



## EUROCIV<sup>1</sup> BRIEF N° 2

### THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AGENT OF EUROPEANIZATION

This EUROCIV brief aims to discuss the limitations and strengths of the Europeanization literature with a particular emphasis on civil society as an actor enabling or disabling change through Europeanization. It argues that the mainstream understanding of Europeanization as a linear process of domestic change and adaptation to the European Union (EU) is far from exploring the different patterns of civil societal involvement and or non-involvement in EU-ization/Europeanization processes. Over the past decades, scholarly research on Europeanisation of domestic politics has blossomed. However, this body of research has failed to establish any relationship between changes of domestic politics and involvement or non-involvement of civil society in EU-ization and Europeanization contexts. As integral parts of domestic publics civil societal actors both shape and are shape by these contexts. This EUROCIV brief discusses the various ways in which civil society organizations (CSOs) influence and are influenced by EU-ization and Europeanization.

Our research has shown that CSOs may develop and implement different actions, strategies and discourses to make their voice heard through Europeanization in different periods of time and political circumstances. CSOs may mobilize the norms, values, expectations assigned to Europe to promote their social/political agenda or may entirely ignore these norms and values in their actions and discourses. While articulating their political demands and deliberative positions in large public debates, CSOs may avoid making references to the European policies and institutions. They deem it either unnecessary or even damaging to their causes.

As long-term research for EUROCIV demonstrates, this is particularly true for the CSOs actively joining the debates on the Kurdish question and on the current peace process in Turkey (EUROCIV brief 4, forthcoming; Kaliber, forthcoming in 2016). CSOs, in turn, may perceive EU-ization/Europeanization reforms, norms and policies as threats to their

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objectives and even survival. In each scenario, CSOs do not work as ‘passive recipients’ or neutral conductors of Europeanization (Ketola, 2010). Rather, they filter, interpret and use the European context in ways that they deem best suits their aims, strategies and identities. Hence, like other influential domestic actors, CSOs ‘are not ‘mediators’, but creators of Europeanization’ (Kaliber, 2013).

This brief begs to differ with the widespread, yet often unjustifiably optimistic view about necessarily positive roles of Europe on the emergence and development of pluralist civil society in countries subject to the European impact. Defenders of this view contend that thickening of Europeanization as a political/normative context facilitates the development of more pluralist and democratic CSOs in European societies. Similarly, many observers of Turkish politics hold the idea that strengthening of Turkey’s integration with Europe has facilitated the development of pluralist and democratic civil society (Kirişçi, 2007: 17; Göksel and Güneş, 2005; Yerasimos, 2000) in the country. A more nuanced account of the issue suggests that the intensifying impact of Europe may also open up new spaces for the ‘undemocratic civil society’ voicing essentialist identity claims, characterized by religious and ethnic fundamentalism. For instance, in the wake of the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the increasing involvement of Europe and particularly the EU in Turkey’s domestic debates was securitized by some groups within civil society as foreign interventions threatening Turkey’s territorial integrity, indivisibility and secularist characteristics.

Hence, the post-1999 era has witnessed the exponential rise of ‘uncivic’<sup>2</sup> or ‘uncivil’ society defending a very rigid interpretation of Turkish nationalism, authoritarian state ideology and militant secularism. These organizations which do not avoid the use of violence or threat of violence against the so-called enemies of Turkish nationalism, i.e. liberal or Kurdish intellectuals, leftist groups, deny the existence of any distinct identity and culture other than Turkish one in the country. Thus, it is not possible to attribute civil society ‘a positivity’ in an *a priori* manner, (Kaliber, 2010; see also Keyman and Öniş, 2007) since, it does not necessarily pursue basic liberal values such as individual freedom, social pluralism, and democratic citizenship and does not serve as a site for development and democratization. There is a relatively vast body of literature on how Europeanization strengthens pluralist and democratic civil society. Yet, the use of political spaces by the ‘uncivil’ society’ opened up through the process of European integration has remained largely unstudied.

