived that their organisation was challenged by government agencies that preferred to support those who are less critical: 'Government sometimes tries to find more benign, less challenging organisations to elicit support.' Unlike in the Swedish material, one UK leader also mentioned that government officials did not appreciate the role that CSOs play as an umbrella body.

Several of the responses from the Polish leaders reflected experiences of being actively opposed by the government (the Law and Justice [PiS] party). The comments were less about competition for resources and more about ideological conflicts. In addition to controversies on, for example, religious and family-related issues, the answers testified to disagreement over migration and educational issues.

The comments from the Italian leaders were, just as in the other countries, both about competition for resources with CSOs engaged in the same area of activity (e.g. addiction, migration, and international organisations for helping children) and about ideological conflicts. Several of the responses reflected experiences of being actively opposed by far-right populist actors and of being challenged by political parties critical of CSO activities. Civil society umbrella networks were also mentioned by some respondents as challengers, as were local and regional administrations.

The final survey question was about the grounds for challenging the organisations, which was also touched on in the open-ended answers mentioned above. As shown in Table 11.3, we chose to categorise competition for access to political processes as well as competition for status in civil society as cases of a medium degree of contestation because they might involve disagreements over policy positions.

Two types of contestations against the organisations seem to dominate in all four countries. On the one hand, there are ideological differences, which we have categorised as a profound type of conflict (major), and on the other hand there is competition over resources, which we have defined as less wide-ranging (minor). Medium levels of contestation were mentioned less frequently, except in the UK and Poland where over half of the leaders mentioned one or both examples of such grounds.

Table 11.3 Grounds for contesting the organisation's position (N = 289)

	Italy (%)	Poland (%)	Sweden (%)	UK (%)	Measure of association
MINOR					
<i>Personal differences</i>	9	26.5	17	19	n.s.
<i>Competition for resources</i>	44	32	54	74	0.229**
MEDIUM					
<i>Competition for access to policy processes</i>	35	18	28	58	0.251***
<i>Competition for status within civil society</i>	39.5	53	34	56	0.182*
MAJOR					
<i>Ideological</i>	51	62	52	65	n.s.

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey (see Appendix)

Note: The measure of association between the variables is Cramer's V. (Sig. t : $P = <0.1$ *: $P = <0.05$ **: $P = <0.01$ ***: $P = <0.001$, n.s. = not significant)

The respondents from the UK agreed to most statements except 'personal differences', suggesting that there are many different kinds of tensions in the British civil society sector. One UK leader mentioned that yet another ground for questioning the organisation was that 'we are seen as a threat to investments made by wealthy individuals', while another stated that the organisation was challenged because of 'our stated position of collaborating rather than competing'. Polish leaders considered 'ideological differences' to be as important a cause as those in the UK, but mentioned 'competition for resources' to a lesser extent than leaders in the other countries. However, they believed as much as the British respondents that their organisations were challenged due to competition over status within civil society.

Conclusion

We have pursued two aims in this chapter. One was to create an analytical framework with which to study experiences of contestation among civil society elites. Our suggestion is to analytically distinguish between three different dimensions, namely the *target*, the *source*, and the *depth* of

contestation. We acknowledge that in other historical and geographical contexts, other dimensions might be relevant. For instance, we did not include the *means* of contestation, that is, whether or not violence is used, because we did not think it applicable for our particular cases. The other goal was to use the analytical framework that we developed to compare experiences of contestation among civil society elites in four European contexts where CSOs operate under partly different conditions.

An overall result of our study is that many civil society elites in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK had neither experienced that their position as leaders nor their organisations had been challenged. In other words, not all CSOs seem to be affected by the questioning of civil society that the literature describes. This result may have to do with the fact that it is the leaders of the most resource-rich CSOs who were surveyed, and the answers may have been different if the survey had been addressed to leaders of more average-sized CSOs. On the other hand, much of the criticism directed at civil society refers precisely to leaders and organisations that enjoy elite status. Although not the majority, it should however be noted that a non-negligible proportion of the civil society elites who responded had indeed been challenged in their leadership position and that the percentage rose significantly when the question concerned the organisations they represented, particularly among the Swedish respondents. The differences in the response patterns further reflect how macro-level developments such as shrinking civil space and marketisation have impacted civil society in different ways in our four different European contexts.

A common pattern across the countries is that the civil society *leaders* seem to be mostly challenged by 'their peers' as a form of internal contestation. Challenges from outside (from external actors or from other CSOs) seem to be less prevalent in all contexts compared to challenges from within the organisation. The grounds for challenging individual leaders appear more professional than ideological, concerning issues such as their ideas about organisational development, their decisions, or their leadership style. Civil society elites from the UK stood out from the others by more often reporting cases of a medium degree of contestation, such as lack of representativeness and discrimination within the sector.

These issues reflect a currently lively debate regarding diversity in the UK, which has so far not been as intense in the other countries.

In Sweden and the UK, challenges against the *organisation* seemed to be largely driven by competition over resources with other non-profit and for-profit organisations, while such challenges were mentioned less often by Polish and Italian civil society elites. Polish leaders, in particular, more often emphasised ideological conflicts and reported challenges by external actors—not least the government. Given what research has shown about the state of civil society in Poland, political challenges of this kind are hardly surprising. However, in Sweden and the UK as well, many respondents told of ideological challenges from either external populist and right-wing groups or from ideological opponents within civil society. We had expected family issues and religious issues to be bones of contention in Italy and Poland, but were more surprised that they were battlegrounds in secularised countries such as Sweden and the UK.

Our study provides some insights into country-specific conditions for civil society elites in terms of perceived challenges and challengers, the grounds of contestation, and how profound these contentions are, but more research is needed. It would be interesting, for example, to examine the differences in experiences between civil society elites who represent service delivery organisations and those who advocate for rights and justice and are considered particularly threatening to many regimes.

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12

The State as a Challenger to Civil Society Elites: The Case of Poland

Elżbieta Korolczuk

Introduction

In recent decades we have seen significant changes in states' approaches towards civil society in countries all around the globe (Alizada et al., 2021). These changes include increased efforts to control civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), closing communication channels between the state and citizens, and redirecting financial support towards organisations co-opted by or loyal to the ruling party (Dawson & Hanley, 2016; Roggeband & Krizsán 2021). Politicians target specific groups within civil society based on their demographic characteristics and/or ideological positions, seeing these groups as either contenders for power or as a danger to social cohesion and the homogeneity of the nation (Bill, 2020; Graff & Korolczuk, 2022). As shown by Conny Roggeband and Andrea Krizsán (2021) in Central and Eastern Europe,

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we see the process of reconfiguring civil society space, and this process is gendered: women and sexual minorities are targeted as the enemies of the right-wing populist parties, while nationalist and socially conservative organisations become the privileged allies of the state (see also Krizsán & Roggeband, 2019). The degree of autonomy of civil society actors, the possibility to voice critiques and concerns vis-à-vis the state, and the degree of support for independent organisations can be interpreted as a litmus test of democracy. Thus, the changes introduced by the state in countries such as Poland, which result in curtailing the civil rights of a substantial portion of the population, should be seen as part and parcel of the process of transformation of a liberal democracy into an autocratic regime.

To justify the restrictions in the civil society sphere, right-wing politicians give different explanations, claiming that they are ‘protecting state sovereignty; promoting transparency and accountability in the civil society sector; enhancing aid effectiveness; or pursuing national security’ (Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021, p. 24). In countries where right-wing populist parties are in power, it is the notion of ‘elite’ that serves to legitimise the need for sweeping reforms. The charge of being an elite—as corrupted and alienated from the people and financed by foreign powers—is routinely used by the right-wing populists in Poland in relation to liberal and left-leaning civil society actors. In 2015, the representatives of the ruling coalition led by PiS (the Law and Justice party) started to change the infrastructure regulating the relations between state and civil society in order to facilitate the emergence of a new elite group within civil society (Bill, 2020; Korolczuk, 2022). Thus, the Polish context is suitable for analysing the ways in which the state becomes civil society’s biggest challenger in autocratising countries.

This chapter examines the changes in state–civil society relations in contemporary Poland, focusing on the increased pressure on the liberal and left-leaning actors exerted by the state from 2015 onwards. The aim is to analyse key strategies employed by the ruling party to marginalise the position of some civil society actors, especially those who are publicly accused of being detached from the people and ‘elitist’, which usually means being disloyal to or opposing the Law and Justice party and its coalition partners. Previous studies have identified several strategies of

pressure and promotion employed by the Polish state to promote elite change in the field of civil society, including smear campaigns and channelling of financial support towards socially conservative organisations (Bill, 2020; Bill & Stanley, 2020; Pospieszna & Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2022; Szuleka, 2017). This chapter focuses specifically on the patterns of cooperation and communication between the state and civil society actors. The analysis suggests that the state has limited tools to promote elite change within civil society, but challenging independent civil society organisations (hereafter CSO) by state actors effectively contributes to the process of democratic erosion, which undermines democratic values and practices not only in Poland, but globally (Bormeo, 2016; Carothers, 2016; Haggard & Kaufman, 2021).

Data and Methods

This chapter employs a process-tracing method to examine the ways in which the relations between CSOs and the Polish state have developed between 2015 and 2022. I focus on the patterns of cooperation and collaboration between state institutions and civil society by examining (a) the functioning of the institutions or bodies, which were set up before 2015 to facilitate such cooperation; (b) the inclusion/exclusion of CSOs in decision-making processes (the process of preparing and consulting the bill on the National Freedom Institute introduced in 2017); and (c) the existing (post-2015) patterns of cooperation or the lack of thereof between state representatives and civil society actors on a day-to-day basis.

The study is based on a qualitative textual analysis of the content published between 2015 and 2022 in the media (both mainstream media, e.g., *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, and online media, including specialised online portals such as *Ngo.pl*), opinions and reports published by civil society actors on their social media, and documents published on official governmental sites in relation to the process of preparing and debating the 2017 Act on the National Freedom Institute—Centre for the Development of Civil Society (henceforth: the Act) in the parliament. Data set included also 15 interviews conducted between 2019 and 2022 with representatives of Polish CSOs. Interviewees included

representatives of foundations or associations that belonged to the cluster of 31 most resource-rich and influential Polish CSOs, some of which were liberal/left while others were conservative/right leaning. This cluster was identified based on the results of a survey conducted in 2021, and the elite position of specific entities was identified based on factors such as material and human resources, voice vis-à-vis the state, and internal recognition within civil society (Altermark et al., 2022; Korolczuk, 2022). The data were gathered within the research programme ‘Civil Society Elites? Comparing Elite Composition, Reproduction, Integration and Contestation in European Civil Societies’, which aimed to develop the first systematic and cross-country comparative analysis of civil society elites in four countries (Poland, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) and in the European Union (for more details on the method, see Appendix to this book).

The Shifting Relations between the State and Civil Society in Poland

Historically, civil society emerged as an intermediary between the polity and the private sphere of citizens’ lives, in other words, as a sphere of autonomy from absolutist rule. As observed by Michael Bernhard, a critical component of this process was ‘the establishment of legal boundaries that protected the existence of an independent public space from the exercise of state power, and then the ability of organizations within it to influence the exercise of power’ (2020, p. 308). Following this historical development, the contemporary ideal of a liberal democracy rests on the assumption that civil society and the state occupy separate spheres, but the relation between them should be more or less harmonious: the state supports civil society actors, and the latter sometimes act as service providers for the state, while simultaneously monitoring the state’s actions (Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2016).

In the post-socialist countries, a shift occurred from a ‘civil society against the state’ model towards a view of CSOs as partners of public institutions that the state should support both financially and

organisationally (Chimiak, 2016; Cohen & Arato, 1992; Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017). In the newly regained liberal democracy, the ‘rebellious civil society’ (Ekiert & Kubik, 2001) was to be replaced by apolitical service providers, self-help groups, and organisations specialising in advocacy and lobbying that are able and willing to negotiate with state institutions and political elites. In the first decade of the twenty-first century the view of civil society as organisations providing social services has become widespread among Polish think-tanks, effectively overshadowing other frames such as civil society as a moral blueprint or a check against power (Jeziarska, 2020).

