Speaking for the Marginalised

: Representation strategies of the Civil Society Organisations
working with marginalised group issues at European level

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Abstract

Participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) has been greatly promoted by the European Union (EU) and many CSOs in social policy sphere in particular have increasingly gained their participatory venues and consultative status vis-a-vis EU institutions since the 90's. However, their expected role to bring even the most marginalised groups' voice into European policy making process poses a question of how European CSOs achieve the representation of marginalised groups at EU-level. This study aims to unveil how the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, people with disabilities, women, the homeless, ethnic minorities in particular, strategically represent their members and constituencies at European level. In order to answer this question four European CSOs were investigated through a comparative approach, by conducting text and document analysis and interviews with their representative persons. In particular, traditional theoretical accounts on representation and recent debates on non-electoral forms of representation were taken into account in understanding the representation strategies of the selected organisations.

The findings of the study suggest that these European CSOs appeal their representativeness by combining the organisational structures based on membership that emphasise formal and descriptive aspects of representation and the representative claims stressing their deliberative and authentic characteristics. While these CSOs have some common patterns in their representation strategies and face similar challenges that result from their structural set-ups at European level, some distinctive differences were found especially between the organisations focusing on group-representation and the ones with primary focus on issue-representation.

Key words: Civil Society Organisation (CSO), representation, marginalised group, European Union, participatory governance.
Word count: 19,830

List of abbreviation

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
EAPN	European Anti-Poverty Network
EBU	European Blind Union
ECM	European Co-ordination Meeting
EDF	European Disability Forum
EEA	European Economic Area
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
EU	European Union
EWL	European Women's Lobby
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless
GA	General Assembly
AC	Administrative Council
ILGA Europe	The European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association
Inclusion Europe	The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families
NCM	National Co-ordination Meeting
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non Profit Organisation
UN	United Nations

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Chapter 1.   Introduction

1.1. Background: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)[1] and participatory governance of the European Union

Participation of civil society has been put forward by the European Union (EU) as an important way to nurture democratic legitimacy of governance and to contribute to effective policy making by bringing in voice of the broader citizenry of Europe. The involvement of civil society is expected to mediate the distance between society and the EU, which will help "bridging the gap" between the transnational governance of the EU and its citizens (Armstrong, 2002:104). By "bring[ing] Europe much closer to the people" (European Commission, 2000:4), it is expected to alleviate criticism towards the EU being an elitist project.

While there have been many scholars pointing out strategic adoption of discourse of participatory governance by the EU institutions that actively embraces civil society involvement as a potential cure for the legitimacy crisis of the EU project (Greenwood, 2007a; Smismans, 2005:63; Armstrong, 2002:8), European political sphere itself is described as to have structural aspects making participatory democracy alongside representative system particularly attractive. One is the fact that there is no fully democratic representative system in its multi-level structure equivalent to that of a nation state at the EU level. This opens up the possibility for the participation of various organised interests as well as the dependency of EU institutions on outside interests, together which comprise the model of "bargained politics" of the EU (Greenwood, 2007a:21; 2007b:338). This feature becomes more relevant due to the fact that there is no homogeneous nature of European demo but a variety of different identities. The plurality of European society can thus well go along with the idea of representation via multiple civil society organisations (Smismans, 2005:60).

Considering these features, what is particular about the EU politic is that there is not only aspiration of participation and influence from organised interests, but also

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1   In this thesis the term Civil Society Organisation (CSO) is used as to encompass various other terms that might be relevant in discussing civil society actors in European policy making, such as civil association, NGO/NPO, advocacy network, third sector, etc. According to Kaldor (2003:15), the term Civil Society Organisation has the advantage of stressing its identity in its own rights, in contrast to the terms that define these actors against governments or corporations – for instance NGO or NPO.

that there have been increasing expectations regarding the roles of organised civil society which comprise the core discourse of governance from the EU institutions. In fact, despite voluntary nature of civil society which seems intrinsic to the notion itself, the EU institutions have played a pivotal role in supporting the development and involvement of organised civil society especially at European level. The Commission, for example, is a significant funding source for a numerous civil society organisations operating at European level. It fostered trans-nationalisation of CSOs as well as Europe-wide campaigns and initiatives to a great extent, with financial, technical, and even ideation-al supports (Greenwood, 2007a:208; Trenz, 2009:36).

While attention is often given to the Commission's active role in "participatory engineering" (Kohler-Koch - Finke, 2007:206) of civil society, other institutions such as European Economic and Social Committee, European Parliament and European Council have also established various venues for civil society participation, such as public hearings, procedures of receiving and referring petition, and regulation as well as structuration in lobbying (Greenwood, 2007a:119; Kendall, 2009; Smismans, 2005).

Different EU institutions not only have fostered various ways of encouraging participation of civil society but also actively have shaped the normative discourse of participatory governance (Greenwood, 2007a; Sanchez-Salgado, 2007; Trenz, 2009; Smismans, 2005). Although the ambiguity of expected roles for civil society reflected in the discourse of participatory governance suggests the absence of a clear consensus between different actors and political visions (Armstrong, 2002; Kohler-Koch, 2009), the core message from EU official documents has been that more active involvement and participation of civil society will enable EU policies to closely reflect citizens' perspectives and opinions and this will help enhance EU competencies in various areas, policy support, and the input legitimacy of the European governance. The discussion paper *The Commission and non-governmental organizations: building a stronger partnership* published in 2000 explicitly addressed the rationale for co-operation between the Commission and organised civil society as the following:

> 1. *'Belonging to an association **provides an opportunity for citizens to participate actively in new ways** other than or in addition to involvement in political parties or trade unions. [...] **NGOs can make a contribution fostering a more participatory democracy** both within the European Union and beyond' (in particular in the enlargement states and developing countries, with which the EU deals).*
> 2. *NGOs have **the ability to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged, and to provide a voice** for those not sufficiently heard through other channels.*
> 3. *NGOs provide the EU with **expert input**.*
> 4. *NGOs can **manage, monitor and evaluate** projects financed by the EU.*

*5. They contribute to European integration. By encouraging national NGOs to work together, the European NGO networks make an important **contribution to the formation of a European public opinion.** (Smismans, 2005:64; my bold)*

Civil society organisations here are conceptualised as an agent for enhancing the administrative capacity of the EU by contributing with expert knowledge to help effective European policy making, as well as for the formation of public sphere where European citizens can participate and even the most marginalised groups' voices are heard in order to strengthen democratic legitimacy of the EU.

The discourse on civil dialogue and the legitimacy capital of it initially appeared from the social policy sphere with issues such as gender, youth, social exclusion, disability and racism. The CSOs regarding these issues were viewed as to play a contributory role in forming a supportive network in favour of social policy at European level, and some key networks regarding the issue of unemployment and social exclusion contributed to frame these problems as 'European' (Kendall, 2009:6-8; Smismans, 2005:61-2). As related issues became salient in the EU social policy field during the 90's, the CSOs working in this field gained their significance. The network of civic groups 'Platform of European Social NGOs' was established in 1994 with the Commission's support, and in 1996 'Civil Dialogue' in the field of employment and social affairs was introduced. The Platform acquired a privileged partner status from the Commission (Geyer, 2001; Armstrong, 2002:122; Greenwood, 2007a:207). The Social Platform now comprises of over forty local, national and international organisations representing different social groups and defines itself as "the alliance of representative European federations and networks of non-governmental organisations active in the social sector" (www.socialplatform.org).

1.2. Problem area: Bridging the gap? The distance between European CSOs and citizens

Who are then the civil society actors that have seized these participatory opportunities? Over the last two decades, European CSOs claiming representativeness in a broader 'European' sense have grown as major actors engaging in the partnership with the EU institutions, with a tendency of increasingly institutionalised, formalised, and structured engagement. Working within the complex, fragmented, and multi-level EU politics and decision making procedures implies that CSOs' interests are to some extent ought to be mediated and moderated by the engagement with the EU political institutions. The above mentioned emergence of the 'family' CSOs, the Social Platform, can be one of the examples of institutionalisation. (Greenwood, 2007a:119).

Moreover, there also emerged a further confederated form of citizen interest group called 'EU Civil Society Contact Group' in 2002, a coalition between large umbrella groups of CSOs. Playing the role as an initiating force (Kendall, 2009:365), the Social Platform is now one of the 8 other large rights and value based CSO family networks in the areas such as development, environment, human rights, arts/heritage, women, public health, and others (www.socialplatform.org). This "network of networks" encompassing a vast number of members across Europe claims representative legitimacy, and the overall development of the relationship between these established CSOs and the EU is now described as an "increasingly stable and sustained, interactive institutionalized processes" (Kendall, 2009:365, 371).

While there is an ongoing debate on the ambiguous definition and conceptualisation of 'civil society' (Kendall, 2009:6; Kohler-Koch, 2009), the emphasis from the EU in this respect is on organised civil society with some form of representativeness accompanied by transparency and accountability (European Commission, 2001, 2002; Armstrong, 2002:126-7), although specific criteria are disputed (Kohler-Koch, 2008:13). The 2002 Commission Communication on the consultation standards specifies 'openness', 'accountability' as important principles, and information regarding which interests groups represent and to what extent that representation is inclusive are supposed to be clearly provided (European Commission, 2002:17). To illustrate how these principles were put into practice, it is noteworthy to look at how the Commission's public directory of interest groups (CONECCS – Consultation, the European Commission, and Civil Society, transformed into 'Register of interest representatives' since 2008 and now into 'Transparency Register' from June 2011) granted access to the public consultation process for CSOs. To appear in this web-based database, CSOs were required to confirm certain conditions such as having members in at least three member states, having authority to speak for their members, and to operate in accountable ways (Greenwood, 2007a:192).

Although the Commission has explicitly been rejecting any system of accreditation of CSOs (Cullen, 2010:322), the conditions for consultation mentioned above, according to some commentators, effectively spell out a preference over trans-nationalised peak organisations and an intention of establishing further structured consultation relationships that existed between transnational civil society actors and the Commission (Armstrong, 2002). To some extent, the focus on 'European' CSOs with geographical representativeness and member accountability implies difficulties for certain CSOs whose representativeness can not easily be defined with clear membership constituency but rather flexibly applied. The examples of the latter case can be the groups who gain their legitimacy by their capacity in vocalising certain

causes and perspectives in public sphere rather than by explicit representative activities on behalf of certain constituency, and this can include groups which act for those who are not able to speak for themselves: ranging from animal, planet, environment, future generation to prisoners, victims of human right abuses, and so on (Armstrong, 2002:127; Greenwood, 2007a:45, 190-5).

Moreover, there are concerns regarding potential detachment of the trans-nationalised CSOs and their remoteness from European citizens. This has to do with the fact that the core feature of civil society conceptualised by the EU discourse unambiguously emphasises trans-nationalised and institutionalised structure of organised civil society, which implies the same kind of legitimacy problems as the EU itself (Armstrong, 2002:103; Greenwood, 2007a:210). Furthermore, the increasingly professionalised aspect of the European networks of CSOs that is materialised as bureaucratisation and specialisation can lead to domination of elitist professionals and experts rather than citizens' participation (Sanchez-Salgado, 2010). Whether these European CSOs will rather be co-opted by the EU institutions as depoliticised supplementary tool for good governance and solely focusing on their organisational forms and activities in order to influence EU governance while neglecting their members and roots is also another concern (Geyer, 2001:491; Armstrong, 2002:109,115; Trenz, 2009:37).

Related to these concerns, some critic regarding the privileged status of these European networks compared to national-based or grass roots CSOs was spelled out (Lombardo, 2007). A similar critic relates to a potential inequality in structure of membership of CSOs, which goes against equality among citizens (Greven, 2007). On the other hand, a further structuration and organisation of civil society accompanied by democratically established internal rules and decision making structure is supported as a precondition for recognition of more active participatory rights of the civil society (De Schutter, 2002). Reflecting these issues and concerns, a need for scrutiny of internal structures of CSOs has also been pointed out (Finke, 2007).

These critics regarding European CSOs claiming representativeness bring up the question of whether these 'Europeanised' CSOs can genuinely play the role of 'bridging' the gap between citizens and the EU polity as the discourse on participatory governance claims. Especially, this question becomes more relevant when it comes to the expectations towards CSOs in that they are able to bring the voices of the most disadvantaged and marginalised that otherwise would be neglected (Smismans, 2005:64, 73) on the one hand, and the very "federated nature" (Greenwood, 2007a:210) of European networks of CSOs on the other hand. The European CSOs working with the issues regarding marginalised groups are thus expected to be the link between the most unreachable, immobilised, and marginalised groups within a

vast geographical area, while at the same time required to be institutionalised and formalised at the transnational level which inevitably accompanies the vast distance from their constituencies.

1.3. Purpose of the study and Research question

There are several points to be drawn from the previous sections which addressed the background and problem area of the study by reviewing related literature: Firstly, there are some peculiar institutional interests and normative discourses at play in this particular public space, the EU, regarding participation of civil society actors; Secondly, these participatory opportunities have been seen as a new sphere for some marginalised groups to voice their claims, resulting in Europeanised civil society networks; Thirdly, there exist certain requirements and demands from the EU institutions towards these CSOs, for example regarding representativeness; Lastly, the expected role of European CSOs working as a link between the EU and citizens of Europe faces an unavoidable challenge due to their trans-nationalised feature.

Given the expected roles of the CSOs working at European level and their representative claims for various marginalised social groups, this study tries to answer the question of *how the CSOs working with marginalised group issues at European level strategically pursue their representation of members and constituencies*. As the salience of the EU level CSOs has grown, the question of representativeness and accountability of them has emerged in relation to their expected intermediating roles between the EU and citizens (Warleigh, 2001). Questioning representative claims and accountability of civil associations is however not only limited to these European CSOs but applies to the non-governmental sector at large, which has gained increasingly influential positions both in domestic and international public arenas (Jordan – Tuijl, 2006; Perruzzotti, 2006:43; Halpin, 2006:920).