### **Europeanization: change as institutional adaptation**

The concept of Europeanization has become common currency among students of European integration analysing the domestic changes prompted by European institutions particularly the EU on European societies. Nevertheless, this ‘fashionable but contested’ (Olsen, 2002: 921) concept.<sup>3</sup> which is widely used to address ‘a variety of phenomena and processes of

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Uncivil society’ refers to illiberal and disruptive groups espousing uncivic attitudes and at times utilizing discriminatory and violent means to achieve their objectives see Glasius *et. al*, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, for the discussions on the concept see Torreblanca, 2001: 2ff.

change' (ibid.), is still far from defining a relatively stable research agenda. Even though the term has been treated as a panacea by many to model the change of domestic politics in member states by virtue of the EU, its usefulness and explanatory power have been undergoing continuous interrogation.<sup>4</sup> At the most fundamental level, Europeanization is a concept presuming a necessary relationship of diffusion between the EU level 'institution building and identity formation' (Hughes *et al.*, 2004: 28) and the domestic change in member and applicant states. It suggests a 'post-ontological' (Radaelli, 2004; Caporaso, 1996; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003) research agenda through which the domestic effects of already established EU norms and institutions are analysed.

It is fair to suggest that there exist a consensus among the students of Europeanization to define it as a 'process of change and adaptation which is understood to be a consequence of the development of the European Union' (Ladrech, 2001: 1) both at the domestic and European levels. It is often understood as an EU-induced process of domestic change and adaptation to the penetrating 'European values, directives and norms' (Mair, 2004: 341; see also Baun *et al.*, 2006, p. 252ff.; Boerzel and Risse, 2000; Ladrech, 1994). For instance, Risse and Boerzel understand Europeanization 'as a process of change at the domestic level in which the member states adapt their processes, policies, and institutions to new practices, norms, rules, and procedures that emanate from the emergence of a European system of governance' (Boerzel and Risse, 2000: 6). Here the European Union refers to the only body politic in which European-wide norms, rules, institutions, etc. are (re)constructed and exported to the domestic polities of the member and candidate states. Radaelli's approach to Europeanization appears to be more elucidating to understand the role and significance assigned to the EU in the transformation of the domestic polities. Departing from Ladrech's definition and by expanding it, Radaelli conceptualizes Europeanization as a set of processes of '(a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies' (Radaelli, 2000: 4).

### **Institutional and Policy Misfit As A Necessary Condition for Domestic Transformation**

The scholarly research on Europeanization is overwhelmingly shaped by neo-institutionalism and particularly by its historical, rationalist and sociological variances. According to Hall and Taylor (1996), new institutionalist approaches in political science which are not representing a 'unified body of thought' have developed 'in reaction to' the 1960s and 1970s' dominant behavioural perspectives. The central aim of these approaches is to reveal 'the role that institutions play in the determination of social and political outcomes' in a given society and polity. Similarly, the Europeanization literature tends to explain domestic change in the member and associate countries 'via the institutional goodness of fit of domestic and European arrangements' (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999: 4; see also Cowles *et al.*, 2001). The

<sup>4</sup> See among others Olsen, 2002: 923; Kassim *et al.* 2000: 238.

methodological dominance of the institution-focused cross-national comparative approaches (Delanty and Rumford, 2005) in this scholarship means that national institutions of different European societies are ‘largely imagined like-units and homogenous entities’. They are ‘thought to be subject to similar laws of change and adaptation under the impact of Europeanization’ (Kaliber 2014). ‘Deterministic and conservatist bias inherent to ‘simple’ institution-based explanations’ (Knill, 2001: 201) renders the literature vulnerable to the criticism that it analytically ignores the historicities and specificities of distinct cases, and hence, overlooks possible deviancies and discontinuities in absorbing Europeanization. As I have revealed elsewhere (Kaliber, 2014), this is one of the several commonalities between the Europeanization literature and the modernization theories of the 1950s, ‘confined to official and institutional realms’ (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 2000: 10) and marginalizing society as the subject and object of change.

