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Abstract

Employing a sociological actor-centred approach, this article explores the interrelations between individual and organisational dynamics by investigating how national civil society organisations' (CSOs) leaders, board and rank-and-file members' views of Europe(s) contribute to the CSOs' process of reaching consensus about going European. Bottom-up Europeanization and social movement studies are employed to analyse the case of a French CSO joining a European network of national CSOs in order to defend the rights of binational couples. These couples, composed of a European and an extra-European citizen, have been particularly affected since mid-1990 by restrictive policies that the EU has attempted to harmonise, but that remain nationally rooted. Thanks to an in-depth ethnography and drawing on the 'usages of Europe' and the 'Europeanness' literature, three views of Europe, arguments to use or not to use Europe in CSOs, have been identified. These views, defined as instrumental, pro-European and Euro-sceptical, depend on individuals' generation and education, as well as on their motives for engagement and their roles in the CSO. The national CSO leadership and board have to negotiate with this plurality of views before defining activities. In so doing, they have to consider economic and human resource shortages. Thus, beyond divergent positions towards Europe, consensus is reached on the possibility of using Europe as an instrument for national policy changes and CSO visibility. Such dynamics, employed to harmonise disparate views of Europe, are reproduced once national CSOs are acting in the European network and tend to create a weak experience of Europeanization, mainly based on the transnationalisation of the CSO's activities.

Keywords

Usages of Europe; Transnationalisation; Europeanization; Europeanness; Vocabulary of motives; Family migration

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In Europe over the past two decades, in the framework of a general tightening of immigration rules, several specific reforms of union verification and family entrance conditions have restricted marriage migration (Wray 2015). Although marriage control had existed for a long time (Slama 2017), its new codification (de Hart 2006) and enforcement (d'Aoust 2013) were driven by the growing rate of residence permits granted to foreign partners of European citizens (Kraler 2010) and the concern that marriages or civil partnerships with a European citizen were the last loophole for undesirable foreigners' entry or stay in an era of migratory risk containment (d'Aoust 2012; Odasso 2017a). These institutional interventions have resulted from European and national legislative processes (Bonjour and Block 2013; Wray, Hutton and Agoston 2014). For its part, the European Union (EU), bearing in mind the provisions of the 1993 Copenhagen resolution on the harmonization of national family migration policies, in 1997 issued a resolution on measures to be adopted by EU states to combat marriages of convenience, proposing a list of factors (which may provide grounds for believing that a marriage is one of convenience) to be evaluated before a marriage is performed. A few years later, two directives imposed new conditions on family reunification (EU Dir. 2003/86/EC) and on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the member states (EU Dir. 2004/38/EC). For their parts, member states have transposed EU provisions into national law while keeping some freedom to cope with national specificity and interests (Vink, Bonjour and Adam 2014). Hence, bi-national family migration law implementation and resultant practices differ from state to state[1] (d'Aoust 2013; Maskens 2013); such changes are also observed from one locality to another (Odasso 2016). In addition to this diversity, a general

decrease of family migration rights of citizens in Europe is observed (Bonjour and Block 2016). In fact, the administrative and legal government of binational couples is marked by conditions that need to be fulfilled by both partners and by discretional institutional practices that affect not only the foreigner, but also his/her European citizen future spouse (Ferran 2009; Odasso 2016) and sometimes their children (Wray, Grant, Kofman and Peel 2015).

In the wake of this tightening of policy, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have emerged to offer support to binational couples and to lobby locally and nationally for changes in policy and practice. Some of these CSOs ask binational couples to participate directly in defending their own cause (Odasso 2017b). These CSOs are concerned with the dynamics governing family migration policies design and implementation that remain largely grounded at the national level, even if EU institutions and courts, concretely and symbolically, influence them. Due to their field-rooted knowledge and ideologies, such CSOs occupy an intermediate position between the institutions and the couples that drive their logic and aims. This article is interested in the activities of a number of such CSOs that are reunited in a European network, the *European Conference for Binational/Bicultural Relationships* (ECB),[2] whose goals are to share socio-legal knowledge concerning the situation of binational couples Europe wide, and to look for common solutions to questions raised in relation to immigration policy both nationally and at European level.

Along with the rise of legal constraints for binational couples in Europe and in a context where migration has demanded more and more European reflection, the number of CSOs interested in joining the ECB has increased. But for national CSOs, the purpose of 'going European'[3] has not been a smooth process. In the following, the expression 'going European' has to be understood as applying to the CSOs which consider the opportunity of widening the focus of their campaigns from the national to the European level through participation in a European collaborative CSO network. I argue that the main constraints of this process are: a) discordant views towards Europe displayed by CSO members and b) internal CSO dynamics of reaching consensus. These constraints are reproduced within ECB dynamics, as it functions as a wider CSO, and thus impact attempts at Europeanization.