Regarding the issue of representation of organised civil society, Kohler-Koch (2010) pointed out how the issue of democratic representation has been disentangled from the discussion on the CSOs and the governance of the EU and suggested an analytical framework for linking the representation in EU governance and CSOs. The framework suggests that there are two important uninterrupted chains of responsive links in order to achieve democratic representation of civil society in the EU: from the citizens of Europe to the CSOs; and from the CSOs to the Commission (p.109). In relation to this framework, the main findings of this study will give some empirical reference points for investigating the first order of the link (See the Figure 1 below).

Meanwhile, having the highly disputed concept of representativeness (Kohler-Koch, 2010:110) and complex theoretical discussions on representation in mind, this

study focuses on the strategic aspects of representation from organisations' perspective, leaving the question of responsiveness from the perspective of constituents for another research albeit its significance. The research question of the study is thus formed as the following.

What are the **strategies of representation of the civil society organisations operating at EU level, working with issues regarding marginalised groups** *such as people with disabilities, women, homeless people, and racial minorities facing discrimination?* **How are they similar to or different from each other?**

The question is investigated through comparing selected European CSOs' (introduced in the chapter 3) representative claims and organisational features reflecting their representation strategies. More detailed criteria are incorporated in an analytical framework by reflecting theoretical discussions on the topic, which are introduced in the chapter 2. The analysis of empirical cases is carried out by employing a comparative perspective, whereby a special attention is paid to any particular similarities or differences between the CSOs. To see whether there exist any common patterns or challenges in representing members and constituencies will give meaningful insights in identifying structural factors that are common to all of them. At the same time, any diverging patterns will cast implication in identifying other factors that make individual organisations distinctive from each other, for example the characteristics of the represented group or issue, organisational history, dominant ideology or culture, etc.
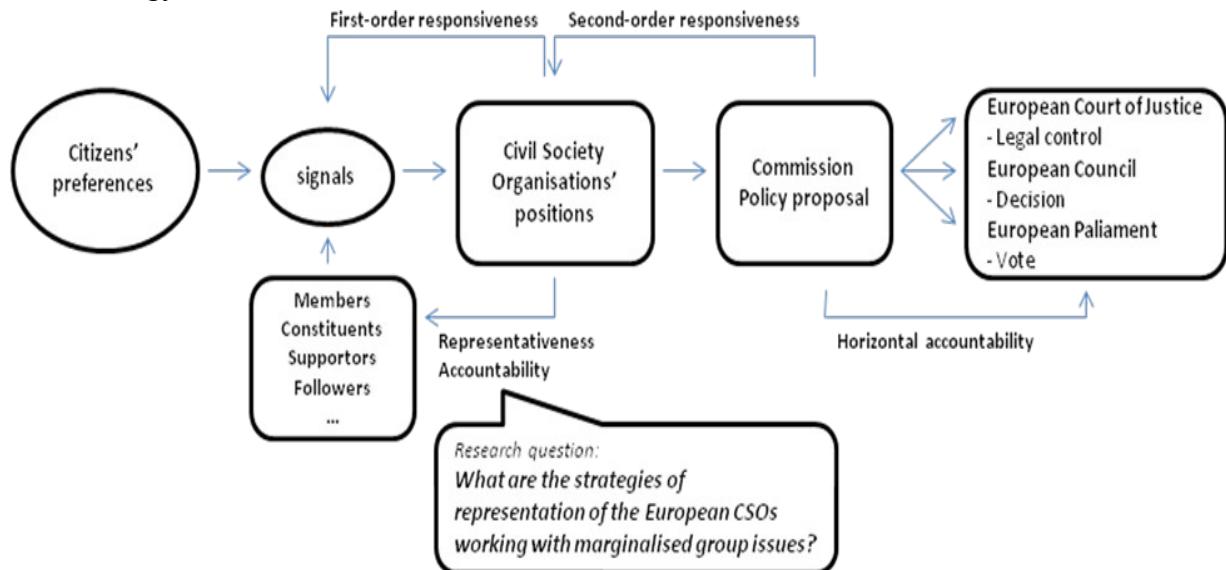
Figure 1 *Research question within the (modified) analytical framework of*
        "Civil society and democratic representation", by Kohler-Koch (2010:109).

Chapter 2.   Theory

In order to draw a theoretically embedded analytical framework in investigating representation of European CSOs, this chapter firstly summarises theoretical discussion about political representation, from traditional accounts to a novel approach. Secondly, recent debates on non-electoral forms of representation, which are pertinent to the case of CSOs, are introduced with a particular attention to the concepts such as deliberation and authenticity. Thirdly, it looks at the studies especially addressing the issue of representativeness and accountability of civil associations, which suggest specific factors to be considered when understanding CSOs' representation. Reflecting these theoretical discussions, an analytical framework applied to the empirical part of this study is introduced in the last section.

2.1.   Theory of political representation

The main debate on political representation has revolved around a perspective which sees representational relationship between a representative and the represented as that of principal – agent relationship (Dovi, 2008:6). This traditional or standard account on representation emphasises formal aspects of representation, where geographically defined constituency and a representative selected through electoral mechanism within state-centric democracy are of central importance (Castiglione – Warren, 2008:2-4; Mansbridge, 2003:516). Mansbridge (2003:516) categorises this traditional mode of representation as 'Promissory' representation, in which a representative has a normative duty to keep promises made in authorising election and the represented can claim for accountability through sanction via voting behaviour.

The most frequently referred scholar in this debate, Hanna Pitkin (1967), conceptualised different types of representation which current theoretical debate still largely rests on. Pitkin distinguishes four different aspects of representation. Firstly, 'Formalistic' representation emphasises the procedure of authorisation and accountability as the most important aspect of representation. 'Symbolic' and 'Descriptive' representation, both what she sees as the views reflecting 'standing for' aspect of representation, respectively emphasise the meaning and acceptance that a representative has for those being represented, and the accuracy of resemblance that a

representative has vis-a-vis the represented. Descriptive representation can have a strong justifying implication when it comes to the representation of marginalised groups because it introduces the voices, perspectives, and experiences of disadvantaged groups in a direct way. Several scholars have criticised the electoral and legislative representative system in liberal democracies for historically excluding certain marginalised groups and pointed out that when there is a greater similarity between representatives and the represented or constituencies, it is more likely that the representation of the whole range of experiences and perspectives will be done better (Castiglione – Warren, 2008:13; Williams, 1998; Phillips, 1995). However, some other theorists seem to agree on that such an impact is contingent, rather limited, and even mixed (Mansbridge, 1999:628; Severs, 2010:413; Guo – Musso, 2007:315). Lastly, 'Substantive' representation emphasises the actual activity of representatives in 'acting for' in the interest of the represented in a responsive manner to their constituents. According to Pitkin, substantive representation is central in representation, and this assumes prior existence of the represented and responsive act of representatives towards them (Severs, 2010:412-4).

Meanwhile, a novel approach understanding political representation as a 'representative claim making' has recently been employed by some studies (Severs, 2010; Trenz, 2009). Refuting traditional ways of creating rigid typologies of representation that largely focused on nation-state based electoral representative system, Michael Saward (2010) in his book *The Representative Claim* emphasises dynamic, multi-dimensional, context-contingent, and constitutive nature of representative claim making process and suggests looking at diverse patterns of representative claims rather than institutionally located or fixed forms of representation. Within this approach, representation is a constitutive and dynamic process of claim-making and claim-receiving among diverse actors in multiple contexts. This idea is sharply in contrast with the traditional account of representation where the existence of constituency and its interests are assumed to be pre-fixed or given, leaving no room for constituency or audience to react, accept, or not accept the representative claims made about themselves outside of formal election procedures.

Moreover, rather than theorising what representation is or what representative should do in normative terms, this approach looks at the patterns of representative claims-making and reception of the claims while abstaining from normative judgements that are argued to be ultimately constituency's subjective matter. Hence, the classical work of Pitkin, the demarcation between different modes of representation for example, can be rather understood as different resources that representative claims are based on rather than as different 'types' of representation (ibid, p. 71).

2.2. Understanding non-electoral representation

Many scholars have recently pointed out changing conditions in contemporary democracy and implications on the debate of representation. The emerging conditions can be summarised as the following: Firstly, there are increasingly diversified forms of representation which include self-authorised, informal representative organisations such as advocacy organisations, interest groups, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, and philanthropic foundations (Urbinati – Warren, 2008:407); Secondly, the complexity and the scale of decision making procedures are changing due to the expanding transnational, non-territorial issues and complex public discourses of representation (Castiglione – Warren, 2008:2-4); Accordingly, there emerges an increasing number of international, transnational and non-governmental actors acting on behalf of a broader citizenry (Dovi, 2008:7). Besides, increasing dissatisfaction with the electoral politics based on political parties can also be seen as a background factor for rising importance of non-electoral representation (Sward, 2010:83).

Responding to this new situation, in order to conceive and understand these diverse practices there has also been rising attention on non-electoral forms of representation for which traditional account on political representation cannot be adequate. These emerging accounts partially divorce themselves from the standard political representation theory in different ways, proposing some alternative conceptualisations in understanding and judging non-electoral forms of representation.

2.2.1. Debates on deliberation and representation

The idea of 'deliberative democracy' emphasises an open public sphere where the exchange of perspectives and engagement of various actors are expected to result in democratic deliberation. The implication of this con-temporarily popular normative concept of democracy on political representation is that it looks at the possibility of formation of new consensus, which is not restricted by the static concept of 'represented' interests or opinions that are pre-existing or pre-given (Phillips, 1995:149). In line with this understanding, deliberative, discursive or communicative aspects of representation have been one area where many scholars paid attention to.

In this respect, Mendoca (2008) argues for the necessity of re-conceptualising political representation and attempts to consider political representation in a broader sense. For civil society associations to act as representatives of diverse discourses and perspectives, what is important is not to have a clear formal mechanism of

authorisation and accountability but to have plural communicative interactions in public spheres where deliberation of diverse discourses and perspectives can occur and consequently discursively formed accountability can be achieved.

Casting theoretical issues in democratic representation in contemporary politics, Castiglione and Warren (2008) also argue for the need to theorise informal forms of representation while acknowledging the difficulty in determining what 'democratic' representative is in non-electoral politics. Acknowledging the increasing importance of discursive and symbolic aspects of representation, it is pointed out that what is represented is not a pre-existing or fixed idea, identity, interest, or value but discursively constructed objects which are formulated within and through representational relationships that are detached from specific individuals or groups of constituencies. This very nature of 'detached' interests is said to enable discursive procedures in politics.

In *Rethinking Representation*, Jane Mansbridge (2003) poses different forms of representation. These are 'Anticipatory', 'Gyroscopic', and 'Surrogate' representation, where more deliberative and plural normative criteria are applied in judging diverse forms of representative practices in contemporary politics. These novel conceptions can be differentiated as to conceive more reciprocal and continuing mutual influence and power relationship between the represented and a representative, as opposed to the traditional mode of 'Promissory' representation where authorisation and accountability based on a linear relationship between 'mandate' and 'trustee' hold true. While all these three modes of representation emphasise the deliberative and discursive feature of the relationship between a representative and the represented and their collective will formation process (Trenz, 2009:41), the following is a summary of the core features of each mode of representation (Mansbridge, 2003):

- 'Anticipatory' representation, assuming retrospective voting behaviour, emphasises the deliberation process with reciprocal communication and mutual influence between the represented and representatives until the time of next authorisation of representative.
- 'Gyroscopic' representation emphasises the congruence between representatives' own principle, beliefs, and characteristics and those of the represented. In order for voters to have accurate understanding of these features before authorising the representative, the deliberation process during the authorising election becomes important.
- 'Surrogate' representation, the representative relation that is not based on any electoral mechanism or territorial boundary, emphasises adequate deliberative

representation of important perspectives or interests that are not politically presented due to formal territorial representation system.

Although her discussion largely refers to electoral representative systems, these new modes of representation having more emphasis on the deliberative and communicative aspects of representational relationship and less on the formal aspects can be usefully adopted in understanding non-electoral representation.

Deliberation in understanding European CSOs can especially be considered as to have a relevant analytical potential, since this perspective has normatively been related to the role of European CSOs in the discourse of participatory governance as well. CSOs are deemed as to contribute to the deliberative policy making process in the EU, but not without doubts and critics towards this expectation (Greenwood, 2007a:198).

2.2.2. The concept of authenticity in non-electoral representation

As explored above, within the framework of deliberative representation there is an emphasis in viewing representation as a process in which the represented and their interests are discursively constructed, rather than given or pre-existing. This creative and per-formative aspect of representation referred to as 'claims-making' (Saward, 2006, 2009, 2010) has been suggested as an alternative approach, as opposed to the traditional account of non-dynamic, one-directional principle-agent like representative relationship (Severs, 2010:411).

Seeing the practice of electoral representation bound to be incomplete and partial, Saward (2010) argues for the advantage of non-elective representation that exploits the structural weakness of electoral system (p.93). What non-elective actors claiming representativeness can provide distinctively in this respect are certain characteristics that stem from the fact that they are not as much restricted as electoral representatives in relation to formal election procedures or geographical restriction, thus opening up more flexible as well as alternative, different representative patterns which come closer to certain audiences (Saward, 2009:8-9). Not only suggesting the advantages of non-elective representation, it is argued that there is a democratic necessity of non-elective representative claims in our complex contemporary democracy where the constituencies are increasingly flexibly defined:

> *"Constituencies are no longer only singular, territorial, fixed, and possessed of transparent interests. Rather, 'constituency' is fluid, functional and cultural,*

permanent or temporary, within or across borders, evoked as well as given."
(ibid, p. 22)

Meanwhile, by extending the concept of 'Surrogate' representation (Mansbridge, 2003) to the non-elective representative claims, the concept of 'authenticity' is seen as an alternative, as well as a distinctive strength of non-electoral representative claims which is comparable to 'authorisation' when it comes to electoral representative claims (Saward, 2009, 2010). According to this perspective, there are various types of representative claims that non-elective individuals or organisations make. These include claiming for deeper roots, expertise and special credentials towards constituencies and for wider interests and new voices. The more detailed illustration of these types is summarised in the Table 1 below.