Researchers and practitioners alike have observed that such a close collaboration between the state and civil society may result in the latter losing autonomy, value orientation, and the capability to respond to the authentic needs of local populations (Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2017; Jeziarska & Sörbom, 2021; Toje, 2013). When the state budget becomes the main source of financial support for civil society, CSOs are expected to work towards politically defined policy objectives, which may significantly limit their ability to control power holders and set their own agenda. Critics of civil society’s dependence on state funds and the subsequent bureaucratisation and alienation of CSOs do not undermine the central assumption that collaboration between the state and civil society is conducive to civic engagement and effectively strengthens democracy, but highlight the eminent imbalance of power inscribed in the relations between power holders and civil society actors.

Ideally, resource-rich CSOs should be able to influence politics, for example, by lobbying for specific solutions, advising the authorities, or offering expert knowledge on specific issues. In practice, the level of participation depends on the good will of political elites and the existence and relative openness/closeness of communication and cooperation channels. These channels may include consultative bodies placed at the level of ministries and other state institutions, deliberative spaces such as conferences or meetings of different stakeholders, and platforms that can be used for information sharing and advice (Arnstein, 1969; Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021). The analysis of the Polish context shows that between 2015 and 2022 significant changes occurred regarding the functioning of the existing cooperation and communication channels with CSOs, the

possibilities for participation of civil society actors in the process of social consultations, and the level of state control over CSOs. The present analysis focuses on these three key areas of participation, highlighting changes in discourses, regulations, and practices that took place between 2015 and 2022: (a) closing the existing cooperation and communication channels between the state and civil society; (b) closing space for social consultations; (c) centralisation of power over civil society organisations.

Closing the Existing Cooperation and Communication Channels between the State and Civil Society

In its electoral programme in 2015, the Law and Justice party claimed that major reform was needed because many CSOs lacked access to decision-making processes and were financially over-dependent on the state. Allegedly, at the heart of the problem was the lack of inclusive consultative bodies, the low level of autonomy of civil society actors, and insufficient state funding. The analysis of the patterns of cooperation between the state and civil society prior to 2015 and after the elections suggests that while the amount of money available to civil society is indeed bigger, the patterns of cooperation shifted significantly.

Polish regulations included provisions that enabled CSOs to cooperate with the state and with local authorities over issues regarding civil society, such as tax provisions, planned reforms, and state supervision over public welfare work. The 2003 Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (with a 2010 amendment) established the Public Benefit Works Council, an advisory and consultative body, consisting mainly of the leaders of big and influential organisations, whose role was to express opinions about how the government's plans might affect civil society and to propose reforms or changes on behalf of the Polish third sector (Gumkowska et al., 2006, p. 49). The council included representatives of umbrella bodies such as the Polish Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations (OFOP) and the Non-Governmental Organizations Supporting Network

(SPLOT), large religious organisations (e.g. Caritas), and resource-rich foundations and associations, including the Stocznia Foundation, the Voluntary Fire Brigades Associations, and the Polish Scouting Association. Local authorities were also encouraged to set up social consultation bodies, and according to reports published annually by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy by 2015 most local governments had submitted plans of cooperation with the leaders of CSOs. Not all organisations had the material resources, skills, and personnel that such cooperation requires, but quite a few had participated in efforts to influence the state on matters regarding the third sector during the previous two decades (e.g. Charycka et al., 2021; Domaradzka, 2016; Garpiel, 2014; Klon Jawor Association, 2017, 2020).

Resource-rich CSOs promoted greater cooperation between different CSOs as well as between the third sector and the state. To facilitate such cooperation, work on the Strategic Roadmap for the Development of Civil Society (Strategiczna Mapa Drogowa Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego) was initiated in 2014 under the lead of nationwide umbrella organisations OFOP and SPLOT. The goal was to map Polish civil society, to discuss and address the main obstacles to the development of the Polish third sector, and to enable closer collaboration between organisations, which would strengthen their voice vis-à-vis the state. Intense debates, meetings, and consultations continued over the period of three years and included over 2500 individuals representing a wide range of CSOs, including large national and local federations and those focused on single issues such as civic education, voluntary work, advocacy, rural development, and more. The initiators of the roadmap continuously discussed the project with politicians, hoping to integrate the conclusions and goals into policies and institutional practices concerning civil society in Poland. This group included well-known civil society leaders, such as Jakub Wygnański, Piotr Frączak, and Tomasz Schimanek, who were often mentioned in my interviews as key representatives of civil society elites and as people who have significant influence also within the political sphere:

Wygnański is an icon ... he is 'the pope of civil society', and indeed, he has fought for this position. Piotr Frączak also ... I think that such people can certainly be found in every big city, a group that sometimes is able to put pressure on power, these people are known for operating in this field and have enough authority ... There is this group of people at the national level, so when someone wants to talk to civil society, they will call Wygnański, for example. (Warsaw, 28.10.2021)

After Law and Justice came to power, the collaboration over the roadmap came to an end. The representatives of state institutions were no longer interested in or able to continue consultations, and the ruling party had its own plan to redefine the relations between the state and the third sector. In the eyes of Law and Justice, people representing existing umbrella networks and influential organisations, which engaged in dialogue with the previous regime, represented contenders to power rather than potential collaborators. In 2016, the public television news (TVP) initiated a smear campaign targeting Jakub Wygnański and the people who sat on the Stocznia advisory council, suggesting that they illegally received financial support from the then Mayor of Warsaw Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, an oppositional politician from the liberal Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska, PO) (Orzechowski, 2016). Similarly to attacks on Jurek Owsiak, the head of the well-known charitable organisation WOŚP, the smear campaign targeting Wygnański portrayed civil society leaders as shady characters seeking financial gains and political influence under the pretence that they work for the common good (Bill, 2020).

CSOs enjoy the trust of Polish society, and in 2021, 56% of respondents declared that they trust them, compared to a mere 28% of people who trust public media and 26% who trust the government (Poniatowski, 2021). Because trust is a form of social capital, the question of legitimacy is of key importance for civil society actors (Altermark et al., 2022). The strategy of the ruling coalition in Poland, which included closing the channels for cooperation and engaging in attacks on specific organisations and people active in the public sphere should be seen as an attempt to challenge the influence of elite civil society actors and to undercut their social standing and legitimacy.

Closing Space for Social Consultations

The shift in state–civil society relations initiated in 2015 included institutional and legal initiatives as well as changes in institutional practices that negatively affected the degree of openness of state institutions in regard to some civil society actors. Initially, the representatives of the ruling coalition promised to strengthen the collaboration with civil society and its influence on decision-making processes by replacing existing institutions with new, more effective, and inclusive ones. To facilitate this process, the role of overseeing the state's relations with the third sector was assigned to the newly established office of the Plenipotentiary for Civil Society and Equal Treatment, positioned at the Chancellery of the President of the Council of Ministers.¹ A close analysis of the activities undertaken by the three consecutive Plenipotentiaries shows however, that all Plenipotentiaries kept a relatively low profile and ceased to engage in wide social consultations or broad cooperation with CSOs, except for those with close ties to the ruling parties.

By mid-2016 then-Prime Minister Beata Szydło announced a new plan that included establishing an administrative body fully in control of communication and cooperation between the state and the third sector. A key element of the reform was the act on the National Freedom Institute—Centre for the Development of Civil Society (e.g. wPolityce, 2017). The leaders of liberal CSOs interviewed for this project were unanimous in their view that the reform led to the closing of existing communication and cooperation channels between the state and many civil society actors. The trend to exclude organisations seen as representing the 'liberal elite' from social consultations and to dismiss their attempts to communicate with the authorities emerged already in 2016 and continues today. As observed by one of the interviewees, the tendency to exclude some actors is part of a broader strategy of 'divide and conquer' applied by the right-wing coalition against CSOs:

¹ Until 2016 it was the office of the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, a key institution for implementing gender equality in Poland, but because the new government saw 'gender equality' as a problematic and potentially dangerous concept, both the name of the institution and the focus of the Plenipotentiary's work has changed.

The previous authorities left this environment aside and sometimes when someone jumped the line, they would show you your place. The current authorities say that ‘everything is political’, but only they represent the right way of doing politics, and you are supposed to support them The intensity of the involvement of politicians in what we do has changed. And they are very destructive now as they divide [civil society], incite hatred against one another, attempt to destroy the image [of civil society organisations] and trust between organisations. (Warszawa, 11.02.2019)

The ways in which new legislation was introduced is illustrative of the process of a selective closure of civil society space (McMahon & Niparko, 2022). The speed of introducing change is indicative of the key role attributed by the new regime to reforming civil society sphere. The act on the National Freedom Institute passed in the Sejm and Senate with very limited time for consultations and with no public hearings, and President Andrzej Duda signed the bill on October 12, 2017 (ISAP, 2017). Such haste was not uncommon also in the case of other bills. According to the report published by the Batory Foundation in 2019 over a quarter of all legislative proposals were debated for less than two weeks in Polish parliament, which is against the regulations requiring at least two weeks for parliamentary proceedings (Fundacja..., 2019).

Key umbrella organisations and the influential actors of liberal orientation were not invited to consult on the project. Two main umbrella bodies representing thousands of Polish CSOs—OFOP and SPLOT—as well as thinks-tanks such as the Klon/Jawor Association submitted their opinions to the ministry, but their critiques and suggestions were left unaddressed. The government officials and minister Gliński, who were responsible for the project, also did not respond to the concerns of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Adam Bodnar, who pointed to the fact that the lack of wide social consultations suggests the undemocratic nature of the procedures leading to the establishment of the National Freedom Institute.

In a series of texts and open letters, civil society actors expressed their concerns (e.g. Batko-Tołuć, 2017; OFOP, 2017). In mid-2017, an open letter of CSOs was sent to the Polish president asking him to veto the

new law. The authors of the letter pointed to the fact that most organisations that submitted their opinions on the draft of the new bill were very critical of the new provisions: 'Out of 48 opinions that were submitted, 33 were against creating the National Freedom Institute, 15 assessed the current project critically, and only 2 were overtly positive' (List do prezydenta RP 2017). They warned the public that the National Freedom Institute would be controlled solely by the state, not civil society representatives. The reform was a move towards centralisation of power, leaving control over activities and financial resources of CSOs in the hands of the state officials and civil society leaders loyal to the ruling party, thus seriously diminishing the autonomy of the third sector.

As shown by Roggeband and Krizsán (2021), the process of closing civil society space was uneven and selective. While liberal and left-oriented CSOs especially the ones that focused on women's rights, sexual minorities, and migrants, were marginalised or subjected to smear campaigns and harassment by right-wing actors, the conservative and patriotic CSOs enjoyed a privileged position vis-à-vis the state. The representatives of the latter see it as an obvious consequence of a regime change:

First of all, we must make it clear, of course, with the currently ruling coalition it is certainly easier for us and our supporters now than it was when the previous [liberal coalition] was in power. On the other hand, we experienced an opposite situation before the [current] coalition was in power, when other NGOs had greater support and influence on what was happening in national politics. (Warsaw, 8.06.2021)

Within this new context, liberal and left-oriented organisations seek new ways to use cultural capital such as trust and other resources to strengthen their organisational capacity and to mobilise wider audiences. Interviewees mentioned that they use international contacts and informal channels to inform their partners in other countries and at the EU level about the changes taking place in Poland and the people who are taking over positions in various international bodies:

I was at this meeting with EU Commissioner, who ... said, 'Listen, we at the Commission level can't do anything. We need to engage in dialogue with all representatives who meet the definition of NGOs. We can't treat various organisations different in any way ... but you can tell us who is who ... knowing the context, we know who is who, and that is a lot'. (Warsaw, 22.12.2020)

Undercutting the influence of CSOs on the international arena turned out to be difficult also because between 2015 and 2022 Poland had become a widely discussed case of de-democratisation due to reforms concerning the judicial system and the media (Alizada et al., 2021). Thus, civic activism in Poland is shifting as people focus on new issues and employ new mobilisation tactics, and it is strengthening as various networks and groups join forces (McMahon & Niparko, 2022).

