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Strukturni učinci Europske unije na organizacije civilnog društva: učenje na temelju iskustva, učenje iz usporedbi

«EU Structuring Effects on Civic Organizations: Learning from Experience, Learning from Comparison»

by Rosa Sanchez Salgado

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EU STRUCTURING EFFECTS ON CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE, LEARNING FROM COMPARISON

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Summary This article proposes an analytical framework designed to permit a comparison of EU impact on voluntary organizations based in different national and regional settings, including the European Union. The empirical part of this paper applies the proposed framework of analysis to civil society organizations based in France, the UK and Spain. According to the data collected, the EU has significant structuring effects on its western member states. The EU has not only contributed to the transformation of the voluntary sector's landscape in some member states, it has also supported significant organizational and normative changes among voluntary organizations. This article argues that many of the dynamics at work in Europe may be of some relevance for current developments in candidate and third countries (and formulates some hypotheses in this direction). Comparative studies in this field including third countries would also contribute significantly to a refinement of the proposed analytical framework.

Keywords voluntary organizations, Europeanization, Humanitarian NGOs, funding opportunities, Western Europe

Introduction

The European Commission considers non-state actors as “vital partners” in a democratic society. Their contribution to democratization efforts is often highlighted, both for internal governance (European Commission, 2001) and within the framework of development policy (European Commission, 2002).

Indeed, the EU often puts emphasis on the contribution of civic organizations to democracy development and consolidation. As a result of European policies, the EU may have significant structuring effects on civic organizations¹. Up until

¹ For the purpose of this paper, the terms “voluntary organizations”, “civic organizations”

now, not many studies compare EU impact on civil society organizations in different national or regional settings. The only existing study comparing Europe and Central America reveals that there is much to be learnt from this comparative approach (Parthenay and Sanchez Salgado, forthcoming).

The EU has been supporting EU-based voluntary organizations for more than 30 years. During this period, it contributed significantly to the transformation of civic organizations in many member states (Sanchez Salgado, 2007). However, not much attention has been given to this process. Most studies on EU civil society organizations focus indeed on their bottom-up influence on policy-making, rather than on the EU's structuring effects. The comparative dimension is also most frequently neglected. Is EU impact on EU-based voluntary organizations comparable to its impact on candidate and/or third countries? Is the EU applying the same kind of policies and standards within EU borders and in other national and regional settings? Are the lessons to be learnt being actually learnt?

This article will first propose an analytical framework for the analysis of EU structuring effects on voluntary organizations. This framework has been designed to permit a comparison of EU impact on voluntary organizations based in different national and regional settings, including Europe. The same policy instruments may have different effects on different national contexts, but there may also be some common trends. EU policy instruments used in different national/regional settings may also differ.

and "civil society organizations" are going to be used as synonymous.

The EU would then be applying a policy of double standards or conferring more privileges to some specific countries or regions. The empirical part of this paper applies the proposed framework of analysis to civil society organizations based in France, the UK and Spain. According to the data collected, the EU has significant structuring effects on its western member states. The EU has not only contributed to the transformation of the voluntary sector's landscape in some member states, it has also supported significant organizational and normative changes among voluntary organizations. This article argues that many of the dynamics at work in Europe may be of some relevance for current developments in candidate and third countries (and formulates some hypotheses in this direction). Comparative studies in this field including third countries would also contribute significantly to a refinement of the proposed analytical framework.

1. Voluntary Organizations and the Policy Process: Learning from the European Experience

Drawing on literature on Europeanization, this section presents an analytical framework to analyze EU structuring effects on civic organizations. Emphasis will be put on the importance of comparative studies in this field. From our perspective, much would be learnt from a comparison of EU effects on civic organizations in Europe and in third countries. EU efforts to promote democracy and civil society organizations in third countries were launched only in the late 1990s, while the first initiatives to foster civil society within the EU are much older (late 1970s). Is the EU applying the same kind of policies towards the voluntary sector? Are the same effects to

be expected? What is the significance of specific national contexts?

1.1. EU Structuring Effects at Home and Abroad: the Missing Link

Since the late 1990s, there is an increasing interest for voluntary organizations (or civil society organizations) in European studies. The topic is not new. Within the context of traditional European studies, one of the ever-present questions is to know whether the European supra-national system would lead to a European political community and, in this case, which particular form it would take (Haas, 1968). According to neo-functionalism, European interest groups are not to be opposed to the European political system. They are to be understood as a result (or the motor) of further political integration (Stone Sweet *et al.*, 2001; Kohler-Koch, 1997; Sidjanski, 1997). More recently, the attention has shifted from debates on political integration to the specificity of European governance and its effects on member states. Within this new framework, civil society is being conceptualized as a necessary factor for the legitimation of the European political system, as is expected to bring the Union closer to its citizens (Kohler-Koch, 2004; Grossman and Saurugger, 2006). Indeed, the need to get Europe closer to its citizens, as stated in the White paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001), explains the shift in vocabulary from interest groups to civil society. This new approach to societal actors has led to a new interest in voluntary organizations or NGOs.

Most research considering the European level as a unit of analysis investigates the evolution of interest groups and collective action (Aspinwall and Greenwood, 1998; Richardson and Mazey, 2001) or the democratic potential of

civil society organizations (Smismans, 2006; Kohler-Koch and Finke, 2007). The focus on concepts such as interest groups, social movements or civil society – whose interest is not to be questioned – has withdrawn the attention from significant aspects of the interaction between the EU and societal actors, particularly their role in welfare provision. The impact of European economic opportunities such as funding opportunities and EU impact on voluntary organizations has indeed not been sufficiently taken into account.