While the types of non-electoral representative claims are diverse in what their key bases of claims are, 'authenticity' is understood as a mode of reception of these representative claims by the 'audience' and 'constituents' in his conceptualisation of the five elements that constitute representative claim-making. It is here where the importance of constant and responsive consent towards representative claims of non-electoral representation can be understood as to be contrasted with the mechanism of electoral representation, which has basis on its authorisation process through episodic, prior consent through elections (Saward, 2009:21).

Table 1   *Types of non-elective representative claims by Saward (2010, Chapter 4)*

Types of claims	Sub-types	Key bases of claims
Deeper roots	Deep group morality and ties of tradition	The embeddedness of any political system in a set of historical or traditional structures of leadership and authority
	Hypothetical consent	Deeper interests of all on the basis of hypothetical consent
	Permanent interest	Executive agencies which have a less direct link to lines of delegation but having institutional interests
Expertise, special credentials	Authoritative knowledge	Specialist expertise which fosters a distinctive insight into potentially neglected or underplayed interests of the group
Wider interests and new voices	Surrogacy for wider interests	Voicing an important perspective that is not being heard, especially due to structural limitations arising from the conventional representative government
	The word from the street	Massive and tangible demonstration of popular support, public opinion, specific grass roots techniques or events
	Mirroring	Descriptive similarity between the claimant and the constituency he or she claims to speak or stand for
	Stake-holding	A material or other stake in a process or a decision, therefore having a right to have its interests included in the process
	Self-representation	Implicit role of political citizenship as to speak for or represent one's own interests

In judging the authenticity of representative claims, he also suggests some criteria such as 'Connection' and 'Independence'. While the former points to the mode of reception that gives credential to the claims on the basis of their connectedness with institutional and formal structures, the latter emphasises disconnectedness of claims, which are not bound to any existing institutions or present structure of electoral politics. In other words, what is important is how authentic and genuine the claims are representing marginalised or excluded voices in the independence of formal institutions or electoral representative politics (Saward, 2010:104-9).

The theoretical positions introduced so far, which attempt to account for non-electoral and informal forms of representative practices in contemporary democracy, provide some useful perspectives in understanding representative practices of civil society organisations, the main focus of this study. They put forward some alternative normative concepts in understanding representative practices of non-electoral organisations while pointing to the secondary importance of traditional focus on formal aspect of representation that is centred on authorising election. Next section of the chapter introduces more concrete and contextual factors to be considered, from the studies particularly addressing CSOs and more narrowly, NGOs' representation.

2.3. Representation of civil society organisations

The question of how to understand representation and accountability in relation to CSOs speaking or acting for various causes or constituencies has increasingly been debated, although there seems to be no single converging approach.

In proposing a framework for understanding different dimensions of representation of non-profit and voluntary organisations, Guo and Musso (2007) builds on Pitkin's work by adding 'Participatory' representation to substantive, symbolic, formal, and descriptive representation (See the section 2.1.) By adding this fifth dimension what is emphasised is a direct, un-mediated participatory relationship and communication between an organisation and its constituents (p. 312). These different dimensions of representation are also divided into two, where input measures (formal, descriptive, and participatory) are having contributory impacts on output measures (substantive, symbolic). By illustrating empirical application of the framework, the study highlights the complex and contingent aspects of the relationship between different dimensions of representation. For example, it shows that formal arrangement of representative mechanisms do not necessarily guarantee substantive representation, while substantive effects of descriptive representation have mixed results and participatory representation can possibly improve substantive representation (ibid, pp. 314-6).

Social and political contexts are also to be taken into account in understanding CSOs' representation and their democratic potential (Rossteutscher, 2005:6). Political institutions and their institutional interests can have a significant impact on the opportunities and participatory possibilities for CSOs' activities and status (Smismans, 2005). Jordan and Tuijl (2006) also emphasise the importance of political context in understanding the question of NGO accountability. Moreover, they suggest different categories of responsibilities of NGOs, namely, organisational responsibility, responsibility embedded in the mission and value of an NGO, and responsibility to different stake holders (pp. 4-5). These different aspects comprise of the plurality of the context of NGO accountability to be considered.

In the same volume, Charnovitz (2006) argues for the peculiarity of certain NGOs to which explicit principal – agent relationship with external actors or any delegated responsibilities as such cannot be applied. Instead, the key relationship of accountability for NGOs is centred on membership (p. 33), and what is important is performance of organisations in representing a particular constituency and perspective, rather than accountability to external bodies or to general public. A similar approach is shown by Peruzzotti (2006): Civil society associations play a role in making representative democratic political system to be responsive to the ignored and marginalised issues, and accordingly, CSOs still stand on the constituent side rather than on the representative side. Emphasising the distinctiveness of CSOs both from the traditional political representative bodies and from interest groups, the author calls for a cautious approach to accountability of CSOs. Especially, the diversity in the organisational forms and understandings of representative claims among CSOs should be kept in mind, while accountability approach should be differentiated from formal and standard political representative bodies especially when they represent dis-empowered, disorganised, or voiceless groups.

Some other factors taken up by a study looking at diverse campaign groups are group sizes, types of membership style, venues for internal participation, and mechanisms of recruiting and maintaining members (Clarence – Jordan – Maloney, 2005). Moreover, mission statements or descriptive characteristics that converge with constituencies are also worth to take notice since non-electoral representatives do not have clearly established mechanism of authorisation and accountability - what Pitkin calls 'formalistic' aspect of representation - but instead employ different means to attract supports and memberships (Castiglione and Warren, 2008). Diverse organisational features and the role of leaders and elites of organisations can also have different implications on CSOs' democratic representation (Rossteutscher, 2005:8-10). The various factors pointed out by the studies summarised here provide useful reference points for the empirical part of this study.

2.4. Analytical framework

To clarify once again, the point of departure of this research is to understand how the European CSOs working with issues related to various marginalised groups that are conventionally considered difficult to be represented strategically pursue representation of their members and constituents in such a complex and peculiar political and institutional context like the EU. To re-counter the main question of the study:

> *What are the* **strategies of representation of the civil society organisations operating at EU level, working with issues regarding marginalised groups** *such as people with disabilities, women, homeless people, and racial minorities facing discrimination?* **How are they similar to or different from each other?**

Reflecting the traditional theoretical accounts on political representation as well as more recent debates on representation of non-electoral entities discussed in this chapter, this research is carried out bearing the following hypothetical questions in mind as to understand the representation strategies of the Europeanised CSOs:

> *Can their representation strategies be explained by* **traditional accounts on political representation** *which emphasise formal representation structures and leaders descriptively reflecting their constituency? Or do they rather stress* **alternative aspects as non-electoral organisations**, *such as deliberative and authentic characteristics?*

Thus, the framework for the empirical investigation is divided into two main analytical points, reflecting both the classical approach of Pitkin (1967) on representation and the alternative theoretical positions conceiving non-electoral representation. Firstly, *formalistic* and *descriptive* aspects of representation of CSOs are explored in order to see to what extent the organisational features of the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues can be explained by these rather traditional and standard modes of representation.[2] The key aspects of this first

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2   Within the representation typology by Pitkin (1967), the 'symbolic' and 'substantive' representation which respectively look at how well a representative is trusted by the represented and how responsively a representative acts on behalf of the represented are difficult to be considered as representation 'strategies' in this context. Rather, these can be explained as output aspects of representation strategies, following the study of Guo and Musso (2007) which makes a distinction between 'input measures (formal, descriptive, and participatory representation)' on one hand, and 'output measures (substantive and symbolic representation) on the other hand. In this conceptualisation the input measures are supposed to play some contributory roles to the output measures of

analytical point are thus formal organisational arrangements that establish the ways of authorisation and accountability of representative-represented relation and similarities between a representative and the represented, such as shared ascriptive features or experiences. Some concrete variables to look at in identifying these aspects are: election system, general decision making structure and membership structure for the formalistic aspect; composition of leaders, executive boards and secretariats for the descriptive aspect. Further explanation about the sources and data to derive these variables is given in the chapter 3.

The reason for employing these traditional modes of representation, of which the fundamental assumption underlying is electoral representative system within nation-states, is because these are still prevailing perspectives and standards when it comes to the understanding of representation. There are due reasons for the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues transnationally still are expected to live up to the traditional understanding of the representation based on formalistic aspect of representation, considering the questions posed to them such as "How can we be sure that you have a mandate to speak for this group? To whom are you accountable?" (Johansson, forthcoming), as well as the requirements on formal representativeness from the EU institutions (See the section 1.2.). Meanwhile, descriptive aspects of representation are worth investigating considering the peculiar implication of descriptive representation when it comes to marginalised groups' representation (See the section 2.1.).

Regarding the second analytical point, the alternative theoretical concepts conceiving non-electoral representation such as *deliberation* and *authenticity* explored above are employed as to capture the ways how CSOs claim their representativeness of constituents, members and actions. The key aspects of this second analytical point thus reflect the essential features of the two concepts: reciprocal communication and interaction venues and practices within organisation as well as in public sphere for the concept of 'deliberation'; different kinds of representative claims such as 'expertise and special credentials', 'surrogacy for wider interests, 'words from the streets', 'self-representation' that appeal their authenticity towards constituents for the concept of 'authenticity'.

Additionally, some contextual factors such as relations with the EU institutions, funding requirements and situation, the salience and status of the related issues, and characteristics of constituents of the selected CSOs are taken into account where appropriate. Although these contextual factors can have a great significance in understanding the representation strategies of European CSOs, faced with the limited scope of the study these factors do not receive a systemic attention.

representation practices.

By exploring representation strategies of the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues through the comprehensive theoretical lens summarised as the above, this study attempts to contribute to the understanding of the largely unknown operation of "the long chains of representation" (Kröger, 2008:35-6) of European CSOs. Furthermore, it attempts to contribute to the recent theoretical discussion on non-electoral representation by applying novel theoretical conceptions and approaches on empirical cases. The table 2 below summarises the analytical framework for conducting the empirical part of the study.

Table 2

Analytical framework for the empirical investigation of CSOs' representation strategies

Analytical points	Theoretical concepts	Key aspects	Empirical Variables
Traditional/Standard modes of representation : to be reflected in organisational features	Formalistic representation	Formal organisational arrangements establishing the ways of authorisation and accountability of the representative-represented relation	Election system, General decision making structure, Membership structure, Composition of leaders in executive boards, Secretariats, etc.
	Descriptive representation	Similarities between representative-represented, such as ascriptive features or shared experiences	
Alternative conceptual positions for non-electoral representation : to be identified in representative claims	Deliberation	Reciprocal communication and interaction venues and practices within organisation as well as in public sphere	Mission statement, Representative claims expressed in key organisational/policy-related documents, Ways of defining constituents, etc.
	Authenticity	Different kinds of claims for authentic representativeness such as 'expertise and special credentials', 'surrogacy for wider interests, 'words from the streets', 'self-representation' claims	

Sources: Pitkin (1967), Guo - Musso (2007), Mansbridge (2003), Mendoca (2008), Castiglione and Warren (2008), Saward (2009, 2010), Charnovitz (2006).

Chapter 3.   Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology used in this study is discussed in the following order. Firstly, the implication of comparative approach in relation to the research question is explained. Secondly the reasons and the process of selection of cases to be investigated are discussed and a brief description of the selected European CSOs is provided. Lastly, text and document analysis and interviewing as main methods for collecting and analysing empirical materials are discussed, followed by some reflections.

3.1.   Comparative approach

Comparative method in social sciences is broadly used in understanding causal complexities and empirical regularities of social phenomena in relation to substantive or theoretical accounts (Ragin, 1987). In investigating representation strategies of the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, a comparative approach focusing on qualitative investigation of few cases are used. The use of case-oriented comparative approach will focus on the close examination of theoretically important similarities and dissimilarities between the cases with an aim of identifying any converging or diverging patterns in the representation strategies of different CSOs selected. However, the aim is not to reach any generalisable conclusions from different cases but to point out potential explanatory factors confined by contextual specificity that make different CSOs converge with or diverge from each other in their representation strategies (ibid, pp. 48-9).

When it comes to understanding representation strategies of the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, giving holistic attention to each case while accounting for specific contextual features can be highly beneficial given that the issues and constituents of the selected CSOs (to be introduced) have diverse features which might have implications on their representation strategies as well as organisational forms, histories, missions and values. Thus, the employment of case-oriented qualitative comparison that casts attention to individual cases and their heterogeneity and particularity (Ragin, 1987:17,24) is argued to be adequate for investigating the research question.

Meanwhile, qualitatively oriented comparative studies often are better suited for applying theories in interpreting cases rather than in testing theories to empirical cases (ibid, pp. 16, 44). This way of relating empirical cases with theories is well suited for the aim of the empirical part of the study, since the analytical framework is derived from theoretical debate in order to help understanding representation strategies of European CSOs by applying novel and diverse conceptions, rather than trying to test one certain unifying or generalisable theory.

While comparative approach that highlights regularities and irregularities between different cases can be rightfully applied in attempting to understand the complexity of social phenomena, the real challenge is to make sense of these complexities in a coherent, substantive framework that is theoretically grounded (Ragin, 1987:19). The aim of the empirical part of this study thus is to identify and explain the similarities and dissimilarities between different European CSOs working with marginalised group issues with the help of theoretical framework drawn in the previous chapter, in a way that a coherent and meaningful understanding of the subject is achieved.

3.2. Selection of cases

Sampling ways of selecting the cases to be investigated in comparative studies greatly vary depending on research problems and the nature of population from which cases are chosen (Przeworski – Teune, 1970:31). For the empirical investigation of representation strategies of European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, a purposeful sampling is used in order to select the cases that can provide relevant understanding of the central phenomenon of the study. This sampling method is often employed in qualitative studies with limited ambition of generalisation but with the orientation of more in-depth understanding of specific phenomena (Creswell, 2007:125). While there are diverse sampling methods under this category of purposeful sampling, 'criterion sampling' (ibid, p. 127) is used to ensure that all cases being studied to reflect substantive as well as practical requirements of the study. The following criteria are used in selecting the European CSOs to be empirically studied:

1) Working with marginalised group issues with group or issue focused missions
2) Certain extent of establishment at European level and active participation in civil society sectoral cooperation at European level
3) Claiming broad representativeness at European level
4) Availability of and accessibility to well-informed official websites

To illustrate more details of each criterion in selecting cases, firstly the definition of marginalised group by Melissa William (1998) in her book *Voice, Trust, and Memory: Marginalized groups and the failing of liberal representation* is worth noting since these criteria formed the basis of defining 'marginalised group' specified in the first criterion. According to her definition, marginalised groups show patterns of social and political inequality that are structured along the lines of group membership and there are negative meanings assigned to group identity by broader society or dominant culture. Moreover, determinant characteristics for the membership to the groups are usually non-voluntary and non-mutable (William, 1998:15-6). While this definition narrows down possible candidates in a great deal from the CSOs registered in the web-based database 'Register of Interest Representatives' of the European Commission,[3] still there are hundreds of social CSOs working with marginalised group issues including European, national, and local level organisations.