The article begins by presenting the relevance of a sociological actor-centered approach to examine the national CSOs' bottom-up Europeanization(s) and by clarifying the chosen theoretical framework, namely the 'usages of Europe' and the distinctions and relations between 'transnationalisation' and 'Europeanization'. After introducing the case studies chosen, of a French CSO *Amoureaux au Ban Public* (ABP), which decided to join the ECB, and after detailing the methodologies used for data collection, the three views of Europe displayed by CSO members which emerged through analysis are presented. The second part of this article discusses the interaction between these individual views of Europe and organisational consensus building dynamics and decisions. It is also shown how this nationally rooted interplay between individual and organisational dynamics is replicated in the European network decision-making process. The article concludes with a heuristic insight provided by a sociological qualitative analysis of the link between individual and organisation dynamics, into the complex processes of 'Europeanization beyond Brussels'.

A SOCIOLOGICAL ACTOR-CENTRED APPROACH TO EUROPEANIZATION(S)

This article combines studies on bottom-up Europeanization and social movement studies in the frame of a pragmatic sociological actor-centred approach (Little 2014). Such an approach investigates national CSOs' efforts to Europeanize as a social process, having 'micro-foundations' at the level of the actors (ibid) who constitute the CSOs, namely their members. It examines the ways these actors represent Europe and pro-marriage migration activism, what motivates them to

participate and how they arrive at certain decisions and actions individually and then collectively thanks to organisation dynamics, such as 'internal democracy' (della Porta 2015). To place the actors at the centre of the observation does not mean merely to proceed from the individual to the society, but to articulate and connect individual logics and the structures that impact on their freedom of decision, with CSO functions, EU policies and EU participation processes at large.

In the sociology of the EU, national CSOs are rarely studied in their own right (Salgado and Demidov, this issue). This article aims to do this by focusing on the specific interactions between the individual and the organisational dimensions in national CSOs that make the gamble to go European. CSOs cannot be considered as wholly homogeneous actors as they are foremost groups of individuals who share a collective identity (Melucci 1995) and voluntarily cooperate around a specific problem. In contrast to institutional bodies, CSOs are 'embedded in society and EU cannot directly affect them, but rather offers them some incentives' (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 8) that they *can* choose to use. This choice is the result of an upstream internal consensus-building process within the CSOs' membership. Through negotiations about members' opinions and maximal participation in collective deliberations, such a constitutive step of a CSO democratic dynamic allows a common strategy to be attained and thereby sustains CSO cohesion over time. To assess the dynamics of such a process, the members' agency and the 'vocabulary of motives' (Mills 1940; Trom 2001) lying behind their participation has to be considered, as well as their roles (leaders, boards and rank-and-file members), social characteristics (e.g. gender, generation, ethnicity, class), affiliations (e.g. professional category, activists, national citizens and EU citizens), and experienced spaces of socialisation (Lahire 1998). The notion of generation (Mannheim 1952) is particularly relevant to highlight how social cohorts of individuals with similar ages are influenced by historical events and experiences that characterise their attitudes and actions.

CSO members' arguments for going European, or not, are shaped by their specific attitudes towards Europe. In this regard, it is worth noting that terms such as Europe and EU are ambiguously employed in the narrative of CSOs' members. As already noted elsewhere (Karolewski and Kaina 2006), this becomes problematic for the analysis of arguments for 'going European' - which may refer to the targeting of EU institutions as interlocutors, to investing in Europe as a *champ* for empowering CSOs' campaigns (thanks to EU-related activities in national and local contexts and/or in a transnational space), or the contemplation of the EU as a source of funding. In most cases, these arguments are legitimised by a certain utility. In this respect, the notion of 'usages of Europe' (Jacquot and Woll 2004) is theoretically useful to grasp national actors' interests and logics in moving towards the EU. Usages are defined as 'social practices that seize the EU as a set of opportunities, be they institutional, ideological, political or organisational' (Woll and Jacquot 2010: 116). According to their functionality, three main usages of Europe are classified: 'strategic, cognitive, and legitimating' motivated by 'influence, positioning, and justification' logics (ibid: 117). These usages imply intentionality and depend upon immaterial (e.g. discursive references, ideas, public sphere) or material (e.g. institutions, policy instruments, funding) elements. Both in rhetoric and in practice, the emphasis of this analytical frame is on the idea that there is 'no impact without usages' (Jacquot and Woll 2004). Paying attention to 'how EU is instrumentalized by domestic actors' (Salgado 2014: 19), the notion of usage is here extensively applied not only to domestic actors such as CSOs (Graziano, Jacquot and Palier 2011), but also to those individuals who compose these CSOs, in order to understand how they justify the process of Europeanization.