There are also many studies drawing attention to EU efforts to promote civil society and democracy in third countries (Youngs, Raik, Junermann, Grugel). Contrary to studies on the interaction between EU institutions and civil society in Western Europe (focusing on decision-making), they focus on EU impact on the voluntary sector. These studies often assume that the EU has a significant structuring impact on civil society organizations. EU contribution to the democratization of third countries is not clear, though. Many studies focus on the actual impact of the EU and affirm that it is exporting models of governance. But there is also much criticism about EU efforts. As an example, from a neo-Gramscian approach, Hurt (2006) considers that EU promotion of civil society organizations advances a neo-liberal model, rather than contributing to democratization efforts.

1.2. Comparing Western EU Member States to Other National and Regional Settings: Challenges and Possibilities

This study brings together literature on *external* and *internal* promotion of civic organizations, and consequently, it contributes to the dialogue between

European policy analysis and studies on EU influence outside the European Union. In a number of occasions, some scholars have detached themselves from European studies in order to avoid what has been perceived as “European analytical primacy”. Indeed, it could be argued that European studies are imposing concepts and analytical tools that are not appropriate for the analysis of other national and regional settings. Many academic studies indeed propose a specific theory based on the European experience (such as the theory on regional integration) and consider it to be applicable to other regional settings. According to this approach, third countries are expected to follow the same path as European countries. This article only develops an analytical framework for the analysis of institutional processes in different national and regional settings. Such an analytical framework does not predict future developments. It only proposes tools for analysis of EU impact (and eventually the impact of other public donors) on the voluntary sector, but it does not necessarily assume that third countries will follow the same path. Emphasis is put on differential impact, which is explained by a set of intervening factors. Thus, the analysis of the differences is as relevant as the analysis of the common trends.

In addition, in this specific case, there is much to be learnt from studies focusing on EU influence on third countries. As mentioned above, contrary to studies on western civic organizations, such studies focus on EU structuring effects, which is the focus of this article.

In spite of possible objections, there are many reasons justifying comparisons between different national and regional settings. First, the value attributed to

comparative studies by the academic community is increasing day by day. As they imply a detached analysis of national realities, they permit a better comprehension of each specific political system. The benefits of comparing different regional settings have also been highlighted, especially to grant “the liberation of EU studies from its infamous ‘n=1’ problem”. In this article, as long as the emphasis is put on a delimited topic, the difficulties inherent to the construction of any comparison are notably reduced. The comparison will serve to identify differential effects of institutional factors (the mechanisms for the promotion of civic organizations, and in particular funding opportunities). Contextual differences and their effects on civil society landscape will also be taken into account. As an example, the topics covered by civic organizations may be different in different national and regional settings as far as they may depend on the specific socio-historic context. In spite of such differences, these topics may still be influenced by institutional factors in both regions.

The European Union offers funds in many different fields, such as social action, environment or development and humanitarian aid. While European civic organizations can apply for many grants proposed by different directorate generals, the non-European ones can only benefit from grants through the European development agency Europeaid.² Candidate countries are given a specific treatment and they interact with DG Enlargement.

² Some American Humanitarian NGOs also receive funds from the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

1.3. Accounting for Transformation of Voluntary Organizations in Western Europe and Beyond

In the absence of a European statute for voluntary organizations (Kendall and Fraisse, 2005), the transformation of voluntary organizations in EU member states is not motivated by binding legal constraints of direct application, such as directives or other European norms. The transformation of voluntary organizations results from inducing instruments such as funding opportunities created at the European level, which voluntary organizations are authorized to seize if they will. Consequently, we do not expect transformation to be a straightforward and automatic process, and there is a lot of room for manoeuvre for voluntary organizations.³ It is then necessary to account both for the structuring effects of European non-binding rules and for the reactions of voluntary organizations to these rules. Putting emphasis on the consequences of these non-binding measures is essential for a better comprehension of the interaction (EPPIE, 2007). Transformations under analy-

sis are thus not considered in this article as a top-down process, but rather as the product of interaction of a variety of actors. Having said this, the EU may be also promoting changes in national legislation in candidate and third countries, especially through political conditionality and negative incentives such as sanctions. An analysis of such cases would be very relevant in comparing the effects of different EU instruments (inducing instruments and sanctions).

The transformation of civic organizations as a result of the use of European funding opportunities can be measured with analytical tools related to Europeanization as the “misfit” model developed by Cowles *et al.* (2001) as well as other efforts to measure the magnitude of transformations and explaining change (Börzel, 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Dyson and Goetz, 2004; Radaelli, 2004). Indeed, the existence of a misfit is a necessary condition for the transformation of voluntary organizations. Europeanization through money may be, at first sight, best understood as creating new opportunities and therefore as a redistribution of resources, but, as will be clearly shown in this article, there is also a socialization process taking place. We expect European funds to make a difference, but variation depends on the national context and voluntary organizations’ specific features (size, organizational capacity, values, etc.). As general rule, NGOs receiving more European funds will be transformed more than NGOs receiving fewer funds (or none at all).

It is expected (but not confirmed) that the “misfit” between European pressures and third-country-based voluntary organizations is much bigger than the misfit between European pressures and

³ EU opportunities and norms matter, but obviously they are not the only significant factor. In order to grasp the impact of the EU in all its complexity, as an interactive process, the transformation of Humanitarian NGOs is to be explained by multiple conjunctural causation. As we see it, a specific cause – such as, for example, European funding opportunities – may have opposite effects depending on time and context. Our purpose is then to analyze a single independent variable: European funding opportunities, in several historical and national contexts. As a comparative case-study analysis, our empirical generalisation will be established by examining differences and similarities within different contexts (Ragin, 1989).

western-based NGOs. The potential for change in third countries is then potentially more significant. However, as stated by the existing literature on this topic, too much misfit may also be an obstacle to change.

Against our main argument, we could also point out that voluntary organizations, in particular those focusing on global issues such as Humanitarian NGOs, should logically be more influenced by international pressures. As an example, Delanty and Rumford claim that: “[...] there are more compelling reasons to see European civil society as part of global civil society rather than an outcome of supra-national governance in the EU” (2005: 181). This argument raises the question of alternative explanations, and in particular the specificity of the European Union regarding other international organizations and national pressures. The relative influence of European, national and international pressures may also depend on the national or regional settings. In many third countries, other significant donors, especially USAID, are competing with EU institutions.