For institutionalist approaches, ‘changes in and among the key institutions’ constitute the fundamental and most reliable unit of analysis. The degree of misfit between the domestic and European settings determines the intensity of pressure for institutional and policy adaptation exerted by the EU (Boerzel, 1999; Duina, 1999; Cowles *et al*, 2001). It is fair to suggest that for a good number of scholars<sup>5</sup>, there exists a direct corollary between the intensity of the adaptational pressure generated by Europeanization on the EU member states and the degree of ‘the goodness of fit’ of the domestic polities with the European ones: ‘the lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies and institutions, the higher the adaptational pressure’ (Boerzel & Risse, 2000: 5). Misfit is often taken as the exclusive factor particularly by rationalist institutionalists enabling Europeanization of domestic settings.

According to this conception of Europeanization, in the policy areas and institutions where compatibility between the domestic and European level has already been maintained, no fundamental change should be anticipated. In contrast, when the domestic rules, procedures and institutional structure do not resonate or clash with those attributed to Europeanization, the compliance problems occur and adaptational pressure increases in a way as to create new opportunities or constraints for the domestic societal and political actors<sup>6</sup>. To Radaelli, the relationship between adaptational pressure originating from Europeanization and the domestic structural change in the member states is ‘curvilinear’ (Radaelli, 2000: 20). Put differently, when there is a good fit between the ‘European’ institutional structure, norms and policies and their national counterparts, the pressure will be low and hence it will be ‘easy to absorb Europe’ (Ibid.). Where there is a high degree of institutional and policy misfit, the pressure will be high and ‘the member states will find it very difficult to ‘digest’ and ‘metabolize’ European policy’, which will most probably lead to inertia at the domestic level. He also suggests that we can expect a fundamental domestic change only when the ‘adaptational pressure falls between the two extremes’ (Ibid.).

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<sup>5</sup> See among others Cowles, Maria G., Risse, Thomas, *Transforming Europe Europeanization and Domestic Change*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> This point is especially emphasized by the rationalist intuitionism foregrounding the ‘logic of consequentialism’. See March & Olsen, 1998.

However, institutional and policy misfit is not a sufficient condition through which Europeanization can influence domestic opportunity structures so as to redistribute power and resources among national actors. This is also contingent upon the capacities of these actors to exploit emerging opportunities and to avoid new constraints originating from the penetration of Europeanization. These national actors may be political or bureaucratic figures, party leaders, governmental institutions, CSOs and their leading activists. From a rational institutionalist lens, Risse and Boerzel (2000: 7) cite two mediating factors impacting upon, in opposite directions, the capacities of national actors. First, the existence of numerous actors or institutions imbued with veto power is likely to lead to the empowerment of actors ‘with diverse interests to avoid constraints’ (Ibid., 7). The empowerment of actors defining their interests and identities in different and even in opposing ways may strengthen domestic resistance to Europeanization in such a way as to slow down the process of adaptation to the European norms, policies and institutions. Hence, for rational institutionalism, ‘The more power is dispersed across the political system and the more actors have a say in political decision-making’ (Ibid., 7), the more difficult it is to reach a domestic consensus necessary to implement reforms prescribed by the process of Europeanization. As such, the presence of large number of actors having veto powers is seen as an obstacle before the pro-European domestic powers defending the policies of market liberalization and privatization.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, should formal institutions provide pro-European actors ‘material and ideational resources’ (Boerzel & Risse, 2000: 7), the likelihood of these actors to benefit from the opportunities offered by Europeanization increases, which consequently accelerates the domestic adaptational process.