Regarding the second criterion, the member list of a network of social NGOs working at European level, Social Platform, was used in order to restrict the pool to the organisations that are actively participating in the cooperation among the CSOs at European level. The full members of Social Platform can be considered to have a certain extent of establishment in working at European level as well, considering that the Platform is viewed as a main site of the collaboration between the EU and the civil society sector (Cullen, 2010). This criterion gives us just around 40 organisations.[4]

The third criterion was assessed during the preliminary investigation of the CSOs via their official websites by looking at their general introduction and mission statements. In fact, a majority of the CSOs listed as the full members of Social Platform claim their broad representativeness at European level, either by claiming representativeness of marginalised groups per se or by claiming representativeness of the NGOs working with certain issues related to marginalised groups. For the purpose of embracing this diversity, two organisations that belong to the former case (EDF, EWL) and the other two that belong to the latter case (FEANTSA, ENAR) were

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3   On the European Commission's web-based 'Register of Interest Representatives', https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do, there were over 900 organisations registered under the category of 'non-governmental organisations / associations of NGOs'. The point of access to this site under the process of case selection was April 2011, which was before it was transformed into the new 'Transparency Register', jointly launched by the Commission and the European Parliament in June 2011.
4   Organisations identified at this stage include EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network), EBU (European Blind Union), EDF (European Disability Forum), ENAR (European Network Against Racism), EWL (European Women's Lobby), FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless), ILGA Europe (The European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association), INCLUSION EUROPE (The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families), SOLIDAR and so on.

selected. The table 3 shows the selected European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, with an analytical distinction between the ones with primary emphasis on 'group' representation and the ones with primary emphasis on representation of the NGOs working with specific 'issues' that are related to marginalised groups.

Table 3 *Selected cases with group/issue distinction*

Group/Issue focus	Selected European CSOs	
Group focused	EDF - European Disability Forum (People with disabilities)	EWL – European Women's Lobby (Women)
Issue focused	FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (Homelessness)	ENAR – European Network Against Racism (Racism)

The last criterion was also assessed during the initial investigation of the CSOs via their official websites, by looking at the degree of formality of the web-based information that are available to public and its richness. The availability and accessibility of these data are crucial since it relates to the practical feasibility of the research. Purposeful sampling can address the aspect of convenience and feasibility of data collection for a research process by accounting for the accessibility to the data and the restricted resources in doing so (Creswell, 2007:127; Flick, 2006:131). The above mentioned CSOs turned out to generally have highly informative web-based sources in their official websites.

The underlying principle of the criterion sampling in selecting the cases takes into account two important aspects in relation to the comparative approach of the study. Firstly, the importance of 'European' aspect of organisations is reflected in the second and the third criteria, which focuses on the homogeneous aspect in that all selected CSOs have a certain degree of establishment at European level and claim broad representativeness. Secondly, although not directly reflected in any of the sampling criteria, the importance of including marginalised groups with heterogeneous characteristics is underlying in the selection of cases. This latter consideration will enable the comparative analysis to account for the diverse features of constituents that might have impacts on different representation strategies among the selected CSOs, in terms of main struggles, specific features of constituents, salience and status of the related issues, etc. The table 4 below summarises basic features of the selected European CSOs working with marginalised group issues.

Table 4 *Brief description of basic features of the selected European CSOs*

	EDF	EWL	FEANTSA	ENAR
Key description	An independent European non-governmental organisation (ENGO) that represents the interests of 80 million disabled people in the European Union and stands for their rights.	The largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men.	An umbrella network of not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe.	A network of European NGOs working to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between European Union citizens and third country nationals.
Members	Main organisations of people with disability and their parents in each country and European-wide NGOs representing diverse disability movements.	Main national women's organisations in each country that take coordination roles as well as diverse European and international networks representing women.	National or regional umbrella organisations of service providers that support homeless people with employment, housing, health, social support and etc.	Various groups ranging from grass roots, advocacy organisations, information centres, to faith-based organisations and trade unions who fight against racism.
Membership coverage	One national umbrella organisation (National Council of Disabled People) in each and every member states plus Iceland and Norway, and 25 European-wide NGOs	More than 2500 organisations in all EU27 and three candidate countries that are coordinated by National Coordination member of each country, and 21 European-wide bodies	More than 100 organisations in almost all EU and candidate countries	About 700 members and associated organisations in all EU and some candidate countries that are coordinated by National Co-ordinating Meetings, including 13 European-wide organisations
Established year	1996	1990	1989	1998

Source: Official websites of the selected organisations

3.3. Text and document analysis

In order to understand representation strategies of the selected European CSOs working with marginalised group issues, firstly materials that are publicly available were collected via websites. In interpreting these data, text and document analysis method was used. Data for identifying organisational features reflecting representation strategies (election system, general decision making structure, membership structure, composition of leaders, executive boards, etc.) as well as data for understanding representative claims (mission statement, representative claims expressed in key organisational/policy-related documents, ways of defining constituents, etc.) were collected from the official websites of the selected CSOs.

Using text and document analysis has both its relevance for this study and limitations. Considering the empirical variables specified within the analytical framework (See the section 2.4.), looking into web-based texts and documents available on the selected CSOs' official websites is an adequate step since the official websites are where these organisations try to communicate with general public as well as with their members. They are also critical venues where the CSOs' claims for representativeness as well as missions and values are explicitly pronounced. Also, the materials obtainable from their official websites are not secondary sources, but first-hand sources coming from the CSOs themselves.

Apart from the information directly available on the websites, organisational documents such as Statutes, Annual Reports, Information leaflets were analysed. These documents primarily contain aims, missions, objectives, and core activities of organisations as well as information about governance structure, decision making bodies' delegated responsibilities and competences, rules regarding membership, election procedures for representative bodies, and financial principles. Other sources such as press releases, policy documents, position papers regarding certain issues were also reviewed, although they contain basically the same representative claims that appear within the core organisational documents mentioned above.

While reviewing and analysing these text and document data, the context in which these documents were constructed should always be taken into account (May, 2001:183-4). These factors in this study can range from attached organisational interests, certain requirements or restrictions from related actors, political environment, and so on. Moreover, the question of credibility and authenticity of material should be considered in the interpretation of the information. It is important to contextualise documents with other forms of research, especially when it comes to organisational research (ibid, p.187). Within this study, the contents from publicly available documents and texts about the selected organisations summarised here should foremost be considered as what these organisations are formally as well as ideally aiming for, not necessarily as what they actually realise in practice. Besides, possible audiences of these organisations' representative claims such as EU institutions, member organisations, and a broader public and their expectations towards these organisations should be taken into account when interpreting their organisational structures and representative claims.

All in all, the publicly available documentary sources collected provided the selected organisations' representative claims as well as core organisational features in a great detail. However, the rationale behind these organisational structures, practices, and claims related to their representation as well as any difficulties, challenges, specificities in pursuing those representation strategies cannot be fully understood by

looking at these documents. Documents provide not only rich information regarding how certain events are constructed but also bases for further investigation of research subject (May, 2001:175). Indeed, looking into the selected organisations' official information and documents helped directing further ways of investigating the research question at hand. Within this study, preliminary analysis of these text and document data was followed by qualitative interviews with representatives persons of each organisation.

3.4. Interviews

In contrast to quantitatively oriented structured interviews, qualitative interviews allow more flexibility in modifying initial questions according to interviewees' replies or specific contexts, thus having more focus on the interviewees' in-depth, detailed perspectives rather than on obtaining answers that can be directly coded for pre-fixed questions (Bryman, 2008:436-7). By taking into account the reflections of members of core decision making bodies as well as executive staffs of Secretariats of the organisations through interviewing, rationales behind the representative structures, practices, and claims identified in the first part of empirical research were explored. Also, some information about difficulties, challenges, and specificities of each organisation in representing their members and constituents at European level was obtained by conducting interviews.

The decisions regarding selecting, contacting the interviewees, structuring the interview guidelines and scheduling the interviews were based on the preliminary analysis of the documentary sources. For example, after looking at the basic organisational structures and the delegated responsibilities of different organisational bodies, it was plausible that interviewing people from both Statutory bodies (elected representatives among the members of the CSOs) and Secretariats (hired staffs working in the Brussels-based offices of the CSOs) would be the best thing to do in order to obtain a comprehensive view on their representation strategies. It was deemed that people from these two different categories could provide perspectives that are complementary to each other since they have different kind of roles, competences, and interactions with their members, EU institutions, etc. Thus, the initial plan was to interview one person from Executive Committee and another from Secretariat for each organisation. Based on the contact information available on the websites, scheduling of the interviews proceeded while the accessibility and time factors were taken into account. This sampling method is 'purposive sampling', since the interviewees were selected based on the judgement that they could provide information about the central question of the study and the sampling of interviewees

was done with the purpose of finding people that are most relevant to the research question (Bryman, 2008:458). At last, there were five in-person interviews in Copenhagen and in Brussels, one phone interview, and one email interview conducted - which covered two interviewees for all organisations but one (See the Appendix B).

The interviews were planned as semi-structured ones, comprising of three broad themes which have a set of questions and potential follow-up questions under each theme (See the Appendix A). However, during the actual interviews there was a great deal of flexibility in terms of adding complementary questions or omitting certain questions that seemed to be irrelevant to ask any longer given the conversation, although in general all themes were to a great extent covered and wordings of the questions were similar from one interview to another. The term 'semi-structured interview' is used to refer "the context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions" (Bryman, 2008:196). Especially when it comes to a multiple-case study, it is recommended to have a certain structure in order to make sure that the different cases investigated through interviews are comparable (Bryman, 2008:440). This type of semi-structured interview was useful since it helped keeping the general form of the interviews across different organisations while allowing the flexibility which was important for adjusting each interview to different organisations as well as persons with different backgrounds.

Upon the consent of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. The length of the interviews varied, between 36 minutes (a phone-interview) and 1 hour and 32 minutes although the majority of them last about an hour. All interviewees were informed that anonymity would be guaranteed, although all of them expressed that they had no reserve in being disclosed in relation to their interviews.

3.5.   Reflection on the methods

Reflecting on the methodology is important in identifying limitations or potential bias of the results of the empirical research. First and the foremost, both the number of cases selected (four cases) and the analytical framework which has multiple focuses are challenges in this comparative research in terms of managing the limited scope of the study. In order to make the comparison between the cases not only meaningful but also manageable, the case selection was done in such a way that there are certain converging homogeneous features among them. However, the challenge of looking at four different large-scaled organisations with multiple analytical points still remains.

With the text and document analysis, although the document styles as well as the extent of available documents and other information on the organisations' websites were to a great extent similar, there as yet was an uncertainty in making sure that all materials reviewed are comparable across the cases and extensive enough for the research purpose. Moreover, the accessibility to the text and documents varied, which again comes back to the problem of comparability across the cases. Another aspect was that when trying to systematically categorise the text materials in relation to the analytical framework, there was a danger that some unexpected important aspects of the empirical materials which did not fall into the analytical framework or theories might have been ignored or inappropriately handled.

When it comes to the interviews, accessibility to the interviewees in terms of time, distance, schedules, and available funding for the trips all mattered in a great deal. Also, since all interviews were relatively closely scheduled to each other due to the time and distance reason, there was not much room for reflection in between the interviews which could have led to identifying novel issues or changing of the interview guidelines. On the other hand, this at the same time enabled all the interviews conducted to have highly similar formats. According to Flick (2006), in-depth interviews can only be successfully implemented with the researcher's patience and highly trained situational competence (p. 154). It was very clear that the whole process of contacting, scheduling, meeting, conducting interviews and managing unexpected situations with a number of interviewees requires great inter-personal skills as well as situational competence, and as a first time interviewer there might have been unprofessional ways of handling some situations. Lastly, there was a lack of understanding about the different types of interviews such as phone and email interviews in terms of in what way the interaction might be different from in-person interviews. The quality of these interviews in terms of the information obtained varied quite much from the in-person interviews, for which the interviewer was not well prepared.

Meanwhile, the triangulation of the two methods and data, text and document analysis and interview, turned out to be useful in generating a deeper and comprehensive understanding of the representation strategies of the European CSOs. Both methods complemented and helped each other. For example, the in-depth interviews with the representative persons of the organisations were only possible with the solid knowledge on the essential organisational structures and representative statements that were obtained through the text and document analysis. On the other hand, interviews revealed more complex contexts and rationales behind the documentary materials and provided additional reflections, as well as some gaps between what is written in the documents and the reality of the organisations.

Chapter 4.　Analysis

4.1.　Formal structures of representation

The core formal mechanism commonly emphasised by all selected CSOs is a membership-based democratic election system which ensures formal authorisation of representatives forming main decision making bodies, who are accountable to their members. Meanwhile, rationales behind the formal structures as well as some gaps between such structures and real practices were pointed out during the interviews. The following part illustrates specificities of each organisation regarding their formal representation structures.

4.1.1. European Disability Forum (EDF)

EDF has four different membership categories. The core membership category, full member, includes a National Council of Disabled People from each EU/EEA member states and European NGOs of disabled people. While these two groups should conspicuously have their characteristics as DPOs (Disabled People's Organisations), ordinary member covers European NGOs working 'for' disabled people. The rest are observer members who are National Councils of disabled people from European countries that are outside the EU/EEA and associate members who are non-profit, corporate or individual members (EDF Statutes, Article 10, p. 4-6).