An alternative view would consider that global and European pressures are not incompatible. As Caporaso and

Stone Sweet point out, “it is not a question of which level of governance is more powerful, or who would win in a showdown over national sovereignty” (2001: 230).

Before going further, it is important to be accurate about what is *transformed* or *adjusted*. How can money transform civic organizations? Most research into the effects of funding relationships on voluntary organizations has been carried out at the national level (Harris and Rochester, 2001; Smith and Lipsky, 1993; Queinnec and Ingalens, 2004). Most of this research considers that public funds lead to a “professionalization process” without being very accurate about what this professionalization process entails. We consider that public funds have a significant impact on the growing dynamics of specific organizations, on their organizational structures and management techniques. In the EU context, funding opportunities are also being used to foster European identity acquisition (Sanchez Salgado, 2007).

1.4. Case Study: Humanitarian NGOs in Western Europe

Most European studies restrict their analysis to interest groups or civil society organizations working in the Brus-

Table 1: Analysis of EU impact on civic organizations

	Europe	Third countries
European Pressures	Funding opportunities	Legal reforms Funding opportunities
Misfit	Misfit is not expected in all EU member states	A lot of misfit is expected, perhaps so much as to preclude change
Alternative factors explaining change	International pressures National pressures	International pressures are expected to be more important, and national pressures less important

sels complex, mainly transnational organizations or Euro-groups. Research on “national” societal actors in Western Europe from a European perspective is dramatically lacking and inconclusive, which is also a consequence of the focus of existing literature on collective action and lobbying. Quantitative research on social movements in member states shows little evidence of Europeanization (Doug and Tarrow, 1999). The few qualitative findings taking into account national voluntary organizations point to an extreme diversity in results across Europe⁴ and do not deal with the question of funding opportunities.

This article will examine “national” civic organizations; more specifically, it will focus on Humanitarian NGOs, or national sections of transnational Humanitarian NGOs. Even if we consider many Humanitarian NGOs, there will be only three case studies: NGOs in France, in the United Kingdom and in Spain. Empirical data is drawn from the systematic analysis of around 400 voluntary organization websites in the three countries, as well as from 45 qualitative interviews.

Humanitarian NGOs are voluntary organizations working in the field of Humanitarian Aid.⁵ As a general rule,

voluntary organizations are viewed as groups not to be included in the public sector, the informal sector and the market sector. They are also considered as an expression of voluntary action, which implies voluntary adhesion, voluntary work and some kind of common or “public interest”.

Humanitarian Aid principles have first been defined by the Red Cross, founded in 1863 by Henri Dunant, as well as by the successive Geneva Conventions on Humanitarian Aid. These principles are urgency, non-discrimination and neutrality. The first Humanitarian NGOs were created during or shortly after the World Wars; the same goes for the biggest American (International Rescue Committee, 1940; Cooperative for American Relief in Europe-CARE, 1945) and British Humanitarian NGOs (Save the Children, 1919; Oxfam, 1942). During the 1960s, interest for emergency relief was progressively supplemented by development assistance and Development NGOs, which focused more on self-help.⁶ However, at the beginning of

fic voluntary organizations such as, for example, Greenpeace, are actually at some times considered as interest groups, created to influence public policy, and at other times as part of a broader environmental social movement.

⁴ See research produced within the framework of the Third Sector European Policy (TSEP) network. Papers are available on: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/TSEP/publicdocfind.htm>, consulted on June 27, 2006.

⁵ As a general rule, scholars use diverse concepts to refer to voluntary organizations in their empirical analysis. Concepts such as interest groups, social movements and civil society – whose definitions have not proven to be an easy task – are frequently pointing to very similar actors (if not the same). Speci-

⁶ Unlike Humanitarian NGOs, active in crisis situations such as wars, accidents or natural disasters, Development NGOs do not intervene in emergency situations. They focus on small participatory self-help projects oriented to reduce poverty and enable long-term economic and social improvements for local populations. In spite of the clear conceptual distinction between Development cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, in practice, a significant number of NGOs carry out many different projects, including emergency re-

the 1970s, in the wake of a new kind of conflict such as the one opposing Nigeria and Biafra, a new conception of Humanitarian Aid emerged in France, first mirrored by organizations such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* (1971) and *Médecins du Monde* (1980). The “French Doctors” put emphasis on the transgression of rules and borders, which lead more recently to the conceptualization of the “right of intervention” (Klingberg, 1998).

As France and the United Kingdom have developed opposite conceptions of Humanitarian Aid, the study of the two dissimilar cases will improve the internal validity of our analysis. As a counterpoint to these strong opposite positions on Humanitarian Aid, we will also consider the case of Spain, which has not developed any particular conception on this topic. Any conclusions have to be applied with a lot of caution to different case studies of neo-corporatist nation states, or third and candidate countries. Many conclusions are not necessarily applicable to other sectors, especially if there are few or no European funds available.

2. A Necessary Condition for EU Impact: a Significant Amount of European Funds

According to our main hypothesis, European funds have a significant impact on the shaping of voluntary organizations. Some authors have already highlighted the importance of European funds for general interest groups in the Brussels complex (Aspinwall and Green-

wood, 1998; Furtak, 2001; Ruzza, 2004). However, NGOs operating at the national level are not identical to European networks and euro-groups, because they focus on service-provision (and not on advocacy campaigns like EU networks). The effects of funding opportunities for voluntary organizations based in EU member states and beyond have been neglected up to now. However, in order to detect a significant impact, the amount of funds channelled through the EU has to be substantial.