Usages have to be combined with other dimensions to avoid a solely instrumental view of Europe. In particular, the 'diffusion of a sense of European identity [Europeanness] on the same level as the sense of national or local belonging' (Piasecki and Woroniecki 2016: 67) may impact views and decisions to seize European opportunity. The EU identity turns into a general 'openness towards Europe often 'related to variables such as education, socio-economic background, media exposure,

transnational networking, participation and experiencing Europe' (Scalise 2015). Those members who show a high degree of 'Europeanness' can promote a positive view of Europe in a CSO. But, the picture is more contradictory and complex than expected. Individuals can recognise the fundamental values of the EU, but not trust the current EU institutions and policies at large. This is particularly true in the field of migration and family. In that respect, some questions overlap: migration and family are highly nationally grounded policies, everyday law implementation produces differential treatments that seldom reach EU courts to be contested, and migration policy at EU level is also marked by a restrictive turn.

Heterogeneous views of Europe, national and local contexts, CSOs' structures and their economic and human resources all play a pivotal role in the decision to move from a national field of action to a transnational and/or Brussels-centred one (Caiani and Ferrer-Fons 2010). In this article, this distinction between 'transnationalism' and 'Europeanization' is an important one. 'Transnationalisation' is generally described as a horizontal process of diffusion of ideas and action repertoires among CSOs based in different EU member states allowing them to 'learn from the goals and the strategies pursued by CSOs in other States' (Holzhacker 2007: 3). 'Europeanization', instead, is identified as a more structured process of working together to target the EU and its institutions: a 're-orientation of sub-national actors' *champ d'activité* towards supranational [namely European] institutions, politics or policy-making' (McCauley 2011: 1020). These two processes are highly linked to the extent that some consider transnationalisation as 'Europeanization on the cheap' (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 59) or as a specific kind of Europeanization wherein actors transform themselves to overcome the national context (Balme, Chabanet and Wright 2002: 104-106). Transnationalisation, along with externalisation, internalisation and supranationalisation, is a kind of Europeanization defined on the basis of the strategies the actors employ to change their level of mobilisation, their action repertoires and the aims and challenges of their mobilisation (Monforte 2010; Balme et al. 2002). Such a frame has been employed to examine the Europeanization of national CSOs in the domain of asylum policies (Monforte 2014) and has shown that activists interested in European migration policies have first had to create their own European network before developing collective actions at the European level. This is because the organisations and groups already Brussels-based were closed to them (Monforte 2010: 138). The same process has been undertaken by the national CSOs observed for this article who participate in and consolidate a European network as an attempt to go European. This constitutes the empirical section of the article where the linkage between individuals' views of Europe, the organisational dynamics and their outcomes in terms of Europeanization are detailed.

CASE STUDIES AND METHODOLOGY

The empirical material underpinning this article is a section of the data collected during two researches conducted in France and Italy respectively (2009-2013) and in Belgium, France and Italy (2014-2016). While researching the impact of migration laws on binational couples and on the activities of some of the national CSOs supporting these couples, the author observed a French CSO attempt to enlarge its campaign in Europe by participating in the European network ECB. A multi-sited ethnography was conducted (Marcus 1995) to grasp the discourses and practices surrounding binational couples' management in Europe. The author has attended parliamentary hearings, analysed national and European documents, monitored media and spoken with state agents in charge of law enforcement in France, as well as in other European countries. Yet to understand deeply the national CSOs' positioning logic, it was essential to explore thoroughly members' motives towards Europe, their views of Europe and the consequent CSO collective decisions. It was not

possible to understand fully the dynamics and the logics behind these processes 'without actually being there and being involved' (Majic 2017: 104) to witness contextualised member interactions.

As this article focuses on ABP and ECB perspectives, the following boxes briefly present these case studies, then the section goes on to clarify the methodologies employed for data collection and analysis.