For sociological institutionalism, mediating factors shaping the impact of Europe in domestic settings are mainly twofold. These are the capacity of ‘norm entrepreneurs’ (e.g. epistemic communities, advocacy networks) to promote change and the existence or absence of political culture ‘conducive to consensus-building and cost-sharing’ (Boerzel & Risse, 2000: 10). In order to explain domestic change through Europeanization, while, rationalist institutionalism focuses on ‘strategic interactions’ and rivalry among ‘rational, goal-oriented’ (Boerzel and Risse, 2000: 6) national actors, sociological account conceives this change as an outcome of inter-subjective, interpretative socialization processes (March & Olsen, 1998). Domestic change occurs when ‘European elites and institutions socialize candidate states into changing first their identities and then their preferences and interests’ (Subotic, 2011). Rationalist institutionalism also foregrounds the notion of logic of consequences where actors are viewed as ‘strategic utility-maximizers’ (Pollack, 2004: 137). Their actions are constrained or facilitated by institutions and are driven by their rational, self-interested personal or collective goals’. For sociological institutionalism, these actions, set in a particular institutional structure, are rather driven by the rules of appropriate behaviour, namely the logic of appropriateness (Bürgin, forthcoming in 2016). Actors determine their positions and preferences in accordance with their identities and normative evaluations rather than rationally formulated calculations.

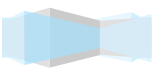
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<sup>7</sup> For an elaborate discussion of the effect of Europeanisation on the transport policies of distinct European countries see Heritier et. al., 1999.

In either case, change through Europeanization is conceptualized as the successful import of EU norms, principles and institutions as established and even fixed identities to be internalized by the member or applicant states (Flockhart, 2010). The success of Europeanization is largely thought to be dependent on the adaptational ability and learning capacity of the societies exposed to European impact. Europeanization is imagined as a uni-dimensional process (Ladrech, 1994; Schmidt, 2002) whereby the norms, rules, and institutions that are typical of Europe are constructed at the EU level and diffused through various mechanisms into the domestic/national polities, policies and political structures (Radaelli, 2000). Domestic actors are often ‘only considered as mediators’ of top-down pressures coming from the European level and no real political role and discretion are recognized to them (Jacquot and Woll, 2003: 1). For instance, Checkel (2001: 182) formulates his question as ‘how does the norm get from out there (the European level) and down here (domestic arena) and have possible effects?’ Whereas, the EU itself, as the principal agent of Europeanization, ‘is not a separate unitary actor over and above member states. Rather, Europeanization denotes an interactive, iterative process between actors, domestic and European, and the EU level is occupied by varied and competitive actors’ (Featherstone & Kazamias, 2001: 12). Then, developing a more adequate account of Europeanization requires conceptualizing it as a ‘reflexive relationship’ between the national and supranational levels where ‘the response of national actors to EU inputs may influence the supranational level as well’ (Ladrech, 2001: 5).

As mentioned above, the current scholarship on Europeanization tends to understand the European impact on domestic settings via the institutional ‘goodness of fit’ (Boerzel & Risse, 2000) between these two. Powerful domestic actors, i.e. political elites, bureaucratic apparatus, legislatures, though not the society itself, are seen as responsible agents enjoying the capacity of responding to the EU for the removal of misfits between the domestic and European institutions. The societal actors such as civil society organizations, less organized social groups, social movements, small or medium size grassroots organizations or other types of citizen initiatives are often ignored as subjects and objects of Europeanization. These actors which have less or no access to formal, institutional processes are largely ignored in scholarly research on Europeanization. The scholarly reflection on the issue needs to take more serious their less implicit, less direct, yet, in the most cases more durable roles and impacts on Europeanization contexts. EUROCIIV departs from the notion that civil society groups not only are amongst the influential actors shaping public perceptions and discourses, but also in many cases they act as mediators of Europeanization-globalization contexts. For a fuller understanding of the ways in which European and national level institutions, discourses, and publics impact each other, society should be brought back into analysis. EUROCIIV may well be considered as one of few pioneering steps for further research and reflections in this direction.

## 6 Making an Analytical Distinction between Europeanization and EU-ization



Considering the mentioned problems of the current scholarship, EUROCIIV departs from a radically different conception of Europeanization, which was adapted from earlier works by

Alper Kaliber (2010, 2013, 2014). This radical difference first manifests itself in its analytical distinction drawn between EU-ization and Europeanization. In this distinction, EU-ization refers to a more concrete and restricted sphere of alignment with the EU's body of law and institutions. It is a formal process of adjustment the most radical impacts of which are manifest during the accession negotiations. Alignment with and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* is the *sine qua non* and the yardstick against which to measure achieved level of EU-ization (Kaliber 2013).