2.1. Funding Opportunities: Expanding Competencies

Contrary to common assumptions, the EU (and previously the European Economic Community) has taken a prominent position in the development of relationships with voluntary organizations, in particular in the humanitarian field, but also in social work, environment or development aid. The European Commission was one of the first administrative bodies in Europe to set up a co-financing system for Development NGOs in 1975, within the context of crisis of the “developmentalist” state. This innovation inspired similar procedures in many Western European countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Belgium (OCDE, 1988). Spain has adopted an equivalent co-financing system at the time of its entry in the European Economic Community (ECC).

Once the co-financing system was settled, the European Commission was able to expand its competencies through societal actors’ involvement as service providers (Cram, 1997). The Commission’s right of initiative and the European Parliament’s budgetary powers enabled this expansion during the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s. Con-

lief, Development Aid and actions to promote gender equity, global justice and human rights, as well as many other topics.

trary to the EU, most international organizations such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the World Trade Organization (WTO) do not offer any kind of funds for Humanitarian assistance or Development Aid. In the absence of sufficient discretionary powers and resources, opportunities offered by the United Nations bodies and the World Bank have never been as generous as those offered by the EU.⁷

The European Union channels at least one billion Euro through voluntary organizations today. Humanitarian NGOs are receiving the most funds from the EU. However, as it may be expected, the availability of funds depends much on conflicts and natural crises (for example, 652 million Euro in 2005, and 570 in 2004). Around half of the funds are channelled through European Humanitarian NGOs. As a comparative example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN body most related to Humanitarian NGOs, channels around 20% of its budget of 1 billion Euro among 500 Humanitarian NGOs all around the world.⁸ Consequently, for European Humanitarian NGOs European economic pressures are much more important than global pressures. The aid of the USA is much more significant; the Office of US Fo-

reign Disaster Assistance has indeed an annual budget of around 1 billion dollars, also channelled through NGOs and other public institutions, including other USAID departments.⁹

The significance of Humanitarian Aid in the EU is also manifested in the creation of a specific administrative body for its implementation. Since 1993, European Humanitarian Aid has been channelled through the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), which is frequently considered as more flexible and autonomous than the traditional directorate generals. ECHO's partnership with Humanitarian NGOs is indeed different from usual Commission procedures as it is based on the signature of a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) between ECHO and the contracting entity.

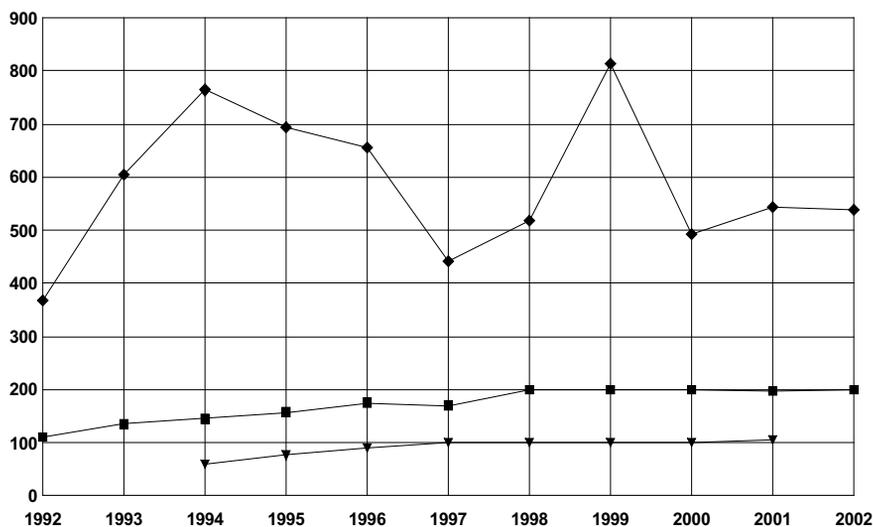
Even if it is very difficult to obtain the specific figures, a great amount of EU resources is being channelled by third country voluntary organizations. The EU has launched different programmes for different regional settings: the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument – ENPI (around 1.6 billion Euro per year); the European Development Fund for ACP countries (around 3.7 billion per year); and the Development Co-operation Instrument (1.4 billion per year). Candidate countries are supported by the IPA (around 11.5 billion Euro for the period 2007-2013). All such programmes have a specific budget line to support civil society organizations (as it is the case in programmes targeting

⁷ More information available at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20094255~menuPK:220440~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html#Small_Grants, consulted on: March 16, 2006.

⁸ Information available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/basics/BASICS/420cc0432.html#contributors>, consulted on August 2, 2007.

⁹ Detailed information available online: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/publications/annual_reports/index.html, consulted on June 1, 2011.

Graphic 1: Funds used by French NGOs from 1991 to 1999 (in MFF)¹⁰



▼ local government; ■ national government; ◆ European Union

the EU). As an example, the Civil Society Facility (CSF) has been launched in 2008 within the IPA framework to support CSO in candidate countries. Civic organizations may also obtain EU funds if they are involved in the implementation of other EU priorities. There may be interesting disequilibria among the amounts of money that the EU gives to different regional and national actors, which may explain its differential impact.¹⁰

2.2. Voluntary Organizations in Europe: National or European?

Contrary to what could be expected, in some EU member states (including big member states such as France) Humanitarian and Development NGOs

receive more funds from the European Commission than from their national government (*Commission Coopération Développement*, 2003). Indeed, 45% of French NGOs' total public resources come from the EU, while national and local funds are considerably less important (see Graphic 1). The position of other international organizations is even more marginal, as only 14% and 1% of French NGOs' total public income comes from the United Nations and the World Bank respectively. If we take public funds as the only indicator, such NGOs should be considered more "European" than "French", let alone "international".