CASE STUDY 1. A national CSO: the French Amoureux au Ban Public (ABP)

The ABP was informally established in 2007 within the Montpellier section of *La Cimade* (a well-established French organisation defending refugees and migrants' rights) and formalised into an organisation able to access public and private funds in 2010. ABP's main goals are: to facilitate access to law and justice for French-foreigner couples by offering legal advice, to raise awareness about the rights of binational couples in public opinion, to monitor legal changes and to lobby for policy improvement and more transparent administrative procedures. The peculiarity of ABP's approach and aim is the direct participation of binational couples in the activities (Odasso 2017b). The majority of members are French women (Odasso 2018). ABP groups (20 in 2008, 8 nowadays) involving both binational couples and volunteers operate in different areas of French territory under Paris-based coordination that, beyond providing an effective linkage between such local groups, deals with fund-raising, national projects' management and national-centred actions of lobbying. The coordination has changed three times up to now and is supported by a six member board which meets monthly to discuss administration and strategies. Their decisions are validated by the members: an on-line forum offers a virtual space for answering on current topics, while pillar issues are debated during the national meetings. ABP joined the ECB in 2012, considering it to be a good means to Europeanise, even though the organisation had already contacted French EU deputies during its lobbying activities which suggests that it already believed in some 'going European' strategy.

CASE STUDY 2. A European network: European Conference for Binational/Bicultural Relationships (ECB)

ECB was established in 1990 as a network of French,[4] Austrian, Italian, Swiss, Greek, Belgian, Dutch, German and Tunisian CSOs supporting binational and bicultural relationships. These CSOs share similar attitudes towards EU policies and institutions and promote similar activities (e.g. offering legal and administrative advice, monitoring legislation, encouraging couples' participation, raising awareness). At the beginning, ECB was affiliated to the Brussels-based *European coordination for foreigners' rights to family life* in order to enjoy the benefits of an international non-profit organisation, but it then became an independent organisation managed on a voluntary basis under the guidance of a rotating national CSO presidency (ABP held the ECB annual presidency in 2016-2017). Annual meetings, social network and technical tools permit the sharing of information and action repertoires (Verband 2001). In 2012, new national CSOs from France (namely ABP), Spain, Denmark and Norway were invited to join the ECB due to the new relevance assumed by the binational union's Europe-wide governance. Nowadays, the ECB counts nine national CSOs members; its activists are aged 30 to 65 and the majority are women (an average of 15 women among 18 regular participants) (Woesthoff 2013).

After analysis of the ABP documents and website, participant observation was undertaken during regular activities and public events in Paris and locally, mainly in Strasbourg and in Marseille. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews were collected with both the leadership teams and twenty members, inviting them to evaluate the effects of national and European migration policies through the method of 'biographical policies evaluation' (Apitzsch, Inowlocki and Kontos 2008). They were then asked to explain the motives for their engagement and their opinions about the opportunities to participate in an EU network to enlarge the focus of the ABP campaign to the European level. The choice of the interviewees was guided by the aim of collecting the narratives of individuals of different generations, gender, nationality and different roles in the organisation. Concretely, two thirds of the respondents were women and French nationals in their thirties. Such a proportion is representative of the pattern of ABP active members (Odasso 2018). Beyond the interviews, interactions in situ with other members during observations permitted a wider understanding of the clusters of motives behind their actions and views of Europe. Such motives were not only 'an individual state or a subjective process of internal personal elaboration of the action, but a real grammar that contributed to build the sociality of the actions and their agents' (Quéré 1993: 69) within internal decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the author took the opportunity to participate with other two ABP members in ECB annual meetings and to follow the regular exchanges with the network. Such a socio-anthropological approach has permitted very fruitful observation 'from the inside' of micro-interactions between several CSO members from several EU states, avoiding the modification of dynamics through a presence as external observer, but instead 'experienc[ing] and observ[ing] their own and others' coparticipation within the ethnographic encounter' (Tedlock 1991: 69). A distance from the field was taken during data analysis in acknowledgement of the tension between the two roles, activist and academic, and the theme of role expectations and conflicts properly considered (Heyman 2011).

A data-driven thematic analysis (Braun and Clark 2006) of the in-depth interviews identified three main views of Europe among ABP members related to their roles and characteristics. These views were clearly illustrated from ethnographic field notes concerning discourses and practices observed firstly in the ABP and, successively, in the ECB. Personal views, arguments and CSO negotiations towards collective decisions acquired an informing value regarding the relationship between actor-centered agency and collective decisions to go European. Some additional elements issued from informal exchanges with other European CSO members participating in the ECB helped to put the proposed typology of views of Europe into perspective, confirming the replicability of the dynamics found in the ABP and prompting further reflection on the prospects of generalisations.