Different membership categories determine the scope of participation rights in EDF's three main statutory bodies - the General Assembly, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee - all of which are assisted by the Secretariat. Delegates to the General Assembly, the highest authority in decision making, consist of nominated representatives from full and ordinary members who have voting rights (EDF Statutes, Article 12, 13 p. 6-7).

At the General Assembly, the President of EDF and members of the Board of Directors are elected every four years. The Board of Directors consists of 28 full members and 2 ordinary members, and different groups of member organisations conduct internal elections in order to select these delegates. The Executive Committee members are elected among the members of the Board of Directors, with the

President being the Chair. The Committee consists of five representatives from National Councils of Disabled People and five representatives from European non-governmental organisations of disabled people (EDF Statutes, Article 13, 20 p. 7-10).

All in all, the structure of the statutory bodies and the formal election systems are explicitly established, reflecting hierarchical features in terms of representation of different membership categories. While the full membership which is only restricted to DPOs takes a critical importance in EDF's work, thus having larger representation in the Board (28 delegates out of 30, among which 16 are from the National Councils and 12 are from the European DPOs), ordinary members have a reserved right to sit in the Board (2 delegates) but not in the Executive Committee. This peculiar complexity of the membership categories and the rules regarding the number of the seats delegated to each membership category in the decision making bodies is a result of efforts in trying to obtain a democratic balance in representation of different perspectives (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July 2011).

Furthermore, it is explicitly stated that the Board is accountable to the General Assembly and the Executive Committee is accountable to the Board (EDF Statutes, p. 10-11), which shows a clear orientation of establishing formalistic representative structures. The Membership and Credentials Committee, which is comprised of the board members, has a delegated responsibility in assessing membership applications (EDF Statutes, Article 9, p. 4). This also implies a clear formal structure in managing the membership of EDF. The importance of formal representation structure of the organisation was repeated during the interview.

"It [the formal representation structure] *is very important for our legitimacy. Because... I am not speaking on behalf of myself, I am not speaking on behalf of people who fund me, I am not speaking on behalf of my director. I am speaking on behalf of our member organisations. So every decision we make here, they have to be pre-approved by them in a democratic way."* (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

4.1.2. European Women's Lobby (EWL)

EWL shares a highly similar organisational structure to that of EDF. To start with membership, full member comprises of National Coordination of women's NGOs (umbrella organisation) from the member states of the EU/EEA, accession countries and European Wide women's NGOs or women's section of mixed organisations. There are also associate member established in outside of the EU, and individual supporting members. Among the full members, each National Coordination has the right to nominate three delegates, while each European-wide organisation has the

right to nominate one delegate to the General Assembly, the highest authority in EWL (EWL Statutes, Article 4-11, p. 2-7). The emphasis on formal representativeness at every level is stressed in its Statutes.

> *"The National Co-ordinations and the European Wide Non-governmental organisations will ensure their own democratic and transparent procedures for the election of their delegates to the General Assembly".* (EWL Statutes, Article 11.4, p. 7)

The Board of Administration is comprised by election in the GA every two years, and each national coordination has one seat to the board while the number of seats for the European-wide NGOs is decided according to the internal rules, "in such a way as to achieve a balance between the national co-ordinations and the European wide non-governmental organisations" (EWL Statutes, Article 18, p. 9). Still other statutory body, the Executive Committee, is elected among the members of the Board, consisting of seven members: the President, two Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and three additional members. The Secretariat works as the administrative office of EWL (EWL Statutes, Article 20, p. 11-2).

While EWL appears to have a solidly established formal representation structure as summarised, the extensive membership-based structure is considered as the main force which backs up the representativeness of EWL.

> *"I think it's... if you look at how European actors consider us, the Commission, the Parliament... I have been working for another feminist network before, WIDE* [Women In Development Europe] *working on development policy, which has a totally different structure from EWL. Because it's not membership based but more focusing on experts, so... I can see that the legitimacy is bigger when you go and you say that you represent EWL, because of the structure, and because of the members we have. I mean you have bigger, wider membership behind you."* (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Like EDF, EWL also has a consultative body that is in charge of membership application procedure, the membership committee. All membership applications go through this committee who evaluates and makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee, and eventually are passed to the Board in case of associate member application. In case of full membership, the application further goes to the General Assembly, where applying organisations present themselves and full members ask questions to them. Here, one can have an important glimpse on how EWL controls the membership in relation to specific controversial issues. For instance, the organisations applying for full membership would usually be asked questions about their standpoints regarding sexual reproductive rights and prostitution, which, in case of

discordance with those of EWL, can be a reason for rejection of the membership (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011). While the identity as a DPO is strongly emphasised within the membership admission procedure of EDF (in a sense that if an applying organisation is not a DPO as EDF understands it the membership request can be rejected - Arsenjeva. Interview, 29 June 2011), the case of EWL illustrates a rather controversial aspect of the field of women's movement.

4.1.3. European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)

FEANTSA has a slightly different formal structure from EDF and EWL. It does not have any members organised at European level, and its full members include umbrella organisations operating at national as well as regional level while the other two only have national level umbrella organisations as their core members. Associate membership is granted to organisations with several different characteristics, i.e., national or regional organisations working on homelessness but not exclusively, organisations which fulfil the criteria for full membership but operating at local level. While both full and associate membership are confined to the organisations from the EU members states, corresponding membership is granted to the organisations operating in non-EU member states in Europe (FEANTSA Statutes, Article 4, p. 3).

FEANTSA also has three statutory organs, that is, the General Assembly, the Administrative Council, and the Executive Committee. Full members attend the GA, in which every two years the members of the Administrative Council are elected. The members of the Executive Committee are elected by the Administrative Council every two years, consisting of the President, two vice-presidents, the treasurer and the secretary. The Secretariat of FEANTSA is fully accountable to the Administrative Council as well (FEANTSA Statutes, Article 13, 23, p. 6, 8).

To have a formal structure like this has its importance "for credibility, for potential contacts with political representatives, for funding purposes" (Young. Email-interview. 4 July 2011). However, there are somewhat informal elements regarding how the votes are distributed and how the members are coordinated in each nation. While the other organisations have fixed number of votes for each delegate in the GAs, within FEANTSA there are 10 votes for each EU member states and full members of each country attending the GA divide them among each other (FEANTSA Statutes, Article 11, p. 5; Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011). Moreover, in Belgium for instance - where there are two full members who respectively represent Flemish and French regions - these two full members take turns to represent Belgium in the Administrative Council every two years. The interviewed

member of the Executive Committee acknowledged that the decision processes deciding who represents the country in the AC in case there are more than one full members in a country can differ across countries, and also that local level organisations can be present in the AC for the countries where there is no full member. For example, in Romania despite that there is no national or regional umbrella organisation a good working local organisation is invited to the AC and represents the country, while FEANTSA supports this organisation to form an umbrella organisation (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

Considering these aspects, FEANTSA appears to have rather flexible principles regarding the delegation of the representatives in the main decision making bodies as well as the distribution of votes, compared to the other organisations. The membership application process also seems to be less formalised, since it is just the Administrative Council but any specific sub-bodies who is responsible for this procedure, that discusses membership application with the advice from respective countries' representatives.

4.1.4. European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

Unlike EDF or EWL, ENAR does not restrict (full) membership only to national level umbrella organisations but holds direct membership relations with all organisations operating at local, regional, national or European levels. However, it at the same time operates in a very similar manner as EDF and EWL, by specifying that members should be "accepted by the relevant National Coordination Meeting or the European Coordination Meeting" (ENAR Statutes, p. 2). Thus in practice, all individual organisations belong to either national or European coordination organisations, and the delegates to the main decision making bodies come only from those coordination organisations. It also has other membership categories such as associate and accession members, which include organisations based in non-EU member states and accession countries, respectively (ENAR Statutes, p. 3).

ENAR has the Strategic Congress where broad policy guidelines and strategic plan of ENAR for three years are determined, composed of the delegates who are selected by the National Coordination Meeting (NCM) of each country and the European Coordination Meeting (ECM). NCM in each country and ECM are held at least once a year, and every three years two representatives (one representative to sit in the Management Board and one substitute) are elected from each and all of these meetings, to be represented in the General Assembly. From the Management Board which is composed of one representative of each and all NCMs and ECM, a Chair, two Vice Chairs, Treasurer, and three other representatives from different regions

(South, East, Centre/North) are elected, together which constitute the Bureau (ENAR Statutes, p. 3-8).

Each national coordination makes its own independent decisions regarding the constitution of members. The ideal from ENAR's standpoint as a whole is that there should be no gate-keeping in accepting members (Quraishy. Interview. 14 July 2011), which is a quite contrasting aspect compared to EWL for instance. However, this very room for manoeuvre has led to the problem of inclusiveness at the national level of ENAR (See the section 4.4.1.).

While the formal representation structure is imperative as to enable continuity and to form a base of demands and strong voices (Quraishy. Interview. 14 June 2011), it was found out that some aspects of these formal structure were to be changed due to the gap between the Statutes and the practice. For example, the Management Board which comprises of the representatives from each and every member states of the EU and European organisations is now deemed to be too big, bureaucratic, and working inefficiently. Furthermore, the ECM was pointed out as being not so relevant in the current context, since there is no such pressing necessity in having this type of coordination among the European organisations in this field in addition to issue-specific collaborations. So these aspects demonstrate that the formal structure set up at the start of the ENAR does not account for the current reality, thus calling for some structural changes in the near future (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

4.2.   Descriptive aspects of representation

Descriptive aspects of representation are reflected in the conditions for the delegates who constitute main decision making bodies as well as in the membership criteria of the selected CSOs. However, emphasis on these is pronounced to varying degrees among them. The following part illustrates specificities of each organisation when it comes to descriptive representation.

4.2.1. European Disability Forum (EDF)

All selected organisations have some layers of membership criteria depending on member organisations' characteristics, geographical bases, scope of operations (whether it is European, national, regional, or local), and so on. What is particular about EDF is that it has a hierarchical feature of membership structure that reflects descriptive aspect of representation. To illustrate, full members, who have "complete membership of the Association", have to be organisations 'of' disabled people at national and European level. In order to become full members, an organisation should

have a 51% majority of disabled people and of parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves within its membership and within its governing bodies (EDF Statutes, Article 10, p. 5). On the other hand, organisations 'for' disabled people can belong to ordinary membership category, which has lesser representation in the statutory bodies (See the section 4.1.1.).

Apart from these formal principles, the official website of EDF has a rich information about the representative persons in its Executive Committee and Board of Directors. In the detailed description of these leaders, main emphasis is on the shared identities and experiences with diverse disabilities which is articulated by either being a person with disability or being parents of a person with disability. Moreover, the recruitment of secretariat also encourages employment of disabled people (EDF Statutes, Article 25, p.13). The emphasis on the descriptive aspect of representation in EDF was further pronounced during the interviews.

"That [the strong emphasis on DPOs] *is because persons with disabilities... know how it is to live a life in European society.* [...] *the right voice... I mean, you can never be the voice of me, if you do not have disabilities. Because even though one works within the field of disabilities for 25 years, you will not experience what it is to be out in the power and decisions that are generated for persons with disabilities, and the power that is excluding us."* (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July. 2011).

"I think that the main characteristic of our membership is representation of people with disabilities. We are an organisation of people with disabilities, with stress being on 'of'. […] *And generally for example when there is a conflict of... not a conflict but... whenever there is a difference in opinions among our members, between our full and ordinary members, we informally, I don't think there is any written rules, but we would trust more the opinion of the full members. Because they represent the people with disabilities."* (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Thus, it appears that descriptive representation as a principle is not only applied in forming organisational bodies and electing representatives but also in decision making process and working of the executive staffs in the Secretariat as well.

4.2.2. European Women's Lobby (EWL)

EWL also has an explicit principle of descriptive representation when it comes to the composition of main sovereign decision making bodies as well as its membership, by stating that the General Assembly consists of 'women' delegates nominated by the full members (EWL Statutes, Article 11, p. 7). Full members here only involve

women's organisations or women' section of European NGOs. Naturally, the representative members for other statutory bodies such as the Board of Administration and the Executive Committee are all women, since they are elected from the General Assembly and the Board members, respectively. The fact that all staffs of secretariat of EWL, whose detailed information is available on its official website, are women also indicates a pervasive emphasis on descriptive representation.

Regarding this aspect however, the interviewed Policy Officer of EWL Secretariat acknowledged that the question of whether to extend their full membership to include non women-only feminists or gender equality organisations is being discussed currently and emphasised generational as well as historical reasons for the current practice.

> *"All our membership has to be women's organisations. For European organisations also it's a women's section so it's just women. But if we change... I mean in the future for the Statutes to have European gender equality organisations or feminist organisations that are mixed, it could be an amendment coming. […] It's being asked all the time by other people, 'where are the men?', that's a typical question. […] It really depends I think also on the new generation of women's feminist organisations, you have more mixed organisations... it's a generational thing as well."* (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Although more about potential changes in this respect and internal discussions were not looked into further, it was clear that the emphasis on descriptive representation appeared to have equally strong yet a more dynamic characteristic than that of EDF.

4.2.3. European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)

On the contrary to EDF or EWL, FEANTSA does not demonstrate any particular emphasis on descriptive representation in relation to its broader constituency, the homeless. It defines itself as a network of national and regional umbrella organisations of service providers supporting homeless people (www.feantsa.org), thus more oriented to representing the issue of homelessness and related non-governmental actors rather than to group-representation of homeless people.

> *"Well... we are trying to take into account the interests of homeless people as best we can. But we don't have any mandate from them to represent them. You can only represent something or somebody you have a mandate, you are elected to... proposed to..."* (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

From this interview excerpt with a member of the Executive Committee, one can read a formalistic understanding of representation, thus ruling out a possible representative claim of FEANTSA that is directed to the homeless group itself. Nevertheless, there was an emphasis on self-representation via participation of homeless people in one of the policy documents reviewed. In this policy tool-kit for the members of FEANTSA, the importance of participation of homeless people in the operation of service organisations is highlighted and information on how in practice to realise the participation of homeless people is described in detail. Moreover, within this document it is revealed that several representatives of the member organisations of FEANTSA share the experiences of being homeless (FEANTSA, 'Participation Tookit: Redistributing the Power!'. October 2007). Regarding this policy effort on user-participation, the interviewee who happened to be chairing the working group on user-participation provided some information on the further effort of FEANTSA that has been directed to encourage networking of homeless people.