Centralisation of Power over Civil Society Organisations

Despite the reservations and negative opinions, the Act on the National Freedom Institute—Centre for the Development of Civil Society (NIW) was submitted to the Polish parliament on June 5, 2017 as a governmental project, and it was accepted by the Parliament by mid-September (Sejm, 2017). The people responsible for creating the National Freedom Institute were handpicked by the representatives of the ruling right-wing coalition with no significant input from civil society. The Institute's Director and the majority of the Director's Council were appointed by Minister Gliński in his role as the Chair of the Committee for Public Benefit Activity, a new body established by the bill. Gliński himself argued that creating such an institution should be seen as just a minor change that shifted some responsibilities and tasks from the Ministry for Work, Family and Social Affairs to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (PAP, 2017). In light of the new provisions, however, the Committee, whose 22 members are recruited solely from ministries and state departments, has become a key institution tasked with overseeing and coordinating the relations between civil society and the state (Narodowy..., 2017).

The Act stipulates that the members of the Committee are responsible for preparing programmes to support civil society development, which serve as a key source of funding, and they are to draft new regulations in this field and coordinate the process of public consultations. Furthermore, the Chair—Minister Gliński—has full control over appointing the director of the National Institute and monitoring its activities, he approves the budget of the institution, and he controls all public benefit activities. While the Public Benefit Council—an institution facilitating cooperation between civil society and the state—has continued to exist, it is no longer seen by civil society actors as influential and open to all organisations. As one of the interviewees representing liberal-leaning organisations explained:

The Council has no meaning now, no real influence. The signal that comes from the Committee is decisive. And the Council can discuss the matter, it can submit dissenting opinions, whatever, it doesn't matter anyway, because if there is a specific order, it has to be carried out. ... It is just a fig leaf. So they can always say 'After all, we consulted with you, with your representatives, so if you have any complaints, it's not against us, but against them, right?' ... If all bodies, such as the Council, were to be liquidated, then everyone would recognise it as a power grab ... but now it looks ok, sort of. After a while, no one remembers. (Warsaw, 22.12.2020)

Leaving some of the institutional infrastructure intact supports the ruling party's claim that the reform was oriented towards enhancing the effectiveness of the existing institutions, rather than aimed at overhauling the whole structure. As explained by one of the interviewees, Law and Justice wanted to have full control over decisions made by bodies such as the Public Benefit Council or Council of the National Institute of Freedom, and thus they invited leaders sharing socially conservative and patriotic views and assigned key roles to people from small towns and less influential organisations:

In order to have a majority in the Council you need to have enough votes to be able to vote in accordance with such a need, so ... suddenly people appeared there, who were never seen in the civil society space. ... the

narrative was that we need to include these people from small towns to speak, which is cool. But later, when we checked who they are, well... there is this guy, a local regionalist ... who publishes ... all kinds of nationalistic, unpleasant stuff. (Warsaw, 22.12.2020)

The representatives of the Law and Justice party claim that the reform was introduced in a fair and balanced manner, even if its effectiveness was sometimes achieved at the expense of inclusiveness. When asked in an interview about the controversial provisions included in the new bill and the lack of extended social consultations, Minister Gliński, the architect of the reform, dismissed the critiques:

Perhaps an immature democracy, and this is still Poland, this is what it looks like - one government comes and the system is bent in one way, there comes the other, and it can be bent in the other. We will try to build a fair system, maintaining the right proportions, and the sector will monitor the process. (in: Dudkiewicz, 2017, translated by the author)

Gliński dismissed the critiques and shunned the process of democratic deliberation as an obstacle in implementing changes that in his view were both urgently needed and normatively justified. This interview as well as public utterances of the ruling party politicians suggest that the democratic procedures, such as wide social consultations, close collaboration with various civil society actors, and achieving consensus, were not seen as needed when introducing major reforms. To the contrary, they were perceived as a hindrance in the process of building a new, authentic civil society and promoting its new elite.

Law and Justice perceive the existing civil society elite as a contender to power, potentially willing and able to challenge the right-wing regime. This view was expressed in the opening speech by Gliński, delivered during the annual conference of the National Freedom Institute in November 2020. The minister claimed that there were two types of civil society: one that supports democracy and one that endangers it. The people who took to the streets to oppose the government 'are of populist and anarchist nature, they lack some core features that are constitutive for civil society. Thus, this is not the type of civil society that should be functioning in a

democracy' (19.11.2020, author's notes and translation). In other words, in the eyes of the right-wing politicians, civil society is vital for democracy, but only if its activities meet specific criteria, such as loyalty towards the government, thus the mass resistance against the reforms introduced by the populist coalition was neither truly grassroots nor democratic by definition. The protests are presented as inauthentic, for example, initiated and staged by politicians from oppositional parties, who transformed CSOs into pawns in the political game. The quote is illustrative of the logic that drives the changes regarding civil society in contemporary Poland. Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the Law and Justice party, went on record claiming that his ultimate goal is 'the establishment of a "new social hierarchy" that would reach deep into civil society [because] only a total reconstruction of Poland's social elites can complete the country's "unfinished" post-1989 transition' (Bill, 2020, p. 2). Under the rule of the Law and Justice coalition the state emerges not only as the rightful challenger to the civil society actors who allegedly strayed away from their mission and were manipulated by the opposition, but also as an institution that is bestowed with the mission of moulding new elites.

This mission legitimises not only the exclusion of specific CSOs from social consultations and public debate, but also the use of direct violence. Centralisation of power includes a range of different strategies, many of which aim to limit citizen's participation. These strategies range from withholding information, to handpicking members of the bodies designed to facilitate cooperation between the state and civil society, to violence. In recent years researchers and practitioners have noted an increase in discursive and physical violence against protesters and activists. The sweeping reforms introduced by the Law and Justice-led government, such as the reform of judiciary, seizing control over the media, and attempting to further limit access to abortion, indeed led to an awakening of Polish civil society and the rise of contentious activism (Korolczuk et al., 2019; Majewska, 2017; McMahon & Niparko, 2022). On the October 30, 2020 an unprecedented number of over 400,000 demonstrators protested in the streets of over 600 cities, towns, and villages to protest against the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal, which decided that abortions for foetal abnormalities violate the Polish Constitution. These were the biggest protests in the country since 1989, and reports

published by various organisations and media outlets, including Amnesty International and Szpila Collective (an informal network of lawyers helping the people who have been arrested during demonstrations), show that physical violence, detention, and legal harassment were used by the state during protests, significantly limiting freedom of assembly and freedom of speech (Kolektyw Szpila & Sukiennik, 2021). During protests against the abortion ban and against the homophobic rhetoric of the government and the Catholic Church, the police have used excessive violence, detaining dozens of participants, including minors (Amnesty International, 2022; Jędrzejczyk, 2021). The media also reported on police harassment, for example, when police officers were visiting people in their homes for ‘offences’ such as posting their support for protests online, as in the case of a 14-year-old boy who posted words of solidarity with the women’s march on his Facebook page only to find police officers at his doorstep (Ambroziak, 2020). Analysis of the charges brought against the protesters published by the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights shows that at least 60% of the charges against the protesters were later dismissed by the courts, which confirms the view that the use of violence was excessive and politically motivated (Jędrzejczyk, 2021). In the hands of the ruling elite, state violence has become a powerful tool to limit citizen’s rights and freedoms, effectively limiting space for participation in peaceful demonstrations and other forms of contentious politics.

Conclusions

The circulation of elites is often conceptualised as a natural consequence of social mobility, political developments, and socio-cultural change. The change of elites often occurs in the sphere of politics, but can be also observed in other areas including culture and civil society when different groups compete and clash. In contemporary Poland, it is the state that has become the biggest challenger to the civil society elite. There are several key strategies of state-sponsored elite change in the civil society sphere. These include: (i) the (dis)continuation of existing forms of collaboration between the state and civil society, (ii) the closing of existing channels for communication and social consultations or limiting access

to these channels for some groups, (iii) the tendency to privilege civil society actors loyal to the ruling party as state partners, (iv) redirecting funds towards this privileged group, and (v) using smear campaigns or political violence against civil society actors seen as potential challengers to the new political elite. Each of these strategies can be analysed regarding the degree of openness/closeness of the political system for civil society actors and the degree of pressure/promotion of specific CSOs vis-à-vis the state. Illiberal states tend to reconfigure rather than close civil society space, and the core mechanism that steers the selective dynamics of inclusion and exclusion is 'the convergence or divergence between the ideology of civil society organizations and governments or political elites' (Roggeband & Krizsán, 2021, p. 24). In autocratising contexts, such as Poland, the closure affects mostly those organisations that are identified as liberal or left-leaning, of cosmopolitan orientation, and which promote liberal values such as equality, pluralism, and minority rights.

The present analysis shows that the regulations and practices aimed to foster elite change in the sphere of civil society are often intertwined with processes of democratic backsliding. Politicians who want to centralise power treat representatives of civil society elites (experts, leaders of influential CSOs, and umbrella organisations) as contenders who should be kept in check and de-legitimised in the eyes of a broader public. While the process of privileging certain civil society actors by the state can be interpreted as part of a process of elite circulation, not uncommon to healthy democracies, in autocratising countries it is accompanied by exerting pressure on lay citizens engaged in different forms of contentious politics who are seen as disloyal to the power holders and thus are subjected to state violence.

When autocrats gain power, they need to find ways to continue to be seen as outsiders in the system of power, and to this end they need to redirect people's anger and frustration towards groups that can be presented as foreign and potentially dangerous. Existing civil society elites, which consist of people representing relatively privileged organisations, cooperating with transnational and global actors, and mostly of liberal persuasion, are the ideal target of the right-wing populist anti-elitist *resentment*. Simultaneously, the anti-elitist discourse is employed to legitimise violence against minority groups and oppressed individuals,

including women, youth, and LGBTQ people. Despite the fact that protesters often represent marginalised communities and groups lacking substantial resources, they are also vilified as members of or the pawns of global elites. Consequently, their right to political participation is limited, indicating the anti-democratic nature of the anti-elitist discourses and politics introduced by the right-wing coalition in Poland.

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13

Who Gets a Seat at the Table? Civil Society Incumbents and Challengers in the European Parliament's Consultations

Laura Landorff

Introduction

The European Union (EU) has the 'most comprehensive and advanced animal welfare legislation in the world' although animal welfare does not fall within its exclusive competence (Simonin & Gavinelli, 2019, p. 68). EU animal welfare legislation is developed within the framework of EU policies 'where the EU has the legal base to act' such as in agriculture, fisheries, or the internal market (Simonin & Gavinelli, 2019, p. 60). Most of the legislation covers the welfare of 'food producing animals and [...] animals used for experimental purposes' (European Commission, 2020, p. 1).

As a result, animal welfare is a fiercely contested policy area that is shaped by the interests of various individual and collective actors from

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adjacent policy fields such as farmers, consumers, and animal welfare organisations. The recently adopted European Parliament (EP) report on on-farm animal welfare (2022) met major criticism from animal welfare civil society organisations (CSOs) such as the Eurogroup for Animals and Compassion in World Farming for favouring ‘farmers’ economic needs’ in many paragraphs and for ignoring ‘much of the scientific knowledge gained in regard to the welfare of animals’ (Eurogroup for Animals, Compassion in World Farming – EU & Four Paws, 2022, p. 1). As co-legislator, the Parliament plays a crucial role in adopting new EU laws on animal welfare. Thus, it can be an important ally for animal welfare CSOs in pushing for EU animal welfare policies.

In asking who gets a seat at the table when EU parliamentarians consult civil society on animal welfare-related policies, this chapter pursues two aims:

First, it compares two institutional venues for civil society participation and deliberation on animal welfare in the Parliament, namely EP public hearings and the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, to identify which types of civil society actors act as *incumbents* and *challengers* in the EP’s animal welfare policy. While EP public hearings are official bodies of the Parliament, the Intergroup constitutes an unofficial grouping that is formed by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) for the purpose to, among other things, ‘promote contact between parliamentarians and civil society’ (European Parliament, 2019, p. 29).