THE THREE VIEWS OF EUROPE IN THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF AND AGAINST GOING EUROPEAN

From data analysis, three views of Europe have been identified that mark individual attitudes in ABP towards joining the European network ECB and going European: (i) instrumental; (ii) pro-European; and (iii) Euro-sceptical. These terms, and the logics behind them, are based on the theoretical frame previously explained: (i) the legitimating 'usages' of Europe; (ii) the affective perception of Europe based on European belonging; and (iii) on national attachment. In the next three subsections, the features of these three views are presented through some illustrative quotes drawn from the in-depth interviews and confirmed by participant observations. Subsequently, the following section shows the connection between such individual views and organisational dynamics, as national CSOs, even while considering individual members' wills and opinions, have to reach a coherent, collective decision about Europe. The outcomes of such a process define a certain way to Europeanise (or not).

The Instrumental View: Europe as an Opportunity for National Changes

In accordance with its statute, APB are devoted to French-foreigner couples, but they have also been increasingly confronted by other European citizens living in France in a couple with foreigners. Thus, they realised the differential treatment given under French law to these two typologies of couple and, in 2008, the organisation appealed to the *Défenseur de Droit*, the national ombudsman in charge of prevention of discrimination, to denounce the 'reverse discrimination'[5] suffered by French citizens compared to European citizens in France. The aim was to use European law as a means to enhance national law. In marrying a TCN, French citizens have, in fact, to satisfy more and stricter conditions than European citizens based in France, as the EU 2004/38 directive is applied to the latter and national migration law is applied to French nationals. Only in 2014, with a non-binding decision, did the Ombudsman reply, deploring such discrimination and recommending the French authorities improve the situation of disparity between European citizens and French nationals. Even though the government did not change any points in its law, for the ABP, the Ombudsman's answer was symbolically important in introducing new ways for advocacy.

The ABP coordinator at that time was further motivated to solve national constraints and to give visibility to what he described as the deplorable situation of French citizens in a binational couple by observing the situations in other European countries both for nationals and for Europeans in free movement, explaining:

> We should enhance European juridical comparison to map and describe the problems in other states. To do this we need the involvement of those members able to manage different languages to search for information online and around in other organisations (Nicolas, 45 year old lawyer, APB leader between 2007 and 2010).

While sharing this idea with other national CSOs during a European meeting in Murcia in 2010 during which an ABP leader was invited to present the French case, he reinforced his strategic, instrumental view of Europe. The awareness of differential treatments among juridical categories (foreigner, national citizen, EU citizen in movement) and the common administrative suspicion experienced by binational couples in several states led them to consider Europe, and in particular EU institutions, as the proper actors to target to instigate national policy changes. Europe becomes a supranational, somehow independent, entity that can be exploited to solve national problems when national decision-makers seem deaf to the requests of the organisation. Furthermore, the knowledge of EU courts' jurisprudence and EU functioning is an asset in this view.

The board and other CSO members who share this view of Europe with the leadership are already used to dealing with EU authorities and believe in the democratic opportunities offered by the activity of the European courts more than in those offered by EU decision-making. Educational and specific professional capitals are constitutive of this instrumental view of Europe that is highly related to EU integration. The participation in a EU network, such as the ECB, could be a good means to realise this purpose. Such a position has been stably maintained and defended by successive leadership teams. But it implies a reorganisation of the CSOs' priorities and the acquisition of new specific competences.

The Pro-European View: Europe as an Experienced Field for Action

On the same wavelength, while arguing that the opportunity to join the ECB and to act in Europe was useful for the organisation, some members clearly displayed a strong Europeanness. These activists mainly belong to a generation that have grown up in a 'European' educational setting, from which

they could possibly have directly benefited, for instance experiencing intra-European mobility for study or for work with Erasmus or Leonardo programmes or just for improving their skills, e.g. with the Youth in Action exchange programme. Their view of Europe is closely linked to those possibilities they have had to 'live' abroad in Europe as European citizens. They have specific competences, such as foreign language proficiency, education on project management and new media, and technical competencies which are essential when dealing with European mobility and its instruments. They often know how other European collective movements function and, even if worried about the national-rooted aspect of binational couples' control, they conceive it within a wider European regulatory framework in which they can be included. Marta, a 30 year old freelance translator,[6] argues:

> The rights of binational couples are a European matter too; we cannot solve the issue in France. We have to go on to fight locally; but it will not be enough! We have to reach Brussels. It is not easy, but not impossible. There are many programmes and we can apply for them.