> *"In 2009 FEANTSA organised a conference with a theme of participation. And in that conference we made it also possible that people experiencing homeless can be... we had about 100 people experiencing homelessness, from very different countries... and when the conference was finished, those 100 people held a separate meeting, where they decided that it would be good to form an European network of people experiencing homelessness.* [...] *FEANTSA tries to support the foundation of such a network."*
> (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

Thus, although FEANTSA does not directly try to have descriptive representation of homeless people, it does recognise the importance of self-representation of the homeless. By encouraging and supporting this, FEANTSA seems to consider this kind of effort as to contribute to its substantive representation, "in the best interest of people who are homeless" (FEANTSA, 'Statement of Values', p. 2).

4.2.4. European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

Like FEANTSA, ENAR also defines its identity as a thematic organisation.

> *"We are a thematic network. We are a cause-based network. We are not representing a specific community.* […] *For us it is much more complex because we embrace a number of... being discriminated against on the ground of your ethnicity, race, culture, religion... so it is huge, and we have many different types of organisations that work on these issues.* […] *Anti-racism movement does not represent a single group category. So for us, it's difficult to build a single constituency."* (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

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However, despite the fact that ENAR also defines itself as a network organisation of NGOs fighting against racism - that is, it's main activities are more issue-focused rather than group representation-focused - it as yet has a condition for the representative members to be delegated to the statutory bodies of the organisation which reflects descriptive representation. This condition articulates that among two national representatives from each NCM who are selected every three years, at least one should belong to a group directly affected by racism or to an ethnic minority (ENAR Statutes, p. 4).

> *"They* [referring to people from majority] *can be deeply convinced about the need for equality. But there is nevertheless, if you are really from the majority community, eh... how can I say... In-depth personal experiences of discrimination can be never met. Right? You can talk intellectually about it, you can be strong, good... but... I mean you cannot bring personal experiences to the fights, and you just perpetuate the old relationship, in a way... so it is really our ethnic minority people that are also in all the different positions of the organisations."* (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

From this interview excerpt it is clear that although ENAR defines its identity as a thematic issue-focused CSO, in terms of representation it still values the implication of descriptive representation to a certain extent. Although to a lot lesser degree compared to EDF or EWL, it positively acknowledges the impact of having a representative who has shared identity and experiences with its broader constituents.

4.3. Appealing deliberative and authentic characteristics

By looking into the mission statements, objectives, values and other key organisational documents, diverse representative claims of these organisations were identified. Moreover, during the interviews with the representative persons of the organisations, some of these claims were repeated, emphasised, or elaborated further. In the following part, the ways how these European CSOs appeal their representativeness by emphasising *deliberative* and *authentic* characteristics are analysed.

4.3.1. Deliberation as the core principle of decision making

Firstly, a deliberative nature which embraces members' perspectives in their operation is claimed by all selected CSOs. This claim is supported by having rigorous communication and consultation with their members regarding the activities of the

organisations and by emphasising platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences among the members. Deliberative aspect is also linked to the formal arrangement of the organisational structure explored previously, by emphasising democratic as well as accountable ways of communicative channels that are formally established. For example, EDF declares that its main activities are conducted "on the basis of thorough consultation with its members" (EDF Statutes, Article 3, p. 2), and the same aspect is emphasised within FEANTSA's statement: "FEANTSA is democratically structured to involve member organisations in as many aspects of its work as possible." (www.feantsa.org).

The rational behind these deliberative aspects of representation seems to come from the diversity as well as the extensiveness of the membership of these CSOs. For example, EWL emphasises its diversity of membership and working areas (EWL Annual report 2008, p. 3), and the representation of "the full diversity of European women at the European level" (www.womenlobby.org). The diversity gives reasons to further stress democratic and deliberative aspects of representative activities, and this is demonstrated in the following mission of EWL where involvement of the members and the representation of different groups of women are emphasised.

"As these organisations are very diverse, the EWL does not follow any particular political, economic, religious or philosophical doctrine. [...] *European Women's Lobby aims* […] *to take into account the needs, specific inequalities, and perspectives of different groups of women, and the diverse experiences of women at all stages of their life cycle."* (www.womenlobby.org)

Apart from these statements, all organisations have some kind of internal as well as external communicative means such as news letters, magazines and member's room online. However, a substantive question such as whether the perspectives of member organisations result in consensus through deliberative processes via these venues is difficult to be answered by just looking at these venues and related claims. Nevertheless, through the interviews, more information on how these CSOs are trying to achieve more deliberative decision making process as well as member's participation was obtained. For example, EWL is increasingly reaching out to the 'members of the members', which means the local organisations who are members of the national umbrella women's organisations (National Co-ordinations). This effort includes extending the scope of consultation practice.

"We are currently, here in Brussels in the recent years, trying to reach out to them, because that's one of the weaknesses of European networks, who are structured like ours. […] *so for example last year we did a review of our strategic plan, and we did a*

questionnaire survey, that was as well designed for them [the local level members]. *So that they would participate in the consultation on the review of the strategic plan and to keep their views on our policy priorities and all these. So we try more and more to involve them. Now we currently are doing a membership review, and the same, we have designed two questionnaires* [one for the umbrella members and one for the local members].*"* (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

This reaching out effort in order to broaden the scope of deliberation among the members indeed was understandable considering one of the prominent critics towards European CSOs that it does not have a firm connection to the local level (See the section 1.2.). A similar effort is being made within ENAR, in order to reach out and expand their peer-to-peer relationships with their members at local level. Although the primary venue for communicating and consulting the local organisations is through the national coordination organisations, increasingly ENAR is realising the importance of reaching out to them in order to refine the organisation with more depth than extensiveness (Privot. Interveiw. 29 June 2011). Furthermore, according to the following interview excerpt, deliberative process is important for its legitimacy.

"...the only way you can ensure this [referring to grass-roots perspectives] *is through democratic system, consultation process trying to include as many people as possible... so that's where we drive our legitimacy. We are not elected people, we are not parliamentarians, but we represent nevertheless our constituency of various types. At least we should be able to track back the information and say look, this we heard from this person, this organisation, in this country."* (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

The following interview excerpt of a member of the Executive Committee of EDF demonstrates the importance of deliberative process which takes place in decision making.

"I think on average, there is a very... mutual understanding of concept of disability politics. Where we want to go, how we want to get there, etc. But when we are deciding policies, there will always be different arguments... Sometimes the Italians has one, sometimes the Danes has one. So when you are dealing with them, you have to make sure that all necessary perspectives are taken into consideration. And I would not call that tensions, but I will call that input of relevance." (Langvad. Phone-interveiw. 4 July 2011).

Meanwhile, an executive member of FEANTSA emphasised a different kind of deliberation process that occurs within the 'working groups'. The working groups of

FEANTSA are elected among the representatives in the Administrative Council, and its composition has to take into account regional as well as expert balance (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011). From the following interview excerpt, it is implied that these working groups actually function as a deliberative platform where rich amount of knowledge, experiences, and perspectives are exchanged.

"For me the most important aspect is the exchange of experiences between members. […] I learned actually a lot from my colleagues from other countries because in my job, I am the only one in this whole region who work on this issue. Where can I go and ask? […] In the working groups, because it takes one and a half day, twice a year... also to avoid travelling cost and etc., so in one day and a half you can exchange a lot of information." (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

Within FEANTSA's statements, the practical implications of deliberation pointed out by the interviewee are also emphasised, by stressing effectiveness of lobbying or advocacy activities resulting from knowledge exchanges, accumulation of experiences and best practices (www.feantsa.org).

In this study, the ambition cannot stretch to determine whether these organisations' efforts in promoting deliberative communication between the representatives and the members introduced here are substantively achieved. However, as shown here it is certain that there is a claimed aim in establishing venues for deliberation as well as various instruments to encourage deliberative discussions and exchanges among the members, although this focus is not an alternative to formalistic procedures but a complementary measure. While all organisations stress deliberative aspects of their operation, it is interesting to note some differences among them, in terms of the different levels of deliberation that are highlighted. Especially, FEANTSA's emphasis on the deliberation within specific working bodies consisting of the representatives with expertise, the working groups, stands out from the rest who seem to focus more on the extensive bases of deliberation including grass root local members.

4.3.2. Claiming the 'authentic' representative voice

There are a few other representative claims these CSOs make that can be captured by the concept of authenticity. In this section these are analysed with the sub-types of the key bases of representative claims suggested by Saward (2010). (See the Table1, p. 13). The following illustration covers *claiming expertise and special credentials*,

surrogacy for wider interests, *word from the street*, *self-representation and mirroring,* and appealing to *connectedness* as well as *independence*.

Firstly, *expertise and authoritative knowledge* which become the base of the claim for special credentials of these organisations are generally argued in two different aspects. One is in terms of having grass roots members' close and rich experiences in relevant issues of the marginalised groups. The other is in terms of having expert knowledge of the European politics, institutions, legislations, and decision making process that are relevant to the respective marginalised group issues. By claiming for these two different kinds of expertise and authoritative knowledge, the European CSOs legitimise their representative status towards both EU institutions and their members. For instance, FEANTSA stresses its scientific approach to homelessness by stating one of their organisational objectives as to "conduct and promote research and data collection to better understand the nature, extent, causes of, and solutions to, homelessness" (www.feantsa.org). A member of the Executive Committee of FEANTSA also noted that the expertise of FEANTSA is very well recognised, certainly by the European institutions and especially by the Commission. (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011). The following interview excerpt with a member of the Executive Committee of EDF conveys an impression of the authoritative knowledge in its field.

> *"The perspectives that we are putting on the agenda, or our input to the discussions are of course coming from the experiences that we have of representing persons with disabilities for almost 80 years."* (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July 2011).

While in the above excerpt the expert knowledge mentioned indicates the national organisation's experiences, a Policy Officer from EDF Secretariat equally emphasised expert knowledge of the European organisations.

> *"When we discuss policy proposals, we always draw on the experiences of National Councils. Because we cannot write a policy proposal without knowing how it is going to affect at national level. […] But you have to remember that European NGOs, having also very special structures, they don't really have that thorough knowledge of local level but they have so much disability-specific knowledge. It is not like one is more valuable than the other."* (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Secondly, the CSOs also claim their authenticity by broadly defining the goals and visions of their activities. This is done by claiming *a surrogacy for the wider interests* which are not only restricted into representing interests of specific groups or their members. These organisations claim to stand for a broader interest that goes beyond

the groups' and talk for example about equal society, democratic and peaceful Europe. For instance, in ascertaining its objective of equal society EWL frames its representative claims in a broader manner.

> *"EWL works towards a vision of a peaceful, social and democratic European Union built on a culture of respect for human rights, equality, peace and solidarity, in Europe and globally..."* (www.womenlobby.org).

Another example can be ENAR's representative claim regarding its extensiveness of membership base that is united by a surrogate mission of 'fighting against racism'.

> *"ENAR's vision is of a Europe free of racism and related intolerance, where each individual has equal opportunities to participate in society. […] ENAR members are very diverse organisations, ranging from grass roots organisations to advocacy organisations, from information centres to faith-based organisations and to trade unions. What unites these organisations is that they are all involved in the fight against racism, and as such are able to collectively represent the voice of the organised human rights and anti-racist civil society"* (ENAR, Information leaflet, p. 2, 6).

Thirdly, some of the claims of these organisations appeal their grass roots' perspectives. By emphasising close connection to grass roots NGOs and beneficiaries of their activities, they claim their authenticity based on *the words from the street*. For instance, ENAR emphasises the importance of channelling the views of grass roots civil society to public authorities and implies its role as a carrier of the words from the streets.

> *"The work of NGOs at European level is essential in articulating and defending the views of civil society from the grass roots through to the national and European level.* [...] *The voice of the civil society must not only be heard but integrated into European legislation to ensure positive change in the day-to-day lives of those affected by racism and other forms of discrimination."* (ENAR, Information leaflet, p. 10).

Although the claim that highlights grass root perspectives can be a challenging one to realise in practice considering the extensiveness of the European networks, the following interview excerpt with a Policy Officer of EWL Secretariat demonstrates how they actually reach out to grass roots in certain circumstances.

> *"Because of the nature of my work for example which is very on a specific issue which is not the mainstream women's issue - I work on Roma women, on disability, and migrant*

women - I mean then I get to work with the second level members [referring to local organisations coordinated by the national co-ordinations]. *Because often the first level, some have expertise but some don't, and they gave us the contacts of the second level, so that's how we can work and feed expertise and all of this. On this issue, like asylum for example, I know who is working on the local level, maybe not all our members but I know the ones that are the most active."* (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Fourthly, in certain organisations a principle of *self-representation* is highly emphasised and their representative claims are based on descriptive representation, *mirroring*. These organisations claim their authentic representation by ascertaining the importance of speaking for oneself, participating in decision making processes and descriptive similarity between representatives and the represented. Some statements of EDF, who puts forward its members' characteristics as "self-advocate" (www.edf-feph.org) illustrate this point well.

"EDF was created by persons with disabilities and the parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves, and it is precisely this that makes EDF a unique representative platform, both at a European level and internationally." (EDF Annual report 2008-9, p. 4).

"When you are dealing with disability issues, the decisions relevant for persons with disabilities are taking at all levels. [...] So of course we have to be present at the European level because they decide on internal market, on free mobility, on standardisation, and traffic, etc." (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July 2011).