Europeanization however, rather than being a process, exists as a context embracing all other processes and institutions of European integration as well (Vink, 2002; Anagnostou, 2005). It may be understood as a context or situation (Buller and Gamble, 2002) where European norms, policies and institutions are (re)-negotiated and constructed by different European societies and institutions and have an impact on them. Norms and values generating the transformative impact of Europe are always redefined by European societies in their domestic/national and European-level debates. Intensifying relations with Europe, particularly the EU, make (EU)rope increasingly inherent to the reconstructions of 'systems of meanings and collective understandings' (Cowles *et al.*, 2001: 219) in these societies. The more the national political, bureaucratic and civil societal actors make reference to specific European norms, policies or institutions, the more penetration of Europeanization can be expected into domestic policies, discourses and political structures. In the same vein, the more the domestic/national issues are discussed in a European frame of reference, and the more European-level actors are involved in these debates as speakers or addressees of claims, the more penetration of Europeanization as a context can be expected. (Kaliber, 2013; Kaliber, forthcoming in 2016; Aydın-Düzgit, forthcoming in 2016)

As Jacquot and Woll (2003: 6) argue, 'political usage is necessary for any impact of the European integration process on national political systems'. The political leaders, opposition groups, citizen initiatives, civil societal actors may want to instrumentalize Europe to open up more spaces for themselves in domestic public realm, should they believe that this is a working strategy. They may be willing to communicate European values, norms and reforms to gain broader public visibility and legitimacy for their cause. The national actors may also view EU-ization/Europeanization as damaging their causes and interests. In such cases, they either ignore or make negative references to policy expectations, norms and values articulated from European level (Kaliber 2010; and forthcoming in 2016). Then, Europeanization exists as a context to the extent that the European norms, values, institutions are incorporated into the public narratives by domestic political/societal actors. Thus, unlike what the relevant literature often implies, domestic actors are not 'mediators', but creators of Europeanization. Yet, they are not the only creators of Europeanization either. European level developments (policy making, the scope of integration and Europe-wide debates) shape perceptions of domestic actors and the political structure within which they react to and make use of this context.



## Civil Society As an Agent of Europeanization

For the purposes of this research, the phenomenon of civil society has been defined as ‘the coming together of free individuals of their own volition’ (Yerasimos, 2000: 15) in a given society or in a global scale with the purpose of influencing the socio-political, economic and cultural agenda in accordance with the pre-defined collective objectives. The vibrant conceptual/theoretical debates about the meanings of civil society (see Keane, 1998; Van Rooy, 1998; Parekh, 2004) has inspired us to operationalize a broad definition of the term for our research. The nature of the debates on the Kurdish issue and political Islam, where almost all segments of the society have something to say, also necessitated this approach. Thus, we included a wide variety of actors who are intervening in public deliberations ranging from grassroots organizations, associations, trade unions to business oriented NGOs, university based research centres and think-tanks. Before discussing CSOs as actors of Europeanization or de-Europeanization (Kaliber, forthcoming in 2016), it would be elucidating to examine the roles and meanings assigned by the EU to civil society.