In the other countries under analysis, the situation is much more nuanced. While European funds were quite important in Spain at the beginning of the 1990s (and more important than national resources in some specific years such as 1994), national funding (in particular

¹⁰ This graphic has been elaborated by the author. The figures come from the study carried out by the *Commission Coopération Développement* (2003).

funds from local government) has considerably increased since then. In 1999, 14% of the Development and Humanitarian NGOs incomes (including public and private funds) came from European institutions (CONGDE, 2005).¹¹

In the United Kingdom, national funds are concentrated in a very small number of organizations. Most funds (around 66% of the total) from the Department for International Development (DFID) are channelled through the “top-ten” entities which have signed a Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA), including for example Oxfam and Christian Aid (White, 2003). However, it is possible that European funds are more important for some medium British NGOs. In 1999, 87 small development organizations only received £0.5 million from DFID, which is not much compared to €167 million that the same voluntary organizations received from the European Communities from 1994 to 1999 (South Research *et al.*, 2000). It is important to note that since the late 1990s, European funding opportunities tend to stagnate, while national and local funds in countries such as Spain and the United Kingdom continue to grow steadily. Consequently, in relative terms, European funds for these countries are progressively becoming less significant.

EU funds do not only contribute to the shaping of third country civil society landscapes; a considerable amount of European funds is also being channelled through western civic organizations and,

consequently, there may be significant effects on their evolution, in particular in member states such as France, where national funding opportunities are limited. Are the effects of EU funds in Europe comparable to their effects in third countries?

Having said this, in many third countries (especially development countries) there is not much public money for voluntary organizations. However, the amount of public funds coming from other international donors, especially USAID, is usually very significant. USAID funds may have different structuring effects than EU funds. The systematic comparison of the effects of European and American pressures would be an important element to take into account in any comparison.

3. European Funds: a Re-distribution of Resources

In this section, European funds are going to be conceived as opportunities offering some actors additional economic resources (Börzel, 2002). Indeed, during the 1980s and 1990s, a significant number of Humanitarian NGOs were operating with a majority of their funds coming from the EU. Most Humanitarian NGOs out of the 400 under analysis obtain funds from the EU (more than 80% in France and the UK, and around half in Spain).¹² The distri-

¹¹ At the beginning of the 1990s, EU funds were much more important for Spanish NGOs. For example, in 1995, they represented 19% of the total NGO income. However, at the end of the 1990s, there was a clear trend in favour of subnational public funds.

¹² These figures come from the analysis of the websites of Humanitarian NGOs involved in relevant national networks in France, Spain and the United Kingdom (CONGDE in Spain, BOND in the UK, and all French NGOs participating in the governmental *Commission Cooperation Développement*). Data from Spain comes from a report published by CONGDE (2001).

Table 2: Examples of Relationships between the EU and Humanitarian NGOs

	NGOs in sample	NGOs with data	NGOs obtaining EU funds	Examples of NGOs with EU funds	Examples of NGOs without EU funds
France	36	25	25 (69% considering all NGOs)	Médecins du Monde Aide médicale internationale Inter Aide Enfants réfugiés du Monde	<i>Likely without EU funds:</i> Enfants du Monde Association Hôt Lua La Gerbe
United Kingdom	50	36	31 (86.1%) (72% considering all NGOs)	Action against Hunger UK Aid International Care-International CAFOD	Doctors Worldwide Muslim Aid The Mothers Union Christians Abroad
Spain (1997) (1999)	21 43	21 43	13 (61.9%) 21 (48.84%)	MPDL Paz y tercer mundo Accion contra el hambre Asociacio Nous Camins	Alternativa solidaria Plenty Ayuda en Accion SOTERMUN PROYDE

bution of funds among Humanitarian NGOs has also enabled a growth process for many of them, improving their ability to exert influence in the public space. A comparable amount of funds has not been made available for other kinds of voluntary organizations, and therefore their relative influence has been constrained.

3.1. The Dynamics of Growth

The use of European funding opportunities brings out important transformations. NGOs in different western member States have launched a process of expansion and growth thanks to European funds. Many French and Spanish Humanitarian NGOs were willing to accept European funds. Some of them, such as the French NGO *Equilibre* or *Aide Médicale d'Urgence* (AMI) have even been created in the wake of these new

European funding opportunities. Others such as *Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad* (MPDL) were originally peace and Human rights groups who shifted their priorities to benefit from European funds for Humanitarian activities. In many occasions, discourses and studies on third or/and candidate countries point out that NGOs are being created artificially by the EU and more often than not, this is considered to be an “unwelcome interference”. This analysis reveals that such “interference” was also at work within the EU, as many organizations have also been “artificially” created in Western Europe.

Even if European funds enabled the growth dynamics, specific Humanitarian NGOs have followed different paths. Some NGOs are almost exclusively funded by the EU: *Equilibre* (up to 93% of the budget in 1994-1995); *Aide Médicale*

d'Urgence (up to 75% of the budget in 2004); Action against Hunger UK (up to 90% of public funds in 2003) and *Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad* (up to 76% of the budget in 1999).¹³ In this case, it is quite easy to attribute their dynamics of growth to European funding opportunities. As an example, MPDL, created in 1983, had a budget of around 0.6 million Euro until 1990. After the signature of the first FPA with ECHO in 1992, MPDL reached a budget of 7.53 million Euro in 1996 (MPDL, 1997).

Other Humanitarian NGOs such as *Médecins Sans Frontières* and *Médecins du Monde* have also launched a growth process thanks to the EU. However, as they have also invested in marketing techniques, the amount of public funds in their total budget was completed by an equivalent amount of private funds. Even if, considering the budget, private incomes seem as important as public funds, it is much more difficult to launch a process of growth by private incomes alone. Contrary to public funds, marketing techniques require an investment. The history of MSF (Vallaëys, 2004) gives some illustration of the possibilities open by the use of European funds. During the 1980s, the EU has been the main donor of this Humanitarian NGO. The stability guaranteed by institutional funds permitted MSF to hire staff and to invest in marketing techniques, which explains MSF's dynamics of growth. It

would be interesting to analyze the strategies developed by third- and candidate-country NGOs. Can third-country NGOs also use marketing techniques or is this impossible in some regional and national settings? Previous analysis reveals that third-country NGOs are much more dependent on public funds, especially international donors. However, such dependence is limited by the existence of a great variety of donors such as the EU, USAID, EU countries, NGOs (Parthenay and Sanchez Salgado, forthcoming).