In Marta's view, Europe is seen as a stepping-stone in changing the national situation, while Anne, a 34-year-old social assistant in a binational couple, underlined that her local ABP group had already contacted a European deputy because, 'we would like to make an interpellation. We have the right to do this as French and European citizens'. A European sense of belonging and an attachment to European citizenship increases the probability of undertaking such an advocacy line. Feeling a broader sense of citizen responsibility, these members depict Europe as the right *champ* to protest against binational couples and families' mistreatments as Europe can intervene in domestic affairs. Some of these members have followed a training session on building advocacy campaigns delivered by a European agency for family rights in order to learn an operational method that will serve ABP needs once they will be ready to go European.

Members that I include in this 'view' are more or less in favour of a pressure strategy on EU institutions, but they agree on spreading ABP protest around Europe by publicising and raising awareness via social and mass media.

> Visibility and mediatisation are key actions. It is better to extend events through Europe than to do an action in our corner. I am not sure that the institutions are what we are looking for, but European public opinion yes,

affirms Mark, a 36-year-old computer engineer and one of the first members of the organisation.

The Euro-Sceptical View: Europe as a Distant Complex Machine

As expected, the picture is not all bright however. Some members distrust EU opportunities for least for two reasons. Firstly, they perceive EU values – in which they believe – as a theoretical discourse not put into practice, confirming the idea that 'EU integration has failed to transfer its focus from cooperation between governments to a care for what EU citizens think and feel' (Fligstein 2008: VIII, in Piasecki and Woroniecki 2016: 48). Wider migration policies or economic issues are often cited as examples to demonstrate how EU institutions have a real problem being a credible voice and maintaining an influential supranational political power. Second, Europe – as Brussels and Strasbourg based institutions producing policies and documents – is a 'bureaucratic machine' that has little to do with their daily concerns as activists for binational couples' rights. Instead, their actions in the organisation are motivated by fighting injustices that are locally and nationally embedded. When

using these arguments, some activists do not perceive the additional value of widening their protest to Europe.

> How can they be able in Brussels to change what happens in the municipality of a French town! These are our problems: bureaucrats that do what they want, administrations that block files for months, policemen that control in a rude manner houses and people … I think that we have to look for a change here before [reaching Brussels]. Europe is far. And more, we have few human resources how can we make it? (Roland, 64-year-old pensioner, married to Sandra, a Cameroonian.)

Furthermore, the European arena is perceived as locked and a prerogative for just a few experts or international organisations. To prioritise ABP actions and to save the organisation human and economic resources, these members propose focusing on local and national campaigns where couples encounter their main problems, as planning actions at the European level will de-naturalise the original aim of the organisation. These members who focused on a nation-centric view belong to the generation of around 50 years old who have followed the evolution of the EU and the successes and failures of European policies over time.

The three views of Europe presented are not static. Being part of an organisation helps the members to question and even to change their view during the internal national CSOs' process for reaching a collective consensus on whether to act in Europe. With this in mind, the next section presents the interrelations among individual views in consensus building dynamics. Subsequently, some ECB dynamics are outlined to show how even at this first 'European level', individual CSO views of Europe are effective in shaping network dynamics and resolution to be effective in Europe.

INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL DYNAMICS ABOUT GOING EUROPEAN

Each of the views of Europe shown by ABP members is rooted not only in their past experiences but also in their motives for engagement and in their roles within the organisation. Considering this, one needs to remember that participation in a CSO is based on the degree of correspondence between individuals' attitudes and ideologies about a given issue and the ideologies and perspective proposed by a CSO to deal with it (Cefaï and Trom 2001). Should general CSO ideologies change, members may decide to abandon the CSO. However, leaders, board and rank-and-file members have different functions and weights in the organisation dynamics for deciding on aims and activities.

Considering that, firstly, I observe how the three views identified are taken into account and translated in the ABP process to join the ECB. Secondly, as evidence has been found that similar individual views and organisational dynamics of consensus exist in other CSOs belonging to ECB, I explain what the interaction among these individuals' views entails for the Europeanization of such a network.

Interrelations between Individual and Organisational Dynamics within the ABP

The organisational dynamics behind decision-making are not immune from power relations and influencing logics that operate even when a CSO follows a process that is considered democratic. In the first instance, ABP leaders and board discussed on their own the possibility of joining the ECB. Then, they presented their views to a few pro-European members, likely to constitute a small pro-Europe interest group in the organisation and, as observed at the very beginning, to commit to exploring the meaning of participation in the ECB. This sub-group and the leadership interacted

regularly but their 'plans' had not been immediately included in CSO collective discussions – except for some updates posted on the on-line forum read by very few members. But when ECB participation required more consistency and before engaging in precise European actions, the time had arrived in the ABP to listen to all the members' opinions and views of Europe. First of all, in the ABP annual meeting, the leader presented the pertinence for the organisation of approaching EU authorities as follows:

> No country wants to be the worst in Europe; no politician wants to see the country that he represents placed in the lowest rank of implementation and practices. France already does not treat a French citizen as if he is also a European one. We need to take a chance on Europe (Nicolas, leader between 2007 and 2010).