Second, the chapter aims to show how the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals functions as an arena to gather animal welfare CSOs, to concentrate expertise, and to facilitate access to political elites for animal welfare organisations. In this context, particular attention is paid to the Eurogroup for Animals, a Brussels-based animal welfare CSO that acts as the secretariat of the Intergroup. Regarding this position, the Eurogroup speaks of ‘a position envied by many, [...] a unique position to influence the Parliament from within’ (Eurogroup for Animals, 2016, p. 44). Furthermore, it describes itself as a ‘privileged partner of many parliamentarians (MEPs) [who works] hand in hand with all political groups to generate better animal welfare policy and legislation’ (Eurogroup for Animals, 2016, p. 44). These statements point to

a potential elite status of the Eurogroup in terms of having a key position in the Intergroup and enjoying privileged access to political elites, which this chapter aims to explore in greater depth.

To accommodate these aims, the chapter combines a field-analytical approach in its conceptual framework (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012) with the analysis of 84 agendas of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals and 43 agendas of EP public hearings during the eighth (2014–2019) and first half of the ongoing ninth European Parliament (2019–2024). The EP is conceptualised as a Strategic Action Field (SAF), that is, as a mesolevel social order (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). Applying the SAF framework's key components of *incumbents* and *challengers*, those animal welfare CSOs that are invited to EP public hearings are perceived as *incumbents*. As such they occupy a privileged position in the field as they are invited to a formal EP structure that is part of the official policy deliberations and processes. In contrast, those animal welfare CSOs that participate in Intergroups are conceived of as *challengers*. They are perceived as occupying a less privileged position in the field as they conduct their deliberations in an institutional setting that is not part of the official EP structure. To gain insight into the sources of power of *incumbents* and *challengers*, the organisational capacities of CSOs invited to Intergroup meetings and EP public hearings are also briefly examined.

In line with the field-analytical framework of this chapter, the analysis of civil society consultation on animal welfare in the EP is perceived as an initial struggle for access and voice. It is a struggle for access to institutional venues and thus to political elites in the EP. This struggle is expressed through the institutional regulation of EP Intergroups. It is also a struggle for voice in a policy area that is developed within the context of other EU policies, such as agriculture, and thus is shaped by field struggles in the broader field environment.

The chapter starts with a brief introduction to EP public hearings and Intergroups. Thereafter, the conceptual framework of the Parliament as a SAF is developed. The subsequent analysis examines the participation of animal welfare CSOs in public hearings and in the EP Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals and outlines the organisational capacities of *incumbents* and *challengers*. The chapter ends with

concluding remarks and reflections on how to define civil society elites' position in the EP.

Public Hearings in the European Parliament

The EP parliamentary committees frequently hold public hearings to obtain independent expertise and advice on specific topics linked to their legislative, oversight, and appointment activities (Corbett et al., 2016; Díaz Crego & Del Monte, 2021). In these contexts, hearings fulfil various purposes, for example, epistemic, coordinative, and participatory functions (Coen & Katsaitis, 2019). During the eighth EP, 585 public hearings were organised by the parliamentary committees (Sabbati, 2019). According to Ripoll Servant (2018, p. 142), public hearings encourage a 'broader dialogue' between parliamentarians, experts, and civil society 'than one-to-one meetings with selected groups'.

For CSOs, legislative expert hearings provide an opportunity to present their views and expertise to key EU decision-makers, and thus to be part of 'the evidence-gathering process that prepares the ground for a report' (Corbett et al., 2016, p. 186). However, the participation in expert hearings requires prior invitation by the parliamentary committee or rather the committee's secretariat that oversees the organisation of expert hearings (European Parliament, 2003/2014). Thereby, a parliamentary committee may invite 'a maximum of 16 guests each year whose expenses will be covered' (European Parliament, 2003/2014, p. 1).

Because animal welfare is predominantly discussed within the scope of the EU's agricultural policy (though not exclusively), the parliamentary committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and its public hearings are of particular interest to animal welfare CSOs. Therefore, the analysis in this chapter focuses on the 25 AGRI hearings of the eighth EP and the 18 AGRI hearings of the current ninth EP.

Intergroups in the European Parliament

Intergroups have existed since the early 1980s in the EP. They are unofficial cross-party, cross-committee groupings that gather MEPs across political groups and parliamentary committees, representatives of other EU institutions (e.g., the European Commission), and civil society and interest groups in their meetings. The current ninth EP (2019–2024) registered 27 Intergroups dealing with issues such as animal welfare, climate change, disability, trade unions, and urban areas, to name just a few.¹ In the literature, Intergroups have been analysed as informal legislative membership organisations (Ringe et al., 2013), as ‘more or less strong policy networks’ (Nedergaard & Jensen, 2014, p. 9), and as *bridging* social capital of EU parliamentarians (Landorff, 2019).

In response to concerns about Intergroups being too close to certain lobby groups (Corbett et al., 2016), the Parliament established in 1999 internal rules governing the establishment, operation, and financial declarations of Intergroups (European Parliament, 1999/2012). These rules define Intergroups as not being ‘organs of Parliament’ (European Parliament, 1999/2012, p. 1). Consequently, Intergroups may not express the opinion of the EP (European Parliament, 1999/2012). Furthermore, the regulation entails that Intergroups must seek their (re)establishment as an official EP Intergroup at the beginning of each parliamentary term. The official recognition as an EP Intergroup requires the support of at least three political groups and comes with the provision of technical facilities (e.g., rooms, interpreters, and translation facilities) for Intergroup meetings by the political groups. Due to the regulation, the number of EP Intergroups is limited. Likewise, the themes on which Intergroups are established are subject to change because they need to align with the policy priorities of the political groups. Hence, as a venue for civil society participation and deliberation Intergroups are dependent on the political groups in the Parliament.

¹ For an overview of all 27 Intergroups of the ninth EP, see <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/Intergroups> (Accessed: 14 July 2022).

The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals

The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals exists since 1983 (Corbett et al., 2016, p. 248) and is one of the oldest Intergroups of the EP. The Intergroups ‘Disability’, ‘Minority’, ‘Extreme Poverty’, and ‘Trade Union’ were established in the early 1980s and are still active in the ninth EP (Landorff, 2019). At the beginning of the ninth parliamentary term, 99 MEPs were registered as members of the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals (European Parliament, n.d.).

The Intergroup meets monthly for a one-hour meeting during the Parliament’s plenary sessions in Strasbourg, usually on a Thursday morning.² On average more than 20 MEPs attended Intergroup meetings at the end of 2019 (Eurogroup for Animals, 2020, p. 10). The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals covers a broad range of animal welfare issues such as animal welfare during transport, animal welfare in experiments and medical research, animal welfare labelling, the welfare of companion animals, and cage-free farming (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, n.d.). Thereby, the Intergroup functions as a ‘forum for debate and actions’ on animal welfare-related legislation (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 1). Its members work on parliamentary reports (e.g., the report on organic production and labelling of organic products or the implementation report on on-farm animal welfare), resolutions (e.g., on a new animal welfare strategy for 2016–2020), and amendments and parliamentary questions to the plenary (Eurogroup for Animals, 2016, p. 20; Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, n.d.).

Among the Intergroups of the ninth Parliament, the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals represents one of the most formalised groups in terms of its organisational structure. It is chaired by a president and several vice-presidents, has a secretariat, and follows its own rules of procedure that guide the actions of the Intergroup (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a). As of 2022, it

²The move to online meetings in April 2020 has occasionally extended the meetings to up to two hours.

comprised six ad hoc working groups covering, for instance, animal transport, animals in science, and cage-free farming (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, n.d.).

The Eurogroup for Animals

The Eurogroup for Animals presents itself as the ‘only pan-European animal advocacy organisation’ (Eurogroup for Animals, 2019, p. 2). It was founded in 1980 on the initiative of the UK-based Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals and ‘similar national societies’ (Corbett et al., 2016, p. 248). At the end of 2021, the Eurogroup represented over 80 animal advocacy organisations in 25 EU member states and several non-EU countries (Eurogroup for Animals, 2022, p. 56). The Eurogroup’s portfolio covers five policy areas, among them trade and animal welfare, animals in science, and farm animals. These are covered by 15 (out of 34) staff members as of May 2022 (Eurogroup for Animals, 2022, pp. 45–46).

The Eurogroup has served as the Intergroup’s secretariat since 1983 and thus draws on nearly 40 years of experience in liaising with MEPs in the Intergroup (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019b). As its secretariat, the Eurogroup is responsible for ‘administrative, organisational, and advisory tasks’ (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 3). These include, for instance, the organisation of the monthly meetings in Strasbourg, the invitation of guests, the preparation and distribution of the meeting agendas, the coordination of Intergroup initiatives, and regular updates of the Intergroup website (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 3).

The European Parliament as a Strategic Action Field for Animal Welfare CSOs

Inspired by field-analytical approaches in EU and EU civil society studies (e.g., Georgakakis & Rowell, 2013; Johansson & Kalm, 2015; Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Kauppi, 2011; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020; Michel,

2013), this chapter employs the notion of Strategic Action Fields (SAFs) as a heuristic device to construct the Parliament as a ‘meso-level social order’, that is, as a social arena that is shaped by competition and cooperation between collective actors (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 9).

In this way, the chapter applies an institutionalist-inspired approach to field analysis as opposed to an orthodox habitus-inspired field approach (for a good discussion, see Gengnagel, 2014). Its strong and parsimonious focus on the strategic actions of individual and collective actors, on the interplay of cooperation and competition within and across the field, and its account of the broader field environment, makes the SAF framework suitable for the analysis of EP institutional settings. The framework is utilised to map and identify the positions of animal welfare CSOs within the EP and to disclose processes of resource accumulation and concentration that are fostered through the cooperation of animal welfare CSOs in different parliamentary venues.

As a SAF, the Parliament is composed of different sets of actors ‘who can be generally viewed as possessing more or less powers’ (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 11). Thereby, two types of actors are distinguished, namely *incumbents* and *challengers*. *Incumbents* are those actors ‘who occupy privileged positions within the field in terms of ‘material and status reward’ and who wield disproportionately influence within the SAF (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 13). *Challengers* are those actors who ‘occupy less privileged positions’ within the SAF and therefore exert less influence over the functioning of the field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 13). Drawing on positional approaches to civil society elite identification (Johansson & Lee, 2015; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020; Mills, 1956/2000), the privileged position of *incumbents* shall be defined as an elite position that is tied to a formal and official organisational position in the Parliament. Hence, those civil society actors invited to official public hearings are defined as *incumbents*. As such, they are officially recognised as partners to provide expertise and opinions on animal welfare-related policies and legislation. Their position, resources, and powers are institutionally and formally embedded in the organisation, that is, the

EP. In contrast, those civil society actors who are invited to Intergroup meetings are defined as *challengers* whose powers and resources are not formally embedded in the EP.

Incumbents and challengers interact with each other based on shared understandings of 'what the purpose of the field is', of what the rules are that govern legitimate actions within the field, and of their relationships to others in the field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 9). Thus, they share the understanding of the EP's role as co-legislator in EU animal welfare policies. Both understand the tactics and strategies that are possible and legitimate in the Parliament with regard to civil society consultation and participation. In other words, they understand that official civil society consultation takes place in the EP public hearings as part of recognised and established formal EP policy processes, while civil society consultation in EP Intergroups is recognised by the Parliament though not as part of formal EP policy discussions. Both groups understand how their position in EP public hearings and Intergroups relate to each other and to other collective and individual actors in the SAF (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 11). This means that *incumbents* and *challengers* know who their friends and competitors are and where these actors are positioned in the Parliament.

Despite their less privileged positions as *challengers* within the parliamentary SAF, they 'can be expected to conform to the prevailing order' of the SAF (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 13); that is, that civil society consultation is practiced in official EP public hearings, while EP Intergroups serve as unofficial venues for civil society deliberation. *Challengers* conform to the order that EP Intergroups are deprived of the right to speak in the name of the Parliament and are not part of the legislative process. However, as *challengers* they also confront the established working order of the SAF in terms of how, where, and with whom interactions and deliberations on animal welfare policies are practiced in the EP.

Who Is Involved? Public Hearings of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

In the eighth EP (November 2014–March 2019), the AGRI committee conducted 25 hearings (European Parliament, 2014–2019). The hearing on ‘Cloning of animals for farming purposes’ was the only hearing explicitly dedicated to animal welfare (see Table 13.1). It was jointly organised with the parliamentary committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. Additionally, the hearing on ‘European – Level playing field: state of implementation of the EU agricultural legislation in different Member States’ in April 2016 featured a presentation on animal welfare and environmental requirements in the European pig sector (European Parliament, 2016; see Table 13.1). Not a single animal welfare CSO was invited to any of the 25 AGRI public hearings of the eighth Parliament. In the first half of the ongoing ninth EP (November 2019–March 2022), the AGRI committee has organised 18 hearings (European Parliament, 2019–2022). Two hearings in June and September 2021 were explicitly dedicated to animal welfare (Table 13.1).