To sum up, European economic opportunities for Humanitarian activities were at the origin of a growth dynamics (and in some case of the establishment) of many western Humanitarian NGOs. This transformation is not only to be perceived in quantitative terms. European funds do not only allow carrying out *more* Humanitarian activities. Funding opportunities have contributed to the "professionalization" of these NGOs, which implies important qualitative changes, such as a shift of power from volunteers to staff and from advocacy to service provision (Harris and Rochester, 2001; Smith and Lipsky, 1993). Accordingly, these organizations, as a result of European incentives and the subsequent dynamics of growth, have substituted efficient activities for symbolic actions (Vedelago *et al.*, 1996). The outcome of this Europeanization process has to be understood as a *real* transformation or a cognitive development (Radaelli, 2003). Voluntary organizations focusing on other issues and unwilling to shift their priorities could not experience a similar dynamism and growth or a process of professionalization.

¹³ This information is available in NGOs' Activities Reports. Most of them are available on their websites, except for *Equilibre*, which no longer exists. The data for this NGO comes from press articles in the French newspapers *Le Monde* on June 19, 1998, and *Tribune* on November 10, 1998.

3.2. *Intervening Factors at Work and Differential Impact*

The EU can potentially launch a process of growth for the voluntary sector, but this will only happen if certain conditions are met. To which extent do candidate and third countries fulfil such conditions? The EU did not have the same kind of impact on every Humanitarian NGO in the countries under analysis, even though they are all Western European countries. The differential impact is explained by the existence of intervening factors, such as national opportunities offered to NGOs, national and historical context, as well as organizational capacity and values of specific NGOs. The comparison between European and third country voluntary organizations can be a significant contribution to the development of this framework of analysis, for example adding other significant intervening factors (e.g. different European pressures).

First, the use of European funds seems to depend on the availability of **alternative funding opportunities** (South Research *et al.*, 2000; Attanasio, 1994). In Western European countries, most alternative public funding opportunities come from the nation state. In countries such as France, where funding opportunities are less significant, NGOs turn more often to European opportunities. However, the amount of national funding opportunities is not a relevant factor in the absence of facilitating factors, such as political entrepreneurs, familiarity with European requirements, and information flows. Indeed, political and administrative actors have played an important role in the diffusion of funding opportunities. During the 1980s, many European officers contacted Humanitarian and Development NGOs directly

(by telephone or personally) in order to foster the use of funds. As an example, former ECHO director, Santiago Gomez Reino, organised a meeting in 1993 in order to promote European funds among Spanish Humanitarian NGOs. In the same year, the amount of European funds received by such NGOs increased tenfold (Gómez Gil, 2005). Representatives from Humanitarian NGOs report that during the 1980s they received visits or phone calls from European civil servants in order to promote the use of such funds.¹⁴

It is expected that in most developing countries national funding opportunities are less important or not available at all. However, there may be many alternative public funds, coming from other donors, such as USAID or the World Bank. It is also expected that in many national and regional settings European funds are not being sufficiently used in the absence of facilitators.

Organizational capacity is also to be taken into account. Some organizations, particularly in the UK, such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and Save the Children, already had a significant budget when confronted with European funding pressures. For these organizations, the effects of European funding opportunities have been considerably less important. Such NGOs accepted European funds – and more often than not, they were the ones receiving the greatest amount of money from the EU – but EU funds did not bring a relevant transformation in terms of growth or organization-

¹⁴ Some interviewed persons affirmed that these efforts to contact NGOs directly were frequent during the 1980s and the early 1990s. See also Vallaey (2004) for the case of *Médécins Sans Frontières*.

al structure. Our findings are consistent with the schema developed by Cowles *et al.* (2001). For many British Humanitarian NGOs, but also for the national sections of other big structures in France and Spain such as CARITAS, ADRA or the Red Cross, European pressures were not so important because these organizations had previously launched a dynamics of growth. Consequently, they could absorb European opportunities without substantial changes in their own dynamics of growth. The outcome of the Europeanization process is to be understood as an adaptation. The dynamics of growth of these Humanitarian NGOs is to be explained by other factors, such as early use of marketing techniques (e.g. Oxfam), or by the support of other “patrons” (Walker, 1991), such as the nation state or churches. As a general rule, it is not expected that NGOs in third countries (except for countries such as the USA) have a significant budget, and consequently such an “adaptation” process is not expected to be the most frequent effect of EU funds.

As stated in Table 2, some western Humanitarian NGOs do not receive European funds at all. Most of them – for example, the French *Hôt Lua* or *Action Partage Humanitaire*, the British Muslim Aid, the Spanish *Alternativa Solidaria Plenty* or *Asociacion cultural personas* – have not experienced a dynamics of growth comparable to the Humanitarian NGOs already mentioned.

Finally, the EU does not have the same influence regardless of **historical context**. EU opportunities have a history. This historical perspective is quite relevant for the analysis of EU impact on third countries. It reveals that even if a certain number of NGOs may be very dependent on EU funds during a speci-

fic time-period, this situation will evolve. Once they have reached a certain size, NGOs may be ready to become more autonomous in the future.