Employing a 'shaming strategy', the final goal hidden within pressurising Europe was to impact on the French government and its policies, making instrumental usage of Europe, thereby legitimating it with national-based influence logic (Woll and Jacquot 2010).

Some of the members – displaying a Euro-sceptical view – expressed their misgivings, as to go European would have meant an alteration of APB ideology as well as a misuse of its resources. Furthermore, such members pointed out that the dysfunctional family migration policies affecting French-foreigner binational couples are entrenched in local and national situations that they know well due to their strong engagement in the field. More focused on nationally rooted solutions, these members remain key proponents for one ABP principal aim: to support couples and to invite them to act to defend their rights. As pillars members, the leadership has to comply with their will. Therefore as actions to go European were almost in place, the coordination tried to convince such members that Europe would be a useful *champ d'action* by using a more explicit 'justification strategy' (Jacquot and Woll 2004), arguing about new visibility for the ABP campaign, new interlocutors and even new opportunities to receive funds to combat the shortage of economic and human resources. In sum, their aim was to highlight the potential positive impact of an instrumental usage of Europe not only on national policy changes, but even on the national activities of the CSO itself.

At the very end, consensus on going European was reached through a two-level strategy to attempt somehow to go European while keeping the CSO's identity that motivates all members' engagement. Regarding members, each one has to continue to be involved in those actions that better respond to his/her reasons for participating; a long-lasting interest for European activities was displayed mainly by the already 'pro-European' members. With respect to ABP action, French policies and their implementation should have remained the main focus and EU opportunities been used to pressurise national institutions (Monforte 2014: 9-11). But the organisation's dynamic led to the negotiation of the aspirations of Europeanization, resulting in the reduction to a collaboration with other European CSOs for the ECB in action repertoire learning and EU-related activities in national context.

The Interaction of Individual and Organisational Dynamics in ECB Europeanization

The views of Europe displayed by members of other national CSOs were quite close to those reported by ABP members confirming the weight of associative role, knowledge and generation in their views of Europe. For example, the Spanish CSO leader, Carlos, a 40 year old statistician, attributed an 'instrumental potential' to the usage of Europe related to his perspective based on his personal skills. Like the French CSO first leader and jurist, Carlos grounded his justifications in EU juridical apparatus and based his argument on EU statistics. In his words:

> We need efficient data, homogeneous from all European countries, which is not the case nowadays, to have good material to compare European countries and to prove the discrepancies existing among them ... Having a sort of database with organisational aims, people, funding, and actions is a powerful tool to start this process.

Thus, the Spanish CSO, which joined the ECB in 2012, regularly promoted the enhancement of data collection on binational couples and their children to ameliorate the situation of these individuals in Spain. A favourable view of Europe was also recurrently observed relative to generation and experience. The younger ECB newcomers want to 'embark on the European road', as in the case of Nora, a 30-year-old member of the Danish CSO, who was convinced that 'only learning European advocacy mechanism can help to improve the campaigns to defend the rights of binational couples in Europe, but also in Denmark'. Instead, some older members were more sceptical about EU opportunities, even if they still believed that intra-European collaborative activities and information sharing were essential. Judith, a 55-year-old member of the Austrian CSO, affirmed:

> For years, we are trying to reach EU institutions; we have even had a period of internal tensions for this history ECB past. [...] Now, personally I am scared about what the EU can do: we would do well to protest against the EU.

The restrictive turn of EU migration policy worries some ECB members who do not want to use European means as they have doubts about Europe as a valid interlocutor. Thus, they prefer to limit their going European to a collaboration Europe-wide with other CSOs, questioning, if necessary, which Europe should be the target.

Over time, the construction of a 'European movement' (Monforte 2014: 11) was made difficult by the heterogeneity of national CSO members (some of whom are employees while others are volunteers), by structural weaknesses such as a lack of resources and the emergence of contradictory attitudes towards European opportunities for CSOs. Furthermore, the everyday tasks and the short-term innovative projects demanded from national CSOs take precedence over the negotiation of contention in the EU arena. 'It is essential to communicate and collaborate across the borders, but this means an extra engagement for our members. It implies time, skills and human resources' (Judith, 55 year old, retired, member of the Austrian CSO). For years, CSOs in the ECB have discussed the possibility of employing a full-time person, but to establish a more formalised structure would signify a need to apply for funds, a delicate topic in the ECB history. It has been difficult to go European when there is an economic issue on the table regarding a lack of resources.