The analysis of AGRI hearings shows that animal welfare is one topic among many on which the committee organises its public hearings. Overall, AGRI hearings cover the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy and global agricultural policies. Hearings are organised on the EU’s dairy and sugar markets, the EU’s Forest Strategy, and its Farm to Fork Strategy.³ All subjects, including animal welfare, are discussed in relation to the EU’s agricultural policy. This finding is interpreted as reflecting the overall division of powers within EU animal welfare policies. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, EU animal welfare legislation is developed within the context of policies where the EU has the legal right to act, that is, within the EU’s agricultural, environmental, or internal market policies. Hence, animal welfare denotes a dominated policy field. As a dominated policy area, animal welfare is not discussed in its own right in the Parliament, that is, in a separate, stand-alone parliamentary committee,

³ For a full overview of topics, see the website of the EP committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Table 13.1 Panellists of animal welfare-related hearings organised by AGRI 2014–2022

AGRI Public Hearing	<p>'Animal production in the EU in the context of the Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies' 22 June 2021, 13:45–15:45</p>	<p>'Animal welfare: support, enablers and incentives to reinforce EU leadership and guarantee economic sustainability for farmers' 30 September 2021, 14:00–15:45</p>	<p>'Cloning of animals for farming purposes' (joint hearing with ENVI) 23 February 2015, 15:00–18:30</p>	<p>'European – Level playing field: state of implementation of the EU agricultural legislation in different Member States' 25 April 2016, 15:00–17:00</p>
Invited Experts/ Panellists	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deputy Scientific Director INRAE (Institut national de la recherche agronomique—France) 2. Vice-President, European Young Farmers (CEJA) 3. European Commission—DG AGRI, Deputy Director-General 4. Head of Department, Principal Research Officer, Teagasc (Agriculture and Food Development Authority – Ireland) 5. Project manager of a EIP-AGRI programme, farm consultant, research in animal health and welfare (Germany) 6. European Commission—DG SANTE, Head of Unit, Farm to Fork Strategy Unit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of the EU office of Compassion in World Farming 2. French National Institute for Agriculture, Food, and Environment 3. European Commission—DG SANTE, Head of Animal welfare and antimicrobial Unit 4. Agricultural economist, Wageningen University, Economic and Research Department, the Netherlands 5. President of COPA 6. European Commission—DG AGRI, Deputy Director-General 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Latvian Deputy Permanent Representative 2. EU Commissioner for Health & Food Safety 3. Director of the European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders, EFFAB 4. Vice-Chairman of COPA-COGECA Working Party on Breeding Livestock 5. Emeritus Professor of Animal Welfare, Cambridge University 6. Head of Science Strategy and Coordination Department (SCISTRAT), European Food Safety Authority 7. European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies 8. Senior Food Policy Officer of BEUC, European Consumer Organisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Head of Team EU in Danish Agriculture & Food Council, Denmark 2. Former Secretary General of the Union of Agrarian Employers (AMSZ), Hungary 3. Former President of COPA-COGECA and President of LTO Netherlands, The Netherlands 4. Pig Production Economist, Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Wageningen University and Research Centre, The Netherlands
Animal Welfare CSOs	None	Compassion in World Farming	None	None

Source: European Parliament (2014–2019), European Parliament (2019–2022)

but as a sub-theme of agriculture, environment, or the internal market.⁴ As a result, civil society actors advocating animal rights need to compete for a voice and for access to the EP legislative agenda.

Conceptualising those animal welfare CSOs that attend official EP hearings as *incumbents* shows that the globally operating, UK-based charity Compassion in World Farming is the only animal welfare organisation invited to these hearings (Table 13.1). Compassion in World Farming campaigns for the end of extensive farming practices and advocates, among other things, for a sustainable food system (European Commission, 2022). In the hearing in September 2021, Compassion in World Farming was represented by the head of its Brussels branch, Olga Kikou (European Parliament, 2021). Kikou outlined in her presentation citizens' expectations regarding the welfare of farm animals, current animal welfare policies in the EU, and Compassion in World Farming's demands concerning changing food systems, the caging of animals, live exports, etc. (Compassion in World Farming, 2021).

As outlined in Table 13.1, a broad group of stakeholders is consulted for expertise and opinions on animal welfare policies in AGRI hearings. These include representatives of the responsible Directorate-Generals of the European Commission (e.g., Agriculture, Health and Food Safety), the EP, national and EU research/academic institutions, representatives of the European farmers' lobby (e.g., the European farmers and European agri-cooperatives, COPA-COGECA), EU member state authorities, consumer group organisations (e.g., the European Consumer Organisation, BEUC), and animal welfare CSOs such as Compassion in World Farming. While representatives of the farmers' lobby feature in every hearing, animal welfare CSOs have only been invited once, at the meeting in September 2021. Measured in terms of attendance, animal welfare CSOs are valued as consultative partner as much as consumer organisations, though not as much as farmers' organisations. From the perspective of animal welfare CSOs, Compassion in World Farming is

⁴ However, the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport during the ninth EP can be interpreted as animal welfare gaining status on the parliamentary agenda, see also Eurogroup for Animals (2021, p. 9).

said to have an elite position because it is the only animal welfare CSO invited to an official policy consultation process.

Overall, it is argued that the organisation and composition of AGRI public hearings on animal welfare reflect the power structures and dominant actors in EU animal welfare policies, as well as the evidence-based policy-making approach of the EU. As a result, consultations on animal welfare in EP AGRI public hearings are primarily shaped by representatives of the European Commission, the farmer's lobby, and scientific experts.

Who Is Involved? The Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals

The organisation of Intergroup meetings and the invitation of guest speakers falls under the responsibility of the Intergroup secretariat, that is, the Eurogroup for Animals (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 3). The Intergroup's rules of procedure outline the qualities of a good speaker. Accordingly, 'speakers should possibly be experts who are able to inspire and to engage in lively in-depth discussions with MEPs' (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 16). Thus, expert knowledge, good presentation and communication skills are valued by the Intergroup's organisers. Moreover, the rules refer to 'EU officials or representatives from NGOs who cover their own expenses' (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a, p. 16). Thus, guests need to have sufficient economic resources to cover their participation in Intergroup meetings in Strasbourg. In contrast, the expenses for attending EP public hearings are covered by the parliamentary committees (European Parliament, 2003/2014, p. 1). The Intergroup as such lacks its own independent budget (Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals, 2019a).

Based on these criteria, 153 speakers were invited to 56 Intergroup meetings throughout the eighth Parliament (September 2014–March 2019). On average, the Intergroup hosted two to three guests during

their meetings. Out of the 153 invitees, 73 speakers represented 33 different animal welfare CSOs (incl. wildlife conservation organisations), 33 speakers were MEPs, and 18 speakers were European Commission representatives.⁵ Thus, representatives of animal welfare CSOs constitute the largest individual social group among the invited guests.

Among participating animal welfare CSOs, representatives of the Eurogroup for Animals gave 22 presentations at 22 meetings. Thus, the Eurogroup is the animal welfare CSO with the most interventions. In distant second, Compassion in World Farming⁶ follows with five presentations, and World Horse Welfare and Four Paws⁷ follow with four and three presentations, respectively, during the 56 Intergroup meetings.

In the first half of the ninth parliamentary term, that is, from September 2019 to July 2022, the Intergroup has organised 28 monthly meetings⁸ to which 79 guests were invited. Of these, 32 invitees spoke on behalf of 21 different animal welfare CSOs, while academics/scientists⁹ and European Commission¹⁰ representatives had 13 presentations each, followed by MEPs with 11 presentations.

Among attending animal welfare CSOs, the Eurogroup for Animals presented seven times, while Compassion in World Farming¹¹ gave four presentations. Four Paws¹² and Cruelty Free Europe gave two presentations each. Together these four CSOs are the most invited individual animal welfare CSOs in the Intergroup.

Overall, these figures show that the Intergroup serves as a venue for animal welfare CSOs. In contrast to AGRI public hearings in which animal welfare CSOs play a marginal role, animal welfare CSOs are the largest social group among invited speakers in the Intergroup. The Eurogroup for Animals stands out as the most frequently speaking

⁵Including European Commissioners.

⁶Represented by its EU (3) and international/UK branch (1).

⁷EU and Austrian office.

⁸Additionally, two side-events and a webinar were organised. Between April 2020 and March 2022 meetings were conducted online.

⁹From universities and research institutes.

¹⁰Including European Commissioners.

¹¹Represented by its EU (1) and international branch/UK (3).

¹²Represented by staff members of its European policy office in Brussels.

animal welfare CSO in the eighth and ninth parliamentary term. This position is strengthened when considering the presentations by Eurogroup members. In the eighth EP, Eurogroup members delivered 28 presentations. These included presentations by Compassion in World Farming and Four Paws. Both are Eurogroup members. Overall, the Eurogroup and its members delivered two-thirds of all CSO presentations in the Intergroup from 2014 to 2019 (49 out of 73 interventions).

In the first half of the 9th EP, Eurogroup members delivered 14 presentations, including interventions by Compassion in World Farming and Four Paws. In other words, 21 out of 79 presentations in the Intergroup were provided by the Eurogroup and its members. In this way, the Eurogroup provides its members with a platform to voice their interests to MEPs and representatives of the European Commission and provides them with access to political elites.

Organisational Capacities of Incumbents and Challengers

To engage in EP public hearings and Intergroup meetings requires *incumbents* and *challengers* to have sufficient organisational capacities. A good indicator to assess the professional resources of organisations is the number of staff available for EU lobbying. Financial resources can be assessed in terms of available lobbying costs. Moreover, being a membership/umbrella organisation and having one's headquarters in Brussels are interpreted as an organisational source of power. A head office in Brussels implies being close to the EU institutions. However, while EP public hearings are organised in Brussels, the meetings of the Intergroup take place in Strasbourg, France. Here, a head office in Brussels is not necessarily of advantage. For the Eurogroup and participating CSOs, additional time and financial resources are required to attend Intergroup meetings in Strasbourg.

The comparison of the organisational capacities shows the dominance of the union of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU (COGECA) and the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) in terms of lobbying

Table 13.2 Organisational Capacities of Panellists in AGRI Public Hearings and the Intergroup (as of Spring 2019)

Name of the Organisation	AGRI PUBLIC HEARINGS ON ANIMAL WELFARE				INTERGROUP 'WELFARE AND CONSERVATION OF ANIMALS'		
	European agri-cooperatives (COGECA) ¹	Conseil Européen des Jeunes Agriculteurs (CEJA) ²	Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC) ³	Compassion in World Farming Brussels ⁴	Compassion in World Farming ⁵	Eurogroup for Animals ⁶	VIER PFOTEN International ⁷
Membership Organisation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Head office in	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	United Kingdom	Belgium	Austria (plus EU office)
Full-Time Employees (FTEs)	18	4.25	26.25	2.25	11.5	3.5	3.0
Lobbying Costs (Jan – Dec 2019)	1,625,000€	350,000€	2,624,500€	75,000€ ⁸	250,000€ ⁹	950,000€	350,000€
EP Passes	10	4	25	0	3	8	3
Meetings with European Commission	137	27	230	4	16	42	2

Source: European Commission (2022), LobbyFacts (2022/2019)

costs, full-time employees available for EU lobbying, the number of EP pass holders, and the number of meetings with the European Commission (see Table 13.2). The Eurogroup for Animals ranks third in terms of lobbying costs, EP passes, and meetings with the Commission. Thus, it outranks panellists on AGRI public hearings, including the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and Compassion in World Farming Brussels (Table 13.2).