European pressures have indeed been very significant for Humanitarian NGOs, but EU influence was not necessarily everlasting. EU funding opportunities (and consequently EU pressures) were quite significant during the 1980s and the early 1990s. But since the late 1990s, they are becoming less relevant as other public donors are entering the Humanitarian scene. Consequently, some Humanitarian NGOs, such as several sections of MSF, MDM and MPDL, are experiencing a process of disentanglement from the EU or of de-Europeanization in recent years. The percentage of European funds is becoming smaller as these Humanitarian NGOs have started to complement them with the funds of other donors. As an example, according to MSF Spain’s annual reports, while 68.5% of their public income in 1993 came from the EU, in 2003 European funds only covered 26%. While in the early 1990s MSF was almost exclusively funded by the EU and the Spanish Development agency, in 2003 MSF Spain also obtained a considerable amount of funds from autonomous and local governments as well as other international bodies such as DFID, Norway and Jersey Overseas Aid.¹⁵

To sum up, European funding opportunities *really* mattered when used by small NGOs, willing to launch a growth and professionalization process, particularly during the 1980s and early 1990s. Real transformation requires a conjunc-

¹⁵ This information comes from an analysis of MSF Spain Activities Reports from 1993 to 2003.

Table 3: Examples of Europeanization as Transformation

	Before EU pressures	1980-2000	After 2000
MPDL Spain (1983)	Budget: 0.6 ME (1990) First contract with ECHO in 1993	Budget: 12,7 ME (1998) In 1998, 64% of total funds came from the EU	Budget: 12.6 ME (2006) In 2006, 94.5% of public funds came from the EU, but only 12.17% of total funds
Médecins sans Frontières France (1971)	Budget: 1.1 ME (1979) First contract with the EU in 1979	Budget: 34.3 ME (1990) In 1990, 68.76% of public funds came from the EU (28% of total funds)	Budget: 146 ME (2006) In 2006, 43.88% of public funds came from the EU, but only 0.47% of total funds (3.5% in 2005)
Médecins du Monde France (1980)	Budget: 15.24 ME (1990)	Budget: 45.73 ME (1999) In 1999, 69% of public funds came from the EU	Budget: 53.2 ME (2006) In 2006, 29% of public funds came from the EU (9% of total budget)
Médicos sin Fronteras Spain (1986)	Budget: 0.16 ME (1988)	Budget: 8.6 ME (1993) In 1993, 68.5% of public funds came from the EU	Budget: 45 ME (2005) In 2005, 22.47% of public funds came from the EU (3% of total budget)

tion of several factors: significant European funding opportunities in absolute as well as relative terms, a degree of misfit, and a willingness of the Humanitarian NGOs to launch a growth dynamics. A lot would be learned if the effects of such factors were analyzed in other national and regional settings.

4. European Funds as a Socialization Process

European funds are not only to be considered as an amount of money transferred to NGOs, producing transformations of their organizational structure and capabilities, and on national voluntary landscapes. European funds can also launch a process of socialization, since funding conditions can be conceived as rule structures diffusing understandings of what constitutes “proper behaviour”.

Indeed, the EU has transferred management techniques among many western voluntary organizations by requiring them before the submission of funding applications.

4.1. The Transfer of NPM Techniques

At first, EU requirements reflected the bureaucratic structure of the administrative body in charge of the distribution of funds, the Development DG in the European Commission. During the 1980s, the lack of effective controls entailed a very irregular implementation of the Commission’s conditions and rules (Court of Auditors of the European Communities, 1991). It seems reasonable that such flexibility made the growth process more likely among small and medium-sized NGOs. As a project manager points out, “During the 1980s

and 1990s there were no controls. During ADAPT there were no calls for proposals. I remember how the budgets were done... it was not serious.”¹⁶

However, during the late 1990s, after some scandals, the European Commission’s norms on funding opportunities became more demanding and explicit. Presently, Humanitarian NGOs have no alternative but to adopt a sound management system and New Public Management (NPM) techniques. Their implementation is required at the application stage, and not only at the reporting stage. Indeed, in order to apply for an FPA, Humanitarian NGOs are required to use strategic planning and the project cycle approach. As most third- and candidate-country civic organizations are only obtaining EU funds since the late 1990s, they never benefited from the flexibility of the first years (as opposed to European NGOs). Without such flexibility it may be much more difficult to launch a growth process, especially among small and medium-sized NGOs.

Western NGOs started to integrate EU requirements during the late 1990s. At the time, many Humanitarian NGOs adopted NPM techniques in their activities. This applies to Spanish and French MDM sections (1999), all CARITAS sections (2001), Oxfam (2001) and MPDL

(1998). The transfer of those management techniques can be easily attributed to the EU in the case of organizations such as MDM or MPDL, as they have no contact with other donors sharing the same requirements. Again, contrary to French and Spanish NGOs, British NGOs are confronted with other kinds of pressures (DFID or their American counterparts had already been using NPM techniques before the EU), and consequently the degree of misfit is not specifically *European* for British Humanitarian NGOs. Many third-country NGOs may be affected by the requirements of different international donors as well.

In this case also, the presence of **facilitators** is a significant intervening factor explaining change. The management techniques transfer has been promoted by European networks such as EuronAid¹⁷, which organises training sessions on those matters. Many Humanitarian NGOs, such as MPDL and CARITAS, have also created working groups or workshops on NPM to foster a learning process among their staff and volunteers. Training sessions on these techniques have even become a profitable service offered by consultancy firms. As for candidate and third countries, technical assistance is a significant element of European support.

As they are much more in advance for historical reasons (they started earlier), many European voluntary organizations are currently transferring their

¹⁶ In the original: “Pendant les années 80-90 il n’y avait pas de contrôles. Les premiers ADAPT il y avait pas de concours. Je me rapelle comme on faisait les budgets... c’était très à la louche” (from an interview given by a project manager in charge of EU projects to fight against unemployment and to promote vocational training). Similar comments are to be found among Humanitarian and Development NGOs about the situation during the 1980s and 1990s.

¹⁷ EuronAid has been dissolved in 2008 after a withdrawal of support from the European Commission. More information on <http://www.euronaid.net/speech%20PietBukman%202007-8.pdf>, consulted on September 15, 2008.

know-how to third- and candidate-country voluntary organizations. This transfer may be perceived in certain circles (in candidate and third countries) as an illegitimate intrusion, because it comes from foreign networks.