Lastly, Saward's (2010) concepts of *connectedness* and *independence*, which are used as the modes of reception of representative claims by audiences, can also be employed in looking at some other representative claims of these CSOs. For example they all emphasise the connectedness as a means of appealing authentic aspect of their operation, by putting forward their close working relations with public authorities. For example, EWL emphasises its consultative status with the Council of Europe, its partnership with the European Commission, Council of Ministers, European Parliament, and other Advisory bodies. Furthermore, its active engagement in Social Platform and European Civil Society Contact Group is also pronounced (EWL Annual report 2008, p. 2, www.womenlobby.org). Emphasising its cooperative engagement within the broader civil society sector interacting with EU institutions can also be seen as appealing its connectedness to existing structures and eminent actors. Another instance can be drawn from FEANTSA's emphasis on the close working relations with public authorities such as the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN, and

national/regional governments (www.feantsa.org). Still other example is demonstrated by ENAR, whose cooperative relation with the EU institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament's anti-racism Intergroup, the EU Council, and the Committee of Regions is stressed (ENAR, Information leaflet, p. 10). Meanwhile, a contrasting feature is also claimed by all CSOs in order to appeal their authentic character, by asserting independence and disconnectedness from any religions, political affiliations, or specific nationalities as such.

These various representative claims analysed here can be interpreted as attempts to appeal their authenticity of representativeness when it comes to the causes and marginalised groups they claim to act and voice for. As shown, they are diverse but at the same time highly converging among the cases.

4.4. Challenges in representing marginalised groups at EU-level

From the interviews with representative persons of the selected CSOs challenges in representing their members and constituencies at European level were identified, which give us some reasons to question to what extent their representative claims are realised in practice and what are the difficulties in doing so. Some of these challenges seem to be commonly derived from the very structural set-up of these European CSOs, while there are also specific difficulties depending on the nature of the issue and constituency of each organisation.

4.4.1. Differences in capacity among the members and lack of resources

Given the very structure of two-layered membership of these European CSOs – that a numerous members in each EU/EEA, and accession countries are coordinated by one umbrella organisation representing them at national level, although FEANTSA shows a slightly different picture – the capacity of the representative member organisations at national level to representing their own members and to communicate between their members and the European network is a crucial factor for the entire representative chains to work as intended. However, considering the extensiveness of the membership of these European CSOs, it is not surprising that the capacity of these national umbrella organisations in terms of resources in doing so varies to a great extent across countries. Not only the issue of language, funding, and political will, there are also differences in the degree of formalisation as well as comprehensiveness of the membership coverage.

For example there are differences in membership and functioning of the organisations especially between the old EU member states and the new or candidate

countries, since many old member states' organisations pre-existed before the European network while in new member states they were created in order to become members of the European ones. (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011). Moreover, a representative of ENAR pointed out the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of national umbrella organisations in some cases are difficult to achieve, and the power relations at national or local level sometimes can be a barrier in achieving the inclusiveness (Quraishy. Interview. 14 June 2011).

Another challenge that is related to the capacity of the members of these CSOs is lack of resources among the member organisations. For example, the following interview excerpts illustrates how difficult it is for the minorities engaged in anti-discrimination movement in European society to have enough resources to participate and contribute to the organisation's work.

"At the national level I would say... that actually a number of the communities that we do represent... or if you look at specifically migrant, offspring of migrants born in Europe, they are often off the mainstream, so... no contact, no network, no social network... well, social network within the communities sometimes is very strong but with outside of the community or with authorities... to the politicians, media... very scarce resources. […] So I think that in terms of getting your voice heard, it's really an issue." (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Indeed, all selected CSOs' representatives mentioned the lack of resources among some of their members as a barrier that hinders their participation and representation greatly, especially with the recent recession and funding cuts for many NGOs. Not only that the funding problems of certain members are severe, but also the gaps among its members in terms of resources which directly have an impact on their respective participation are seen problematic.

" [referring to certain members] They are well funded. So they can contribute, they can send responses to the questionnaires, come to meetings, they can... but there are other organisations really struggling for their existence. With the financial crisis and funding cuts a lot of them are basically on volunteer-base. They don't have expertise to work on European matters, sometimes the national issues are so serious and so pressing that all their effort goes to sort out the situation, for example paying out benefits to the most vulnerable people, in county X. So they don't necessarily have capacity to always be active at European level." (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

The problem of lack of resources also hampers the participation of members in a specific way, for instance regarding language barrier. A member of the Executive

Committee of FEANTSA mentioned during the interview about this aspect and how lack of resources hampers solving the language issue, since hiring translator is simply too expensive and unaffordable (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

Several interviewees acknowledged the critic pointing out that European CSOs are weak at national level. This aspect is attributed both to the low level of awareness and attention on European issues in national contexts and to the problem of ownership among the members. For example, in some countries not only to be linked to the European network but also to the EU in general are not popular, which poses a challenge in trying to engage national members in European issues (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011). Both ENAR and EDF's Secretariat persons acknowledged that the consultation process on European issues usually does not reach local level organisations because of the limited time, language barrier, and low level of ownership. EWL on the other hand, is trying to address the matter by trying to have direct consultation and interaction with its local level members (See the section 4.3.1.).

4.4.2. Managing the diversity in representing members

One of the overwhelming aspects of these European CSOs is their diversity of members. Although each of them has an explicit definition of its membership, still they cover a great diversity of members in terms of types of organisations, main focuses they have, and diverse sub-groups of the relevant constituency. The Director of ENAR Secretariat acknowledged this aspect and potential critics, and said the core strategy is to work on both transversal and group specific issues (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011). In the following interview excerpt, the importance of achieving a delicate balance among different issues, perspectives, and sub-groups in EDF's work is explained.

" So we have to divide all the necessary political perspectives among each other. […] There is always... the discussion on not to create an unequal balance. North, South, rich, poor, spin-cord injury, psychosocial disabilities... So we are very much aware of this delicate balance which is core thing of our collaboration." (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July 2011).

Meanwhile, a Policy Officer working at EWL Secretariat shared her view on how they try to see this source of challenge, the diversity, as a resource in managing the challenge itself.

"In terms of really taking into account the diversity of women's groups... it's a challenge, and one of the key tools we have is our membership. I mean our key strength. To integrate this diversity perspective is our membership... Because they will remind us, for example we have the women's committee of the European Disability Forum, they will remind us if we are not paying attention to women with disabilities. […] it's from us being pro-active as well, but it's not perfect. I mean we cannot really say that we pay attention to all the different issues and all the groups. […] We are even more pro active on specific groups of women that are not already covered by other interest groups." (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

As pointed out here, there are initiatives from the Secretariat in supporting the representation of certain issues that would otherwise not be raised as agendas. A similar effort is made within EDF, in trying to encourage more participation and representation of the impairment groups that are particularly weakly organised.

"I think it is really a challenge to ensure really everybody is heard. […] Some disability groups are badly organised for various reasons. So that is our struggle. How do you represent those people, to bring their issues into the light if they are not really that well organised. […] We try to get them as much visibility as possible, to help learn to try to keep their members and views on board." (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

4.4.3. Bridging the members and European decision makers

While the importance of the civil society's role as a bridge between the European decision makers and citizens is emphasised both by the European CSOs and the EU institutions, in practice there exists a challenge in communicating between them, according to a Policy Officer in the Secretariat of EDF.

"My job is to have messages that are digestible to the national organisations who don't really know the whole lot about European issues, but at the same time not to have it too basic for the European players who want the proposals coming from me to be extremely technical, doable, and relevant in European context... in political and legal contexts. […] How do you make a convincing message for those [European stakeholders] *and making it relevant and interesting to these?* [national members]*"* (Arsenjeva. Interview. 29 June 2011).

Moreover, although these CSOs are all relatively well-organised, recognised, and big networks in this field, still the challenge of being main-streamed in European policy making process and firmly recognised as important actor by European institutions

remains (Langvad. Phone-interview. 4 July 2011). There are also challenges in raising specific marginalised group issues according to these CSOs for the time being, due to the current political atmosphere in Europe.

"The current context makes it difficult to raise this issue [anti-racism/discrimination]... *I mean equality in general is badly seen... but in particular anti-racism. People do not want to discuss, because it's completely linked to the migration debate."* (Privot. Interview. 29 June 2011).

"On the campaign on non-divisive political issues like violence against women and women in decision making, these two issues we have been working systematically with cross-parties. But when we go with maternity leave, migration, we have been trying, but most of the time but we don't get that [support from certain parties].*"* (Bach. Interview. 29 June 2011).

"Sometimes talking about homelessness you can also come to the item of irregular immigrants. That's a politically difficult item. Every member of FEANTSA knows that. But in general the item of homelessness... it's rather well accepted at European and national levels... at least to discuss." (Lescrauwaet. Interview. 30 June 2011).

The above excerpts demonstrate how the current political atmosphere is making it difficult to raise certain issues for these organisations, that are especially linked to migration. They manifest how the European CSOs' works are influenced by the political context in which they operate.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The following section summarises the findings from the previous chapter and gives holistic accounts on the representation strategies of the organisations investigated, while highlighting the similarities and differences among them. The analytical distinction between the CSOs focusing on group or issue representation and some other characteristics of them are taken into account in discussing possible explanatory factors generating these similarities and differences. Thereafter, final remarks which highlight contributions and limitations of the study as well as prospective research subjects are followed.

5.1. Summarising discussion

First of all, *formal representative structures* in forming main organisational bodies and electing representatives are greatly emphasised by all CSOs. The democratic election systems are established, which claim to link the representative chains between grass roots local organisations, representative national umbrella organisations, and finally European level networks. The formal representative structures are seen essential as the bases of legitimacy, credibility, and transparency of these organisations towards their members and the EU institutions, despite their identities as non-governmental, non-electoral civil organisations. While they share highly similar structures when it comes to the formal set-up of the European level elections and decision making bodies, the extent to which national level organisations are formalised and coordinated across countries differs among them. In this respect, the group-representation focused organisations, EDF and EWL, appear to have a stricter set of principles and more firmly established structures compared to the issue-representation focused organisations, FEANTSA and ENAR, who appear to have rather flexible arrangements and whose formal structure is under some changes, respectively.

Secondly, the emphasis on *descriptive representation* is reflected in the composition of their leaders and in the membership criteria, by stressing the importance of representatives having shared identity and experiences with their constituencies. In this respect again, the group-representation focused organisations

EDF and EWL turned out to have a stronger emphasis than the issue-representation focused FEANTSA and ENAR, by claiming the importance of participation and presence of the respective groups in decision making process. This aspect is pervasively embedded in their organisational structures by exclusively valuing the representatives having shared descriptive characteristics with their constituencies. While the emphasis on descriptive representation is rather absent within FEANTSA in relation to their broader constituency, the homeless, it nevertheless recognises the importance of the self-representation of homeless people and supports the networking and mobilisation of them. ENAR shows descriptive representation by having a condition for the delegates in their main decision making bodies, although it is pronounced to a lesser degree than EDF and EWL.

Thus, regarding the first analytical point where formalistic and descriptive aspects of representation were looked into, the four cases turned out to pose some similarities and differences that go well along with the distinction between the CSOs focusing on group-representation and the ones focusing on issue-representation (See the Table 3, p. 22). To put it simply, the group-representation focused CSOs (EDF, EWL) tend to have a stronger emphasis on both formalistic and descriptive representation compared to the ones with their primary focus on issue-representation (FEANTSA, ENAR). The figure 2 below is a positioning of each organisation in relation to its salience of emphasis on formalistic and descriptive representation.
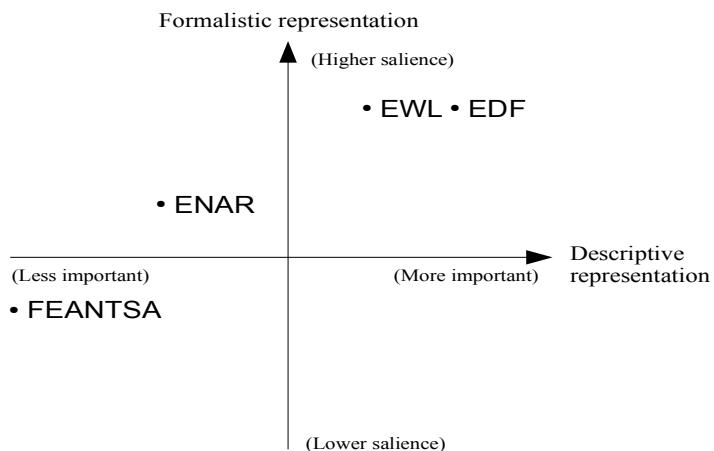
Figure2 *Positioning of the selected CSOs in relation to formalistic/descriptive representation*

How do we explain these similarities and differences? For their highly established and stricter formal structures of EDF and EWL, it might be so that both disability and women's movements have been relatively more active and advanced, with a longer history of their core members' operation who are in many cases better funded as well as equipped with higher capacity, compared to for instance service providing

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organisations in the field of homelessness or advocacy networks working with the issue of anti-racism. This aspect is partly demonstrated by the fact that EDF and EWL have a larger number of member organisations established at European level who have their own lobbying practices established, while FEANTSA has none and ENAR has fewer than the other two. The same goes with the degree of establishment and comprehensiveness of the national umbrella organisations in respective marginalised group issues. Disability movement as well as women's movement have better established national umbrella organisations that have been organised for a longer period of the time in general than homelessness or anti-racism related organisations. Thus, it might be that it is easier for FEANTSA and ENAR to have a rather informal, flexible, as well as dynamic characteristic in their formal structures, compared to EDF and EWL who have more rigid structures with already well established large number of member organisations.

Regarding descriptive representation, the very identity of EDF and EWL as the organisations focusing on the group-representation could be a strong reason for putting more importance on descriptive representation, since they value the self-representation and the participation of their constituencies in decision making as one of the core missions. Moreover, if we think about the characteristics of each marginalised group, the fact that the homeless itself is not a non-mutable status but a temporary (although not necessarily) situation for individual homeless person might explain the lesser salience of descriptive representation within FEANTSA. For ENAR, the fact that the constituencies of anti-discrimination movement are highly diverse, encompassing various racial, religious, or ethnicity-centred movements, and also the fact that there have been anti-discrimination cause-based movements led by non-minority groups might be the reasons for the modest emphasis on descriptive representation.

When it comes to the second analytical point where the ways how these CSOs appeal their representativeness were looked at, no distinctive differences among them were found as discernible as they were within the first analytical point. While various ways of appealing their deliberative and authentic characteristics were identified, the organisations present highly converging patterns.