Among the animal welfare CSOs that are invited to the Intergroup, the Eurogroup for Animals stands out as the only membership organisation. Thus, the Eurogroup draws on its representational mandate that it has been given by its members, among these are Compassion in World Farming and Vier Pfoten International (Four Paws). Although Compassion in World Farming has more full-time staff available for EU lobbying than the Eurogroup, this is not reflected in the number of registered EP pass holders or meetings with the European Commission. Despite having fewer staff members available for EU lobbying, the Eurogroup has more frequent access to and interactions with EU decision-makers. In addition to its engagement in the EP Intergroup, the Eurogroup has been a member of '36 expert consultative bodies of the European Commission' as of 2019 (Eurogroup for Animals, 2020, p. 12). Overall, the Eurogroup outranks both of its fellow animal welfare CSOs

from the Intergroup in terms of lobbying costs, EP access passes, and meetings with the Commission.

The invitation of Compassion in World Farming Brussels to EP public hearings and the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals can be interpreted as a privileged position. Judging from the financial resources and the number of staff, this privileged position might rather be based on Compassion in World Farming's professional expertise on farm animals, and the fact that policies on farm animals fall within the EU's agriculture policy, than on its economic resources.

The comparison shows that the Eurogroup can challenge animal welfare CSOs that are invited to EP public hearings on the grounds of lobby costs, its membership base, meetings with the European Commission, and EP accreditation passes. However, it cannot compete with representatives of the EU farmer's lobby and consumers' organisation. Because EP public hearings on animal welfare are less frequently organised than Intergroup meetings on animal welfare and consequently feature less participation by animal welfare CSOs, the comparison is hampered.

However, this chapter argues that the Eurogroup fosters an accumulation and concentration of policy expertise in the Intergroup that is valued by EU parliamentarians and representatives of the European Commission given their regular attendance in the Intergroup. In 20 out of 29 Eurogroup presentations during the eighth and ninth EP, either an MEP¹³ or representative of the European Commission was also present on the panel. Hence, a direct exchange of views and expertise between the Eurogroup and EU decision-makers takes place in the Intergroup. For this exchange, the Eurogroup draws strategically on its members and its own professional programme staff to provide input on EU legislative dossiers, such as the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species, the implementation of the EU's Zoo Directive, or the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. With regard to the EP's implementation report on on-farm animal welfare, the Eurogroup used the Intergroup to present its demands concerning the inclusion of a five-domain model on animal well-being and species-specific rules in the AGRI-report as well as the tackling of

¹³Also, in their function as rapporteurs.

non-compliance issues.¹⁴ In this way, the Eurogroup and its members are also part of an ‘evidence-gathering process’, similar to the processes observed at the level of EP public hearings, that accompanies the preparation of EP legislative reports.

Conclusion

In asking who gets a seat at the table, this chapter shows that animal welfare CSOs play a marginal role when EU parliamentarians consult civil society on animal welfare in official AGRI public hearings. Compassion in World Farming is the only animal welfare CSO to receive the status of a recognised partner in an official EP consultation process, and this is interpreted as an *incumbent* and elite position from the perspective of animal welfare CSOs. However, the analysis shows that animal welfare CSOs predominantly engage as *challengers* in unofficial groupings, such as the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals.

In line with the SAF framework, this engagement is interpreted as a strategic action of animal welfare CSOs that is necessitated by the overall power structure of EU animal welfare politics. As a dominated policy field, animal welfare plays a subordinate role on the EP’s legislative agenda. Thus, it is granted limited time and space within the EP’s official organisational structures. This chapter shows how animal welfare CSOs make use of the flexible and dynamic nature of the EP as a SAF to foster the emergence of new organisational practices and of alternative social spaces for civil society beyond the official parliamentary practices for civil society consultation. Admittedly, these social spaces are denied the recognition as an official EP structure. However, this chapter also shows that the status of an unofficial grouping does not necessarily result in a less privileged position within the SAF.

On the contrary, as a collective actor the Intergroup facilitates the concentration and cooperation of animal welfare CSOs that goes hand in

¹⁴ See meeting in July 2021. Available at: <https://www.animalwelfareintergroup.eu/files/default/meetings-events/agendas/en/AGENDA%20378%20Implementation%20report%20on-farm%20animal%20welfare%20.pdf> (Accessed 27 October 2022).

hand with the accumulation, pooling, and exchange of policy expertise and the provision of access to political elites. While individual animal welfare CSOs cannot compete with consulted stakeholders in official EP public hearings in terms of their organisational capacities, their expertise is valued and demanded by EU parliamentarians and representatives of the European Commission. The regular presence of these political elites in Intergroup meetings confers status and recognition to those civil society actors active in the Intergroup irrespective of the unofficial status of the Intergroup and their organisational capacities.

Thus, the Eurogroup for Animals occupies a pivotal role in the Intergroup. As the Intergroup's secretariat and the animal welfare organisation with the most individual presentations during Intergroup meetings, the Eurogroup occupies an *incumbent* position, and thus an elite position, within the Intergroup. The finding that Compassion in World Farming occupies both an *incumbent* and *challenger* position within the SAF, as an invited speaker to EP public hearings and the Intergroup, might be a sign of a civil society actor moving from a *challenger* to *incumbent* position or of a civil society actor occupying multiple positions within the SAF. Further research is needed to draw a final conclusion on this observation.

As a result of the analysis, this chapter suggests discussing the term of civil society elites not solely based on civil societies' embeddedness in and ties to formal and official organisational positions in the EP, but with regard to their possession of and control over valued policy expertise, as well as the status and recognition that is conferred to them on the basis of regular interactions with political elites. Future research should focus on how the possession and access to valued resources is used by these CSOs to influence EP policymaking on animal welfare.

Overall, this chapter provides an important contribution to the discussion of civil society's position in EP policymaking and its access to political elites. It provides original insights into the establishment of alternative, and potentially elitist, arenas of civil society deliberation and networking beyond the official parliamentary structures that are based on processes of resource pooling and resource concentration.

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14

Michels, Mills and Civil Society Elites: Concluding Reflections and Avenues for Future Research

Håkan Johansson and Anna Meeuwisse

Introduction

This book introduces the concept of civil society elites and examines civil society elites as an elite group alongside political and economic elites. Contributors address questions like who holds top positions in civil society, where they come from, what factors explain their power and privileged position, and by whom and on what grounds are they challenged. The book engages with established debates in civil society studies, but in an original way. The image of an inclusive and pluralistic civil society sector stands in sharp contrast with the evidence of the dominance of a small number of organisations and movements. Although we know that civil society is a highly heterogeneous field, with a broad and vast range of different types of actors, this coincides with patterns of monopolisation. For instance, calculations from the UK show that there are more than 160,000

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voluntary organisations and charities, but many of them are small and only a few succeed in hoarding substantial resources (e.g. volunteers, members, donors, and money) forming so-called super-major charities (NCVO, 2022, see also Altermark et al., 2022). Although trends of professionalisation and NGOisation have been widely researched (Heylen et al., 2020; Jordan & Maloney, 2007; Skocpol, 2004) and competition and polarisation between civil society actors is increasingly observed (Graff & Korolczuk, 2021; Ivanovska Hadjievaska, 2022; Johansson & Kalm, 2015; Kalm & Meeuwisse, 2020), few have addressed these phenomena as manifestations of elitisation processes in civil society. Instead, this sector has been considered unaffected due to its special mission and limited resources (see, however, Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020; Norén-Nilsson et al., 2023).

In this concluding chapter, we analyse the main findings in the book using a classic debate in elite research, that is, the distinction between ‘oligarchic elites’ (Michels, 1968) and a ‘power elite’ (Mills, 1956). These theories allow us to explore the paradoxical meaning of the concept of civil society elites because such elites derive their status, legitimacy, and influence from ‘standing on the shoulders’ of members, beneficiaries, and constituencies, while at the same time benefiting from being socialised into elite circles as they are integrated with other elite groups in society. We use these theories to distinguish between the elites *of* civil society (‘oligarchic elites’) and the elites *in* civil society (‘power elites’).

Oligarchs, Power Elites, and Civil Society

The theory of oligarchic elites connects with studies of professionalisation, NGOisation, and the institutionalisation of social movements (Heylen et al., 2020; Jordan & Maloney, 2007; Skocpol, 2004). Oligarchy is a well-known phenomenon regarding the relationship between individual and collective power, or even better, between those leading collective efforts and those participating in such efforts. The concept derives from Michels’ investigation of socialist parties and trade unions in which he argues that organisations committed to egalitarian ideals and democratic forms of governance also develop oligarchic modes of leadership

because organisational bureaucracy inevitably leads to the domination of a small group of leaders. An organisation 'gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy' (Michels, 1968, p. 365). Michels argued that although leaders of socialist parties, trade unions, and social movements derive their power from leading democratic organisations working for egalitarianism, equality, and social justice, their leadership tends to raise 'itself above the people' (ibid., p. 75). The iron law of oligarchy thus gives birth to an organisational elite that makes it to the top through a long career within its own ranks and whose main source of power comes from being seen as a legitimate spokesperson and representative of the cause.

Mills' (1956) theory of a power elite offers a different approach, and he defines elites as a group socially integrated at the top across societal spheres and sectors. The notion of a power elite suggests a coherent and socially integrated social group of political, corporate, and military leaders formed by their shared economic, cultural, and political interests and backgrounds. While Michels pointed to changes within organisations as mechanisms of elitisation, Mills considered control and coordination across institutions as the main factor driving elite formation. Although political, corporate, and military elites benefit from operating at the top of major institutions, the power elite also uphold their power through social reproduction and interaction across institutional domains.

The power elite thus includes people with different professions and titles, but Mills argued that they still share a common social, cultural, and ideological background. Elite integration starts at a young age because privileged groups attend similar or even the same schools, and later in life they share social networks, both professionally and privately, for instance, through membership in social clubs and cultural and artistic associations. They become socialised into common circles 'composed of men of similar origin and education, of similar career and style of life' (Mills, 1963, p. 29). The theory of a power elite leaves little room for civil society leaders, but Mills stressed the significance of voluntary, philanthropic, and charitable activities as a means for political, corporate, and military elites to meet and to legitimise their privileged and powerful position in other sectors.

Theories of oligarchic elites and power elites allow us to distinguish between two ideal-typical civil society elite positions: an elite *of* civil society and an elite *in* civil society. In combination with the themes outlined in this book (composition, reproduction, integration, and contestation), we can theorise on the factors that lead to the concentration of power and resources at the top. These reflections are summarised in Table 14.1.

As explored in the introduction to this volume, composition refers to the socio-demographic characteristics of those in positions of power and influence in civil society, but the composition differs between elites *of* and elites *in* civil society because the former must at least to some extent reflect the members, while the latter is socially shaped in connection with political and business elites. Reproduction refers to the ways in which actors in positions of power and control exclude others in order to maintain their privileged roles. Reproduction is vertically shaped when the oligarchic elite exerts control over those who seek their position within the organisation, while it is horizontally shaped when the power elite seek to control the access of newcomers to the top of the power structure. Elite integration relates to principles and practices of mobility across sectors into positions of power and influence within or beyond civil society. This is an obvious feature of the power elites, because they move across sectors, while oligarchic elites tend to stay within their sectors or even within their particular organisations. Contestation refers to the ways different

Table 14.1 Types of civil society elites

	Elites <i>of</i> civil society ('oligarchic elite')	Elites <i>in</i> civil society ('power elite')
Composition	Reflecting constituencies, but with social distance to members	Reflecting top social strata, limited social proximity to beneficiaries
Reproduction	Control of mobility within ranks	Control of newcomers' access to the power elite
Integration	Sectoral in the sense of being linked to particular issues	Overarching in terms of integration across sectors and elite groups
Contestation	By insiders who try to gain top positions	By outsiders who challenge the power elite

Source: Table made by the authors

actors challenge civil society elites, which can happen both from inside and outside civil society.

Civil Society Elites, Members, and the Masses

This volume addresses the relationship between elites and ‘the masses’, a dichotomy that cuts through Michels’ and Mills’ writings. The idea of elites as vertically shaped in relation to the masses, for example members or citizens, comes to the fore in Michels’ writings because he considered this a key element of organisational growth, complexity, and specialisation. Mills also made similar observations and claimed that as organisations grow larger, members become less interested in participating and the ‘desire for democratic participation is lowered’ (Mills, 1948, pp. 64–65). This, among other things, leads to leaders being ‘personally remote from the rank and file’ (ibid., p. 104). Although differently conceptualised, oligarchic elites and power elites can thus be defined based on their social distance to citizens, members, and constituencies because they occupy positions ‘from which they can look down upon, so to speak, and by their decisions mightily affect, the everyday worlds of ordinary men and women’ (Mills, 1956, p. 3). However, while oligarchic elites need to moderate their social distance to members in order to avoid excessive gaps, and legitimacy losses, the power elite do not face similar challenges because social distance to ordinary citizens actually constitutes the foundation for their position.