### The European Union’s Conception of Civil Society

As widely observed by many researchers, the EU institutions (most notably European Commission) have displayed an increasing enthusiasm ‘to define and institutionalize the role of NGOs and transnational networks with in EU governance’ (Lang, 2013: 167) since the inception of the 2000s. The EU tended to view civil society development as an integral part of European norms and policies in member and candidate countries as well as in the wider neighbourhood (Boşnak, forthcoming in 2016). The EU’s central and eastern European enlargement has underlined the significance of civil society in democratization debates for the countries undergoing post-communist transformation. The EU has assigned an increasing role to CSOs in building pluralist and participatory democracies in these countries (Hicks 2004; Fagan 2005; Boerzel and Buzogány 2010; Kutter, and Trappmann 2010 cited in Boşnak, forthcoming in 2016). European Commission has also expanded its focus on NGOs in a way as to comprise different forms of social activism in a wide range of policy sectors (European Commission, 2000 cited in Lang, 2013: 168). Then, the term civil society organizations have been employed as a large category including the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and, at times used interchangeably with non-state actors by the European Commission. Accordingly, non-state actors comprise non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, cooperatives, trade unions, professional associations, universities, media and independent foundations. ‘Their common feature lies in their independence from the State and the voluntary basis upon which they have come together to act and promote common interests’.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the EU adopts a broad definition of civil society which includes ‘all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organisations’ (Communication From

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/index_en.htm)



The Commission To The European Parliament, 2012).

This broad definition of civil society may well be open to discussion and criticism at the conceptual and analytical levels. Yet, it is reasonable to suggest that this is rather a policy oriented definition which needs to be contextualized into the EU's internal integration and enlargement objectives and interest calculations. As another characteristic of the EU's civil society conception, civil society, state and market are often seen as institutionally separate entities. They are demarcated through clear boundaries and in some cases they may have conflicting interests and expectations. Yet, as suggested by various observers, in practice boundaries between these three may well be ambiguous and porous. They do not occupy isolated spheres entirely independent from each other. For instance, Cohen and Arato (1994: ix) argue that 'civil society is a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication'.

The European Commission regards civil society as an intrinsic part of the European Union enlargement process, and 'considers that civil society plays an important role in the development of Community policies' (Communication from the Commission, 2001). The commission encourages the active involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the social partners and civil society in general in policy formulation processes and public discussions to ensure better governance throughout the EU member states. The Commission has set up mechanisms of consultation and dialogue with civil societal actors particularly to make their voice heard in the policy-making processes. The process of "social dialogue" is already enshrined in the Treaty and is enhanced by the White paper on European Governance in 2001 and by a Communication the Commission adopted in 2002, which determined the standards for consulting external interested parties.

The EU documents are inspired by liberal democratic notion of society and politics where empowered civil society and in particular NGOs are deemed crucially important for the sustenance of democratic order. In that sense, the EU assigns the following roles and duties to civil society: to 'foster pluralism', to 'contribute to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth', to 'articulate citizens' concerns' and 'engage in initiatives to further participatory democracy, transparent and accountable governance' (Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, 2012). 'CSOs therefore contribute to building more accountable and legitimate states, leading to enhanced social cohesion and more open and deeper democracies' (Ibid.).

European Commission has also a proclivity to assign normative and political roles to civil society in building participatory democracies in Europe. 'Belonging to an association provides an opportunity for citizens to participate actively in new ways other than or in addition to involving in political parties or trade unions' (European Commission, 2000; Lang, 2013: 168). Hence, for the EU civil society is an integral part of better and democratic governance 'both within the European Union and beyond' (European Commission, 2000: 4). As another manifestation of this normativity CSOs are seen as channels through which 'the poorest and the most advantaged' and those 'not sufficiently heard through other channels'

may gain public visibility and legitimacy (Ibid.). The EU in turn assigns a due importance to the fact that the civil society organizations themselves should be transparent, accountable, pluralist, inclusive and attached to ‘the fundamental values of peace, freedom, equal rights and human dignity’ (Ibid.).

Considering these statements, the EU departs from a universalistic notion of civil society embraced by the western model of liberal individualism (Hann and Dunn, 1996: 3). In this conception, CSOs are expected to be the instruments or even the engines of democratic transformation in national structures. CSOs are often seen as ‘vehicles to be employed to reach certain aspirational goals that relate to Europeanisation and democratisation’ (Ketola, 2011: 9). They are funded through different mechanisms as they are expected to mobilize public realm as translators and transmitters of Europeanization (Lang, 2013). This approach attributes a positivity to civil society in an a priori manner where CSOs promote only democratic values and principles. Yet, the real situation is often more complicated than it is assumed in the EU documents.