The way western Humanitarian NGOs apply NPM principles also depends on their size, capabilities and specific values. When NGOs are smaller or not largely focused on emergency relief, the socialization process may be long or not happen at all. This is expected to be the situation in many third and candidate countries. In Western Europe, many voluntary organizations temporarily sustained an appearance of transformation. In this case, NPM principles are only implemented formally (in the official reporting), but not in the daily activities of the organization. In these cases, there is a contradiction between NPM principles and the NGO's capacity or willingness to apply them. However, it is expected that these organizations will tend towards a new equilibrium in the long run.

The management techniques transferred may have major consequences for NGOs. Management techniques are not neutral (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2004). Strategic planning and the project cycle approach put emphasis on the *quality* and *efficiency* of Humanitarian NGOs' actions instead of on their ethical dimension. This shift in emphasis has originated some criticism from several sources, particularly in France (Vedelago *et al.*, 1996; Marraine, 1996; Castellanet, 2003). According to these critics, strategic planning techniques and emphasis on measurable indicators usually lead to rigidity and goal displacement. Priority is given to the fulfilment of measurable goals, at the expense of the

ethical mandate of the organization and symbolic action. Some Humanitarian workers have reported that logisticians would rather follow their strategic plan than save a life (Marraine, 1996). The lack of peasant participation in community-planning sessions is solved by giving money to those participating in the meetings (Castellanet, 2003). Peasants are indeed participating in the meetings (at least physically), but there is no evidence they are acquiring social capital.

4.2. Contracting a European Identity?

As part of civil society, voluntary organizations are often supposed to contribute to filling the gap between political institutions and citizens, and to the integration process within the framework of the EU (Deutsch *et al.*, 1968). Inspired by those ideas, European funding requirements are also being used to foster a European identity among western EU civil society organizations. ECHO is a clear expression of this willingness. Such an entity was first set up to increase emergency aid efficiency and to solve the lack of European Humanitarian Aid visibility (European Commission, 1991), but it has always put a lot of emphasis on the idea of delivering Humanitarian Aid with a specific identity. Even if USAID also insist on visibility, there is no evidence that NGOs are being used to foster an American identity and there seems not to be any need for it. Contrary to the growth dynamics or the management techniques transfer, the insistence on EU values is *specifically* European (it only concerns EU member states and candidate countries). The EU is most probably not fostering a European identity among third country NGOs. However, the EU may be promoting other kinds of identities, for example,

“regional identities”. The EU has indeed been promoting regional civil society organizations within the framework of the Central American integration process (Parthenay and Sanchez Salgado, forthcoming), strengthening their sense of belonging to a regional complex.

The EU may also use third-country civic organizations to increase its visibility and reputation in the world scene. At first, ECHO directly funded awareness activities, intended to spread information about the role of the EU in the world. More recently, the European Commission has been explicitly promoting the use of marketing techniques. Each Humanitarian NGO implementing an FPA is expected to include a “visibility plan” in the framework of operational proposals. In a visibility manual, ECHO explicitly proposes “essential messages” and encourages NGOs to use a “European terminology” (ECHO, 2004). According to this manual, “the DG encourages its partners to develop a ‘Commission reflex’ when devising information activities” (*ibid.*: 9). ECHO also fosters the use of display panels, of the EU logo in supplies and equipment, posters, stickers and promotional items. The “Commission reflex” is also supposed to apply to communication tools usually employed by the contracting Humanitarian NGO.

Conclusion: EU Structuring Impact beyond Western Europe

As it is clear from the European experience, the EU may have significant structuring effects on civic organiza-

tions. However, such effects depend on many intervening factors, having many different effects in different national and regional settings. The study of candidate and third countries would contribute to a refinement of the analytical framework presented in this paper, and would certainly add many aspects that are relevant beyond Western Europe.

In Western Europe, EU structuring effects have been particularly relevant for Humanitarian NGOs during the 1980s and 1990s. Even if EU effects may be more relevant for Humanitarian NGOs because they receive more money, EU influence may exist also in other fields, such as social organizations working against discriminations or Women’s groups. Like other important donors, the EU has contributed to the transfer of NPM principles among NGOs, which has significant consequences for the role of voluntary organizations. Even if this evolution can be interpreted as a progress – it is undeniable that this evolution leads to effective and complete action – more attention should be drawn to what may be lost in terms of ethical principles and symbolic actions.

Contrary to other donors, some EU efforts may be interpreted as specifically addressed to European identity building. The insistence on marketing techniques and on concepts such as European Humanitarian identity clearly point to the fact that the EU is experimenting with new ways to contribute to the emergence of a European identity or even of a “regional identity” in different regional settings.

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Strukturni učinci Europske unije na organizacije civilnog društva: učenje na temelju iskustva, učenje iz usporedbi

SAŽETAK U članku se predlaže analitički okvir oblikovan tako da omogućí usporedbe utjecaja EU-a na dragovoljne organizacije, zasnovan na različitim nacionalnim i regionalnim okvirima, uključujući i Europsku uniju. Empirijski dio rada primjenjuje predloženi okvir analize na organizacije civilnog društva u Francuskoj, Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu i Španjolskoj. Prema prikupljenim podacima EU ima značajne strukturne učinke na zemlje članice. EU nije samo doprinijela transformaciji sfere dragovoljnih organizacija u pojedinim zemljama članicama, nego je i značajno poduprla organizacijske i normativne promjene unutar tih organizacija. U članku se tvrdi da značajan dio dinamike koja je na djelu u Europi može imati važan značaj za zemlje kandidate za EU i na treće zemlje (te se u tom smjeru formuliра hipoteza). Komparativne studije u ovome području, uključujući treće zemlje, mogle bi također značajno doprinijeti usavršavanju predloženog analitičkog okvira.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI dragovoljne organizacije, europeizacija, humanitarne nevladine organizacije, mogućnosti financiranja, Zapadna Europa