To avoid conflict and to take into account multiple views of Europe existing among members, ECB Europeanization was cautious, and preferred to establish horizontal collaborative paths among CSOs to improve transnational EU-related activities in national contexts. Such an empowering stream is marked by efforts to appeal to European public opinion rather than address actions directly to Brussels-based institutions. For instance, in recent years, following the Dutch example, on June 12 in different European cities, the CSO members of ECB have simultaneously organised celebrations for the *Loving Day.* That is the anniversary of the 1967 United States Supreme Court Decision *Loving v. Virginia* which gave the right to celebrate marriages between the Black American and White American populations. These actions have been considered more suitable for reaching European citizens and in turn national governments, by mobilising ideals of anti-racism and equality of rights without debating precise legal issues less comprehensible to public opinion.

In opting for this type of action, the ECB responds to the scepticism towards EU institutions shown by some of the members of its CSOs and maintains its stability. Thus, both CSOs and the EU network

have resized Europeanization by starting from a more modest position: to use Europe as a 'stage and scenario' for awareness-raising actions that, while remaining located at a national level, acquire a new European visibility and impact.

CONCLUSIONS

Adopting an actor-centred sociological approach to bottom-up Europeanization, this article has offered a heuristic insight into the interactions between the individual dimension and the organisational dimensions when a national CSO considers entry into a EU network. In this respect, the composition of national CSOs and their strategies to consider and solve internal divergences over activities and aims are important (Jacquot and Vitale 2014). Due to the heterogeneity of the CSOs, whose actors are made up of several individualities, it is fruitful firstly to grasp the individual views of Europe and Europeanization and subsequently, to understand what the impact of these particular views is on the organisational collective dynamics of consensus.

Three views of Europe have been identified: an *instrumental* view developed by the leaders and the board that legitimate the 'usage Europe'; and *pro-European;* and *Euro-sceptical* views that are carried by rank-and-file members who in their narratives refer more to feelings of belonging, values and experiences towards Europe. Such views vary according to members' motives for engagement and their roles in the CSO, as well as generation and education. A correspondence between life course events and the evolution of Europe(s) forges views which are also 'locally embedded and influenced by subjective autonomy, experience and structural social conditioning' (Scalise 2015: 594).

Furthermore, the observation of the power relations at play, when an organisation balances its members' views for designing actions, allows the disentanglement of the micro-dynamics that lead to decisions to go European or not. Safeguarding the national CSO nature and members' motives is crucial. Considering the sceptical arguments of some members and the multilevel governmental and societal dynamics of marriage migration, the usage of Europe is put forward for its positive national impact. With regards to Europe, national CSOs prefer to reach European citizens over EU institutions. Issues surrounding economic concerns can also be employed to legitimate symbolically the enlargement of such a European *champ d'activité*.

CSOs' views of Europe that have already been negotiated nationally reappear and need to be reconsidered once the CSOs are reunited in a European network. Divergent views of Europe, internal democracy dynamics both in the national CSOs and in a EU network, and their structural weaknesses, lead to a 'Europeanization on the cheap' (Sanchez Salgado 2014) as a transnational social movement is created for the instrumental usage of Europe for national aims and visibility.

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ENDNOTES

[1] For instance, in Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and the United Kingdom practices for accessing residence status for the extra-EU partner of a citizen are assimilated to those of family reunification. Conditions of minimum age, income and housing – introduced when these states transposed dir. 2003/86 – are placed on the citizen partner. However, other countries, such as France, Italy and Spain, have a specific procedure for ruling on unions with a citizen. Furthermore, each national immigration system produces some specific problems for the couples, depending on the administrative apparatus.

[2] In 2016, the name changed to *European Network for Binational- Bicultural Couples and Families* (ENB).

[3] In the literature, the expression 'going European' (Balme et al. 2002) is employed to describe the 'moment in which CSOs make the decision to use European opportunities' (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 25). The EU seems to affect social practices only if actors, such as CSOs, seize European opportunities. This process is a narrow form of Europeanisation in which 'the transfer of allegiance to the EU level (CSOs becoming more European) cannot be separated from European impact if European pressures are intended to give a European dimension to CSOs (Ibid. 2014: 26).

[4] The French CSO member of ECB when the network was created is no longer active, having been replaced by the ABP in 2012.

[5] To understand better the issue of reverse discrimination concerning binational families and the possible legal solutions, see Berneri, 2014.

[6] The names of the interviewees are anonymised except for those of the CSO leaders.

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