This instrumentalist notion of civil society promoted by the international donors including the EU often ignores the specificities of domestic-local contexts. As Marcus Ketola (2011: 10) has correctly observed, CSOs are ‘embedded in their local environment, where the change processes are likely to acquire new meaning that has been mediated and reinterpreted’ by the domestic actors including civil society groups. ‘What a particular policy intervention, designed with democratisation and Europeanisation in mind, can achieve, is therefore limited by the local context and by the behaviour of the local actors’ (Ibid: 10). This notion of civil society fits very well into our conception of Europeanization as a political/normative context shaped mainly by the actions and discourses of domestic actors. While, filtering and shaping the impact of Europe, these actors negotiate the norms, values, policies assigned to Europe. Obviously, these negotiations, interpretations are largely shaped by local social and political contexts and by the power relations among domestic actors in national and sub-national levels.

### **Civil Society As an Agent of Europeanization?**

It is a widely accepted notion among both academic and policy circles that civil societal actors are indispensable elements of European integration process; their power and autonomy relative to state and market and as well as their capacity. Civil society actors often support EU-ization reforms and consolidation of Europeanization as a political-normative context only when they think that this best serves to their causes or deliberative positions. If they think that the EU induced reforms and norms and values of Europeanization are instrumental for their causes, CSOs frame their actions, strategies and discourses with reference to Europe. In such cases, they strategically emphasize norms and values which they consider resonate with that of Europe’s. They try to display how their actions and discourses fit into the expectations arising out of the European perspective. Yet, unlike what rational institutionalism assumes their interests and identities are neither pre-given, nor are purely based on self-interested rational calculations. Rather than being monolithic entities, CSOs

may embrace diverse groups or may even act as coalitions. While CSOs are mobilizing Europeanization as a context for their social-political agendas, they also renegotiate European norms and values such that they contribute to the reconstruction of them in domestic and European public spaces.

When CSOs do not support Europeanization, they either ignore or make negative references to European norms and values (Kaliber 2010). They try to explain how these roles conflict with the interests of the social groups that they claim to represent. Another probability is that CSOs support penetration of Europeanization into domestic politics, but they may not view the EU process instrumental and useful for their causes any more. This may be related to the changing meanings and importance of the EU and other European institutions for CSOs. The field research conducted with Kurdish CSOs clearly reveals this. ‘In the 1990s, marked by excessive violence, state of emergency and human rights violations, the European institutions were the only channels for the Kurdish CSOs to make their voices heard’. Yet, for the bulk of pro-Kurdish CSOs, ‘as the Kurdish issue has turned out to be a national cause, the human rights and democratisation approach of the EU has become insufficient, and hence not useful for them’ (Kaliber, forthcoming in 2016).

This EUROCV brief mainly addressed some limitations of the current neo-institutionalist scholarly reflection on Europeanization with a particular emphasis on civil society. It suggested that the mainstream understanding of Europeanization is far from exploring the different patterns of civil societal involvement and/or non-involvement in EU-ization/Europeanization processes. It also discussed the various ways in which CSOs influence and are influenced by EU-ization and Europeanization. The next EUROCV brief will critically and comprehensively assess the impact of the EU induced legal and constitutional reforms (EU-ization) on the politically mobilised civil society organizations in Turkey. These reforms, that accelerated in the 2001-2005 period, substantially changed the political opportunity structure in favour of civil society in the country. Yet, the third EUROCV brief will also reveal that despite all these reforms, serious problems persist as far as the implementation of these reforms and the content of newly introduced laws are concerned. Despite several reforms aiming at bringing the sphere of civil society in line with EU standards, CSOs, especially rights-based ones, cannot flourish in a sustainable, supportive, and emancipatory environment based on clearly defined and consistent laws and mechanisms. Not only insufficient attempts at reforms and interpretations unfavourable vis-à-vis the CSOs, but also regressive policies generate an uncertain environment for them particularly if they challenge the official state line.



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