The relationship between civil society elites and the general public is explored by Lee and Scaramuzzino (Chap. 3) in their study of the composition of the civil society elites. They investigate the socio-demographic characteristics of leaders of major civil society organisations (hereafter CSOs) in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK, and at the EU level. Their findings point to oligarchic tendencies in European civil societies; for instance, they show that leaders tend to remain for a long time in their position, and many have been engaged in the same organisation for even longer. This is an evident feature across country contexts but is particularly apparent in countries with a corporatist legacy (e.g. Italy and Sweden).

Lee and Scaramuzzino also find that civil society elites differ from the population in general. Civil society elites are predominantly older white men (a gender balance was only seen in Sweden) and thus resemble the composition of elites in other sectors of society. They moreover find that civil society elites to a much higher degree than the general population have a university background; for instance, in Poland almost all leaders have a university degree. Studies into civil society elites in the UK similarly find that UK leaders often have an Oxbridge background, thus reflecting societal patterns of elite reproduction (Arvidson & Ivanovska Hadjievska, 2021).

These elitist patterns stand in contrast to the ideals of civil society representing its members, at least if we assume that civil society leaders gain some legitimacy from being socially similar to those they aim and/or claim to act on behalf of as a form of descriptive representation (Altermark et al., 2022). However, Lee and Scaramuzzino also find that civil society elites are more progressive than the general population in all countries surveyed. The civil society elites studied are supportive of social change and social justice. Although this book does not offer comparable data for other elite groups, it would be surprising if they came out as more progressive than the general population. This provides some insight into the value profile of civil society elites and contributes an interesting theoretical observation because elite theory posits that elites try to cling to power and maintain the status quo rather than change societies.

We gain further insight into the relationship between elites and the masses in Sevelsted and Lunding's study of the Danish power elite (Chap. 2). Similar to Lee and Scaramuzzino, they find that civil society elites largely come from highly educated social classes, having parents with positions such as high judges, politicians, higher civil servants, leading doctors, or military leaders. However, they also find that the segment of the Danish power elite with an engagement in civil society differs from the power elite in general because it includes more women, but with fewer people born abroad. This suggests that although civil society elites might hold progressive values linked to social justice, they nonetheless tend to come from a privileged background.

Civil Society Elites and the Power Elite

The concept of a power elite draws attention to the dichotomy between insiders and outsiders because it considers the dynamic between the integrated elite recruited through the powerful institutions in society (insiders) and the leaders of subordinate societal institutions (outsiders). Mills assumed that to become an insider and a member one had to pass 'the criteria of admission, of praise, of honor, of promotion that prevails' (Mills, 1956, p. 281). His theory assumes that civil society plays a subordinate function by primarily providing the social glue that holds the powerful together, for instance, through philanthropic engagement or membership in exclusive clubs and associations.

Several contributions to this volume demonstrate the significance of a Millsian approach in the exploration of an elite in civil society, but they also show that civil society serves more functions than just as a sphere for the integration of business and corporate elites. Chi Lai (Chap. 7), for instance, argues that the Hong Kong power elite to a large extent originated from civil society and large charities because these have a longer history than modern political parties and constituted the social space in which societal leaders met and interacted. Charities functioned as a neutral arena for political and economic elites to socialise, recruit, and confirm each other across sectors and competences while they at the same time formed a charity that provided social stability counteracting social change.

A similar argument can be found in Voyer's (Chap. 6) study of what wealthy New York families gain from volunteering in elementary schools. She shows that wealthy elite parents convert their economic (but also social and cultural capital) into a particular 'do good' capital (cf. Dean, 2020) that comes through voluntary engagement, which reinforces and reproduces status hierarchies. Social stratification based on class and wealth spillover into the sphere of civil society as elite volunteers engage in exclusionary boundary processes that ensure that non-elite parents are not given key roles or posts in the voluntary organisation. This study demonstrates that engagement in civil society serves a purpose for the power elite because volunteering legitimises elite status.

Contributions to this volume also challenge the Millsian assumptions. Sevelsted and Lunding (Chap. 2), for instance, find a structural divide within the power elite. Members of the Danish power elite who lack engagement in civil society often have a social background in the economic field (their parents are economic elites or industrialists) while those with an engagement in civil society originate from professional and political elites. This finding indicates that in a Social Democratically shaped country like Denmark, the economic elites do not need civil society to legitimise their wealth and positions of power, while professional and political elites do.

In their study of drivers and motivations related to a boundary-crossing career, Arvidson and Uhlin (Chap. 8) moreover draw attention to the fact that elite integration is not only about social networking, but is a more complex process that involves varying degrees of value congruence between elites.

Arrigoni finds that civil society provides a sphere for the formation of an alternative power elite, different from the established power elite. In her investigation of Italian banking foundations (Chap. 9), she shows that they bring together elites from a wide range of sectors but that these develop a joint political agenda and start to act as an elite alongside the power elite. Their philanthropic activities are not only driven by an ambition to legitimise personal wealth or elite status, but also by an ambition to bring about social change. Instead of primarily seeing civil society as a subordinate field for the integration of other elites, Arrigoni contends that civil society contributes to the emergence of so-called interstitial elites—operating between states, markets, civil society, and academia—who build an ethos for social change.

While these authors explore civil society elites and the power elite, others address connections between an elite *of* and an elite *in* civil society. Altermark and Johansson (Chap. 5) investigate elite integration and field separation through a study of who praises civil society elites. They find that some civil society leaders are praised by the state and gain extensive societal recognition through royal honours or presidential medals. Such recognition places them on par with political, corporate, and administrative elites because they all have done extraordinary services to the country and thus, at least in a symbolic sense, become members of a power elite

despite different social and educational backgrounds. Praising through prizes differs across country contexts as leaders in Sweden are mainly praised by their peers, while they are mainly praised by the state in Italy (presidential medal), Poland (presidential medal), and the UK (royal honours). In this respect, civil society elites in Sweden are less integrated into a power elite than elites in Italy, Poland, and the UK. The latter can benefit more from the social advantages that such prizes provide them with because we know that symbolic resources can be turned into economic, political, or social gains.

Lee, Platek, and Scaramuzzino (Chap. 10) investigate elite integration within civil society through a study of interlocking boards. They find that in countries like Italy and Poland civil society elites are mainly integrated through policy areas, but that the sector is highly fragmented with no or only a few central actors. However, they find civil society elites in Sweden and the UK to be highly integrated through mutual board membership across organisational divides. Despite such similarity, elite networks in Sweden and the UK differ substantially. Civil society elites in the UK are largely integrated through the connection with the royal family because members of the royal family often act as patrons of major UK charities. In contrast, civil society elites in Sweden are integrated through membership in large umbrella associations and capacity-building organisations. While patterns of elite integration in the UK thus follow Mills' assumptions, elite integration in Sweden is more in line with Michels' reasoning of an oligarchic elite. Coordination mainly takes place in broad areas such as adult education or capacity building that are not directly linked to the organisation's main mission or issue. This can result in oligarchic tendencies when organisations and their leaders come together in factions in order to become stronger while still defending their particular interests (cf. the blocs and factions pointed out by Michels).

Civil Society Elites and Counter-Elites

Elites and their challengers constitute a key theme in elite research and in this book. Civil society leaders are often seen as opposed to other elite groups, constituting a counter-elite. Michels (1968) viewed

counter-elites as the newcomers who aspired to the position that the oligarchs occupied and, in his view, successfully protected. Although he recognised that oligarchs could be contested, he assumed them to be adept in handling such insider challengers. Mills (1948) rather viewed civil society leaders, especially union leaders, as a counter-elite against a power elite. He considered civil society leaders to be the ‘managers of discontent’ because they can stir up social and political unrest in order to gain influence. However, due to their inability to mobilise across blocs and factions, civil society elites are unable to gain more substantial power (partly confirmed in Chap. 10). If organisations grow and gain power, Mills asserted that leaders will become part of the power elite. When associations become ‘large enough to count’, leaders tend to see themselves not as delegates, ‘but as a member of “an elite” composed of such men as himself’ (Mills, 1948, p. 307).

This book shows that civil society elites are highly contested in several countries, which can be interpreted as a sign of their position of power and influence. The contributions in this book also show that they are challenged both as an elite *of* and an elite *in* civil society. Korolczuk (Chap. 12) contributes a timely analysis of the strategy by the Polish right-wing political party and government to worsen the conditions for CSOs that disapprove of the government. The party’s accusations against progressive CSOs echo Mills’ characterisation of a power elite because the government favours CSOs that are loyal subjects and hence integrated into a power elite, while others are excluded and subjected to smear campaigns by the government (e.g. Korolczuk, 2022).

Kalm and Meeuwisse’s analysis of a cross-country survey among civil society elites (Chap. 11) shows variation in the targets, sources, and depths of contestation. However, in their capacity as leaders, civil society elites seem to be most often challenged by ‘their peers’. Like oligarchs, they are challenged by those seeking to replace them as leaders of the organisation they all seek to represent. Grounds for challenging individual leaders appear more professional than ideological, concerning issues such as their ideas about organisational development, their decisions, or their leadership style. The social distance to members that Michels assumed to be a defining feature of oligarchs can also be observed in connection with the contestation of elites. Especially leaders in the UK are

challenged by their lack of social similarity to their constituencies and due to a lack of diversity at the top. They are accused of having a privileged and elitist profile due to their lack of representativeness from their organisations' own members (see also Ivanovska Hadjievska, 2022). External challenges are more often directed at the leaders' organisations and are driven by competition for resources or by ideological conflicts.

Contestation over positions within the field of civil society is further explored by Landorff (Chap. 13) who examines who gets a seat at the table when EU parliamentarians consult civil society. She finds that civil society actors who occupy incumbent elite positions (oligarchs in the field and in their organisation) tend to remain in such positions of power, despite being challenged by other civil society actors who act as contenders for the position they occupy.

Civil Society Elites Across Regime Differences

This book draws on empirical studies of civil society elites in national contexts like Denmark, Hong Kong, Italy, Poland, Sweden, the UK, and the United States, and at the EU level. It is a clear observation that the concept of civil society elites makes sense in all country contexts despite differences both in terms of external regulation and funding patterns of civil society and in the governance models and types of organisations that predominate. It is far too complex a task to try to analyse how exogenous and endogenous differences shape national civil society elites, but we nonetheless seek to offer some brief reflections.

The notion of civil society regimes is at times used to reflect endogenous differences in civil society in different countries (e.g. Arvidson et al., 2018; Salamon & Anheier, 1997, 1998). Such frameworks offer some guidance, for instance, in terms of the distinction between corporatist and liberal civil society regimes. Several chapters in this volume address Nordic civil society (e.g. Sweden and Denmark), in which we find a tradition of popular movements, large membership-based organisations, and close connection to the state based on hierarchical modes of representation. Similar corporatist structures can be found in Italy, which despite the long tradition of the Catholic Church has developed

hierarchical modes of representation from the local to national levels. Civil society elites in Italy and the Scandinavian countries are also found to share similar features. They are largely reproduced and integrated as an oligarchic elite. Civil society elites in these countries are natives because they are mainly shaped by internal routes of access and advancement, and they are reproduced through internal organisational processes based on ideological alignment. In the Scandinavian countries they are neither praised by the state nor integrated with an economic elite.

Other chapters address civil society elites in liberal contexts, for example, the UK, the United States, and Hong Kong, and the patterns observed by the authors point to the significance of a Millsian civil society elite logic. Civil societies in such countries and contexts tend to be dominated by large professionalised charities that provide services and organisations with huge turnovers. Staff are recruited based on professional merit, and many civil society leaders have experience from the business and corporate sector. Civil society offers a ground for elite integration and the exchange of economic capital in return for legitimacy of acting for the common good (Ostrower, 1995, 2004). Although elite integration is observed in most countries, in liberal countries it includes civil society and economic elites, while in corporatist contexts it largely involves civil society and political elites. While Michels and Mills thus have significance for capturing the divide between liberal and corporatist contexts, countries like Poland are harder to fit in, suggesting the need for additional theoretical frameworks.

Towards a New Research Agenda

The contributions in this book show that the concept of civil society elites is meaningful both in terms of Michels' theory of oligarchs and Mills' theory of power elites. The analytical themes of composition, reproduction, integration, and contestation of civil society elites that structure this book have been heuristically useful, but it has often proven difficult to distinguish the themes from one to the other. Instead, they should reasonably be treated as parts of intimately intertwined relational processes that can help us interpret the rules that shape access to elite

positions and the power associated with being an elite in civil society. The relationships between processes and practices of elite reproduction, integration, and contestation thus require further investigation, especially in terms of how they influence the composition of civil society elites.

Another point for further exploration is the power associated with a civil society elite. Civil society comes with the assumption of political and normative power, and there seems to be good reason to regard civil society elites as a kind of 'moral elite' claiming a special 'civil society ethic' (see, e.g., Chaps. 3 and 8). Civil society elites then have access to a specific resource that provides status (symbolic capital to exercise normative power), which can reinforce or be exchanged for other types (cf. Chap. 5). It is an important future research task to investigate how civil society elites differ from other elite groups in terms of specific resources and how these are used and to examine whether the value of their resources varies in different contexts and for different types of CSOs (e.g. across service-providing organisations and advocacy organisations).

More research is also needed on the advantages and disadvantages of different methodological approaches and on what can be gained from a multi-methodological approach. Arvidson and Uhlin (Chap. 8) illustrate how qualitative life-work history interviews provide an important complement to established quantitative approaches to the study of elite integration. Also, Scaramuzzino and Santilli's comparison of the results of two classic methods in elite theory and in social movement theory (Chap. 4) shows that a small group of individuals 'tick all the boxes' regardless of methodological approach. Although this book shows that classic methodological approaches in elite research have significance also for the study of civil society, there is nonetheless a risk when adapting methods developed for the study of other sectors. While elite research and methods largely assume an institutionalised elite, the real power holders within civil society might also be informal leaders, movement icons, or social media champions who manage to gain attention without leading major organisations.

Lastly, the democratic consequences of civil society elites and elitisation require further discussions. Scholars have long observed socio-economic and demographic inequalities and entry barriers to civil societies (e.g. Eimhjellen, 2022; Hustinx et al., 2022) as well as gaps of

democratic representation within CSOs (e.g. Johansson & Lee, 2014), but few have interpreted such shortcomings as due to elitisation or strategic closures on the part of those at the top. This suggests that there is still much to explore regarding the inner life of major CSOs as well as within fields of civil society with regard to how people come to and remain in positions of power and influence.

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Appendix: The Civil Society Elite Survey Study

Roberto Scaramuzzino and Jayeon Lee

Introduction

Some chapters in this volume draw on a large dataset developed in the research programme ‘Civil Society Elites? Comparing Elite Composition, Reproduction, Integration and Contestation in European Civil Societies’. This dataset has been developed in three stages, and each stage has produced empirical data that can be used in the study of civil society elites. The stages are the following:

1. Mapping resource-rich civil society organisations
2. Identifying civil society leaders
3. Surveying civil society elites’ composition, reproduction, integration, and contestation

The following appendix describes the data collection methods used to produce the data used in several empirical studies included in the volume. The research concerned with the first and second stages was approved by the Regional Board for Ethical Review (Dnr 2018/852). The third step of our research was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2019-04400).

Mapping Resource-Rich Civil Society Organisations

Following the positional method in elite research (see Chap. 3 by Santilli and Scaramuzzino), we have mapped resource-rich civil society organisations at the national level in Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK as well as at the EU level.

The mapping of civil society organisations was guided by the following criteria:

- The organisations should be non-profit organisations. We have excluded political parties, organisations representing business interests (e.g., employers' associations), public authorities (e.g., associations of municipalities or regions), and trade unions.
- The organisations should be primarily organised and active at the national level (in each national context) or at the EU level.
- The organisations should be involved in one of the following policy areas: Age, Culture, Disability, Environment, Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democracy, Migration and Ethnic groups, Religion, Solidarity, or Sports and Leisure. We also included organisations representing the non-profit sector's interests.

Because we aimed for the most resource-rich civil society organisations in each context, we used a set of indicators of resources to be able to exclude organisations that met the above-mentioned criteria but could not be considered 'resource-rich'. These indicators allowed us to capture different dimensions of resources, influence, and status in civil society.

Internal to civil society, we considered resources that can be used by the organisations to achieve their goals (members, staff, volunteers, and money). In addition to these, we considered participation in umbrella organisations and networks through which civil society organisations can influence the agenda of the organisations that have the task of representing the sector (within a specific policy field or the civil society sector as a whole). More specifically, the indicators were:

1. The organisation should have access to extensive resources in terms of members, staff, and revenue.
2. The organisations should hold posts on the board (or similar decision-making bodies) within umbrella organisations in specific policy areas (e.g., culture)
3. The organisations should be members of umbrella organisations representing the whole civil society sector.

Among external resources, we considered access to public funding as well as posts on public committees and public consultation, which give the organisations access to and possible influence on decision-making in policy processes. More specifically, the indicators were:

4. The organisation should receive public core funding.
5. The organisation should be included in policy-specific public committees and consultations.
6. The organisation should be represented in public committees for relations between the state and civil society.

The indicators were operationalised differently in each context, and some indicators were not able to be used in some of the contexts as shown in Table A.1. The criterion to be included in our mapping of resource-rich civil society organisations was to fulfil at least one of the conditions set up by our indicators. This mapping resulted in a large dataset of resource-rich civil society organisations, including 294–434 organisations in each context (see Table A.2).

Identifying Civil Society Leaders

As a continuation of the positional method, we used the database of resource-rich civil society organisations to identify the civil society elites, that is, the individuals who occupy top positions in the identified organisations. Three types of positions were included in our mapping of the civil society elites:

Table A.1 Operationalisation of elite indicators

Indicator	Italy	Poland	Sweden	UK	EU
Organisations that have access to extensive resources in terms of members, staff or budget.		50 or more employees	50 or more employees	Top 50 per income size and/or top 50 per number of employees (Charity commission)	Budget of 910,002 euros or 4 or more employees as FTE
Organisations that hold posts in the board (or similar decision-bodies) within umbrella organisations in specific policy areas	5 umbrella organizations	30 umbrella organizations	13 umbrella organizations	Top 100 per income size (Haysmacintyre) CSOs that provide services and activities in partnership with the Charity Commission	
Organisations that are members in umbrella organisations representing the civil society sector	1 umbrella organisation	3 umbrella organisations	4 umbrella organisations	Capacity-building bodies listed as partners of the Charity Commission and/or CSOs that have represented the sector on important issues and/or CSOs included in the steering group of the Charity Governance Code	2 umbrella organisations

Organisations that receive public core funding	5 pro 1000 tax deduction 8 pro 1000 tax deduction	At least 3 millions PLN from 1% tax deduction and/or European Funds	At least one government grant of 200,000 pounds or higher (for relevant ministries)	At least 80,267 euros of EU-funding.
Organisations that are included in public consultations in specific policy areas	Included in the registries of 4 departments or have signed agreements with the state (religious)	Included in 24 public committees	Organisations that have had at least two ministerial meetings (for relevant ministries)	Included in Inter groups or Commission groups and/or had at least 7 meetings with EC
Organisations that are represented in public committees for relations state-civil society	Represented in Consiglio Nazionale del Terzo Settore	Represented in the Public Benefit Works Council and/or Council of the National Institute of Freedom	Represented in Compact Voice and/ or Charity SORP Committee 2020	Represented in the Liaison group of the European economic and social committee

Source: Table made by the authors

Table A.2 Mapping of CSOs in each national context

N. conditions fulfilled	Italy (1–5)	Poland (1–6)	Sweden (1–5)	UK (1–6)	EU (1–5)
6	–	1	–		–
5	3		1		7
4	12	3	10		6
3	35	27	39	13	34
2	133	80	72	63	106
1	110	336	272	358	154
Total N. of organisations	293	434	394	434	307

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey

1. The top representative position (e.g., chairperson, spokesperson, president) and deputies
2. The top administrative position (e.g., secretary general, director, CEO) and deputies
3. The board members (including honorary positions)

We identified between 1330 and 5198 leaders in each of the national contexts. The differences depended mostly on the average size of the boards, the number of deputy leaders, and the availability of data (see Table A.3).

This database of leaders was used, for instance, for the social network analysis of interlocking boards (see Chap. 10 by Lee, Platek, and Scaramuzzino).

Surveying Civil Society Elites

The survey study was based on the mapping of resource-rich civil society organisations. For the civil society elite survey study, we chose to exclude the third type of positions identified, that is, ‘The board members (including honorary positions)’, thus we only included:

1. The top representative position (e.g., chairperson, spokesperson, president) and deputies
2. The top administrative position (e.g., secretary general, director, CEO) and deputies

Table A.3 Mapping of leaders in each context

	Italy	Poland	Sweden	UK	EU
Number of leaders mapped (N)	2632	2294	3153	5198	3223

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey

Table A.4 Population and respondents to the survey of civil society elites

	Italy	Poland	Sweden	UK	EU
Sampling of leaders (N).	680	961	835	1005	944
Survey study answers (N) and response rate (%)	133 (19%)	175 (18%)	308 (37%)	123 (12%)	158 (15%)

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey

Accordingly, a smaller population of leaders was identified and targeted as our survey population, ranging between 680 individuals and 1005 in the different national contexts. The survey studies were conducted between January 2020 and June 2021 using a questionnaire with questions on the background, networks, and collaborations as well as past and present organisational positions of civil society leaders. The questions also delved into the motives for engagement, views on leadership, personal values, and views on power and status in civil society.

For the survey we used the digital platform Sunet survey. A link to the survey was sent out to the leaders either to their personal e-mail address or through their organisation when a personal e-mail address was not available. Due to the lower response rate when approaching leaders through their organisations, we also used LinkedIn to reach out to leaders for whom we could not find a personal e-mail address. The response rate ranged between 12% and 37% (see Table A.4). In total we reached out to 4425 leaders, and the number of respondents was 897, giving us an overall response rate of 20%.

We were able to perform a non-response bias analysis of the study based on three variables for which we knew the distribution in the survey population:

1. The number of conditions that the leader's organisation fulfils
2. The organisational position of the leaders
3. The gender of the leaders

Table A.5 Non-response bias analysis of the survey based on three variables (percentages)

Variable	Italy		Poland		Sweden		UK		EU	
	Pop	Resp	Pop	Resp	Pop	Resp	Pop	Resp	Pop	Resp
Nr. of conditions fulfilled by the org.										
1	31	34	68	62	63	58	82	82	40	48
2	47	45	21	21	21	24	14	14	38	29
3-6	22	21	12	17	16	18	4	4	33	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Organisational position of the leader										
Representative	44	58	41	59	38	41	36	39	29	37
Vice-rep	34	18	46	27	31	19	16	12	37	18
Administrative	22	24	12	13	30	37	34	48	31	41
Vice-admin	0	0	1	1	1	3	14	1	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Gender of the leader										
Male	73	72	61	51	57	58	60	60	58	56
Female	27	28	39	49	43	42	40	40	42	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: The Civil Society Elite Survey

The analysis of non-response bias showed very small differences in all of the contexts in terms of the distribution of the population and the respondents concerning these three variables (see Table A.5). We found a relatively larger bias when it comes to the organisational position. It is, however, important to keep in mind that the respondents answered the survey as individuals, not as leaders of the organisation they were selected from. When asked to state their role in the organisation they led, they were instructed as follows: 'If you are leading more than one CSO, this refers to the organisation in which you are most active.' Hence, the self-reported organisational position of the respondents might be different from the organisational position the leaders were sampled from in the population.

The survey data provided a large dataset that allows cross-national comparisons of civil society elites' composition, reproduction, integration, and contestation (see Chap. 3 by Lee and Scaramuzzino).

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