Firstly, all of these CSOs appeal their venues, practices, and instruments enabling *deliberation* as one of the core principles of their decision making process. Deliberative communication, rigorous consultation, and platforms of sharing knowledge and experiences among the members are claimed to bring about effective lobbying and advocacy activities, while the representation of their diverse members' perspectives is also claimed to be achieved in this way. Acknowledging the difficulties in involving the members that are beyond the national umbrella

organisations, especially EWL and ENAR showed their intention to have more direct interactions with their local level member organisations. Meanwhile, FEANTSA's emphasis on the deliberation within specific working bodies consisting of the representatives with expertise, the working groups, stands out from the rest who seem to focus more on the extensive bases of deliberation including grass root local members. This difference might be due to the fact that the members of FEANTSA are mainly service provider organisations with solution-oriented motives, that is, effective fight against homelessness.

Secondly, these CSOs claim their *authentic* characteristics as representative voice of different marginalised groups, by appealing to various aspects such as *expertise and special credentials*, *surrogacy for wider interests*, *word from the street*, *self-representation, mirroring, connectedness* and *independence*. These different bases of authenticity claims are interconnected to each other as well. For instance, expertise and special credentials in representing certain marginalised groups towards policy makers stem from the claims that they convey grass roots perspectives or by ascertaining self-representation and mirroring, appealing to 'the genuine voice' of marginalised groups. On the other hand, claiming expert knowledge and competences regarding the EU institutions, legislations, and policies and connectedness with public authorities and other CSO networks is targeted towards the organisations' members and a broader pubic, by which situate themselves as 'the right actors' in realising citizens' participation and influence.

Meanwhile, the challenges these CSOs face in their representation seem to delimit the realisation of their representative claims identified so far. The unequal capacity among the national level members or different sub-groups across a large number of countries, lack of resources of their members in terms of funding, time, language barrier, and expertise, and the low awareness of European issues at national level all pose a question of whether the claims regarding deliberation based on active participation of all members and conveying grass roots perspectives actually are achieved. Furthermore, the challenges in managing both the geographical and substantive diversity of their members and issues pose a question of to what extent these CSOs' representation is as comprehensive as they claim to be. These challenges seem to have their roots in the very structural set-ups of these European CSOs: their transnational features with the membership spread over the extensive area in Europe. Thus, these challenges identified by the representative persons of the organisations in fact partly confirm the critics towards these European CSOs introduced as the background of the study.

When it comes to being recognised as an important partner by public authorities, the European institutions in particular, all organisations confirmed their

relatively well-recognised status compared to other civil society actors in their respective fields. However some frustration with certain issues or actors was expressed, especially regarding the negative impacts of the current political context on migration related issues. As partly disclosed via the interviews, the severity of these challenges and the ways how each organisation tries to address these difficulties differ among the organisations.

5.2. Final remarks

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues strategically appeal their representativeness by combining their organisational structures reflecting formalistic and descriptive representation and the representative claims emphasising authentic and deliberative aspects of their operation. While the main differences between the organisations focusing on group-representation and the ones with primary focus on issue-representation were found out in relation to formal and descriptive aspects of representation, some other factors such as the characteristics of constituencies and members and the degree of development and history of the respective groups' movement were highlighted as the possible reasons for these differences.

Theoretically, the study showed that the recent theoretical debates on non-electoral representation and the related theoretical positions which conceptualise main aspects of representation in different ways from the traditional accounts are indeed applicable to our real world, the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues in this case. However, the emphasis on the traditional modes of representation such as formal and descriptive aspects still plays a big role for the organisations looked into. Moreover, within this study their use as an analytical tool well served the purpose. Thus, rather than being 'alternative' accounts, appealing to the deliberative and authentic aspects of their representativeness plays a complementary role in these CSOs' representation strategies, while the traditional concepts such as formal and descriptive representation are still well applied to them.

However, this conclusion requires a careful attention to the political and institutional context in which they operate. As pointed out in the background of the study, certain requirements coming from the European institutions that are related to their representation are deemed to have impacts on the representation strategies of these CSOs, considering that they are of a great importance to these organisations. After all, the European institutions are their main source of funding as well as the main target of lobbying work. Thus, the expectations regarding comprehensive representation in terms of geographical area and transparency from the Commission

towards these CSOs might have been one of the guiding reasons for them to have a stronger emphasis on formal representative structures than one would expect for CSOs, with the solid membership-based structures as identified. And this feature could have precisely been one of the reasons why these European CSOs are credited by the EU institutions as the actors who can bridge the EU and citizens. However, the ambition of this study does not stretch to a thorough understanding of this aspect, consequently, leaving the question of to what extent their representation strategies are shaped or influenced by the interactions between the EU institutions and these CSOs not answered.

Coming back to the initial departure point - understanding the largely unknown operation of the long representative chains of the European CSOs, this study tried to answer how strategically the selected organisations try to achieve representation by looking at their organisational structures and representative claims. In order to draw a comprehensive picture of these European CSOs' representation, another natural attempt might be to ask a question towards their members and the decision makers at EU-level. How are these representative claims by European CSOs received, acknowledged, or rather refuted by their members or by European policy makers? Thus, further qualitative research on the questions such as whether deliberation actually takes place among their members, what kind of dynamics exist in election procedures, to what extent members are actively participating in bringing their views and experiences on the board and how the members and the EU institutions evaluate all of these aspects will be a challenging but a meaningful attempt in order to further understand the roles of these European CSOs as the bridge between the EU and its citizens.

Executive Summary

Participation of civil society has been put forward by the European Union (EU) as an important way to nurture democratic legitimacy of governance and to contribute to effective policy making by bringing in voice of the broader citizenry of Europe. The involvement of civil society is expected to mediate the distance between society and the EU, which will help "bridging the gap" between the transnational governance of the EU and its citizens. Over the last two decades, European CSOs claiming representativeness in a broader 'European' sense have grown as major actors engaging in the partnership with the EU institutions, with a tendency of increasingly institutionalised, formalised, and structured engagement.

These European CSOs claiming representativeness bring up the question of whether these 'Europeanised' CSOs can genuinely play the role of 'bridging' the gap between citizens and the EU polity as the discourse on participatory governance claims. Especially, this question becomes more relevant when it comes to the expectations towards CSOs in that they are able to bring the voices of the most disadvantaged and marginalised that otherwise would be neglected on the one hand, and the very federated nature of European networks of CSOs on the other hand. The European CSOs working with the issues regarding marginalised groups are thus expected to be the link between the most unreachable, immobilised, and marginalised groups within a vast geographical area, while at the same time required to be institutionalised and formalised at the transnational level which inevitably accompanies the vast distance from their constituencies.

Given the expected roles of the CSOs working at European level and their representative claims for various marginalised social groups, this study tried to answer the question of *how the CSOs working with marginalised group issues (people with disabilities, women, homeless people, and racial minorities facing discrimination) at European level strategically pursue their representation of members and constituencies.*

In order to draw a theoretically embedded analytical framework to investigate representation of European CSOs, theoretical discussion about political representation, recent debates on non-electoral forms of representation which are pertinent to the case of CSOs, and the studies especially addressing the issue of representativeness and accountability of civil associations were discussed. Reflecting these theoretical discussions, the analytical framework was divided into two main analytical points. Firstly, formalistic and descriptive aspects of representation of CSOs were explored in order to see to what extent the organisational features of the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues can be explained by these

rather traditional and standard modes of representation. Secondly, the alternative theoretical concepts conceiving non-electoral representation such as deliberation and authenticity were employed as to capture the ways how CSOs claim their representativeness of constituents, members and actions. Additionally, some contextual factors such as relations with the EU institutions, funding requirements and situation, the salience and status of the related issues, and characteristics of constituents of the selected CSOs were taken into account where appropriate.

The research question was investigated by employing a qualitative comparative approach in order to find out similarities and differences among the four selected European CSOs: European Disability Forum (EDF), European Women's Lobby (EWL), European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), and European Network Against Racism (ENAR). Text and document analysis of the core organisational documents and their official websites as well as interviewing with the representative persons of each organisation were used as the main methods for the empirical part of the study.

The findings of this study suggest that the European CSOs working with marginalised group issues strategically appeal their representativeness by combining their organisational structures reflecting formalistic and descriptive representation and the representative claims emphasising authentic and deliberative aspects of their operation. While the main differences between the organisations focusing on group-representation and the ones with primary focus on issue-representation were found out in relation to formal and descriptive aspects of representation, some other factors such as the characteristics of constituencies and members and the degree of development and history of the respective groups' movement were highlighted as the possible reasons for these differences. The following points are some details of the findings:

- *Formal representative structures* in forming main organisational bodies and electing representatives are greatly emphasised by all CSOs. The democratic election systems are established, which claim to link the representative chains between grass roots local organisations, representative national umbrella organisations, and finally European level networks. The formal representative structures are seen essential as the bases of legitimacy, credibility, and transparency of these organisations. While they share highly similar structures when it comes to the formal set-up of the European level elections and decision making bodies, the extent to which national level organisations are formalised and coordinated across countries differs among them.

- The emphasis on *descriptive representation* is reflected in the composition of their leaders and in the membership criteria, by stressing the importance of representatives having shared identity and experiences with their constituencies. This aspect is pervasively embedded in their organisational structures by exclusively valuing the representatives having shared descriptive characteristics with their constituencies (for EDF and EWL). While the emphasis on descriptive representation is rather absent within FEANTSA in relation to their broader constituency, the homeless, ENAR shows a modest emphasis on this aspect compared to EDF or EWL.

- Regarding the first analytical point where formalistic and descriptive aspects of representation were looked into, the group-representation focused CSOs (EDF, EWL) tend to have a stronger emphasis on both formalistic and descriptive representation compared to the ones with their primary focus on issue-representation (FEANTSA, ENAR).

- When it comes to the second analytical point various ways to appeal their deliberative and authentic characteristics were identified, and the organisations present highly converging patterns. All of these CSOs appeal their venues, practices, and instruments enabling *deliberation* as one of the core principles of their decision making process. Deliberative communication, rigorous consultation, and platforms of sharing knowledge and experiences among the members are claimed to bring about effective lobbying and advocacy activities, while the representation of their diverse members' perspectives is also claimed to be achieved in this way. Also, these CSOs claim their *authentic* characteristics as representative voice of different marginalised groups, by appealing to various aspects such as *expertise and special credentials, surrogacy for wider interests, word from the street, self-representation, mirroring, connectedness* and *independence*.

- The challenges these CSOs face in their representation seem to delimit the realisation of their representative claims identified. The unequal capacity among the national level members or different sub-groups, lack of resources, and the low awareness of European issues at national level all pose a question of whether the claims regarding deliberation based on active participation of members and conveying grass roots perspectives actually are achieved. Furthermore, the challenges in managing both the geographical and substantive diversity of their members and issues pose a question of to what extent these CSOs' representation is as comprehensive as they claim to be. The severity of these challenges and the ways how each organisation tries to address these difficulties differ among the organisations.

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Appendix A - Interview Guideline

<u>**Statement**</u>

The interview will be used in my thesis where I am writing about representation strategies of European civil society networks. What I am interested in with this interview are representative structures and practices of your organisation. I would also like to ask you about any difficulties, challenges, and specificities in representing your member organisations as well as a broader beneficiaries at European level.

Everything you say will be anonymous and confidential and you are of course not required to answer all the questions. If you have any questions regarding the material and/or your participation, you can contact me at any time. Can I have your consent to record the interview?

<u>**Interview Questions**</u>

Theme 1. Description of representative structures and practices

Q1. Who/what do you (elected figures)/your organisation represent?

Definition of members? (any practical/ideation-al reasons for membership criteria?)
Constituency?
Beneficiaries?

Q2. Could you describe the representative structure of your organisation?

How the main decision making bodies are constituted?
How the main representative persons are elected?
through what kind of processes and with what principles?

  Q2.1. (elected persons) How are representative organisations at national level determined in each country?

  Q2.2. (secretariat staffs) What is known about the national representative members? What is known about the election processes among the organisations at national level?

  Q2.3. Are there certain national organisations who are actively involved than others in the work with the secretariat? If so, why?

Q3. What is your role/responsibility as a member of Executive Committee/Secretariat in your organisation?

Q3.1. (elected persons) As an elected figure of the European network as well as of the national organisation, are there any tensions or conflicts regarding your representative position?

Q3.2. (secretariat staffs) As an executive staff operating at European level, how do you work with the representatives in the board?

Q4. How the membership rights are executed in practice?

Q4.1. Could you give any examples of how the elected representatives are held responsible for their representative acts on behalf of the members?

Q4.2. What venues are there in practice, for the members to participate/to be involved in the network other than via election?

Theme 2. Strategic aspects of representation

Q1. What is a core strategy to be a representative organisation of marginalised groups at European level?

Q1.1. Is it important to have formal structures of representation?

Q1.2. How important is it to have representatives who have shared experiences/identity with a broader beneficiaries/constituency?

Q1.3. How does your organisation appeal representativeness to the members/EU institutions/a broader public? Are there any differences?

Q1.4. Does your organisation take an active role in constituting members? In what way?

Q2. Are there any requirements or expectations regarding representation from any relevant actors that your organisation takes into account? From members, from EU institutions, from general public, or structural reasons?

Q2.1. How does your organisation deal with different (possibly conflicting) requirements or expectations such as those? How do they affect your organisation's operation?

Theme 3. Challenges, difficulties

Q1. How does your organisation manage the extensiveness as well as diversity of the member organisations, in terms of both geography and types/characteristics of them?

Q1.1. When it comes to forming the main decision making bodies such as the board, is there any consideration related to managing this extensive/diverse aspects of your members? Are there any negotiation or adjustment taking into account these aspects besides the formal election process?

Q1.2. Are different members with diverse focuses and organisational characteristics equally represented?

Q1.3. Any particularly identifiable/salient conflicts/cleavages/alliances among member organisations that are important in the representative structures and practices? How to manage them?

Q2. What are the main challenges or difficulties in representing your members and constituents and why?

Q2.1. Do characteristics (including resources) of member organisations or a broader beneficiaries matter? What kinds of barriers are there?

Q2.2. Any challenges coming from the political/institutional environment/structure?

Q3. Are there any questions/doubts or critics regarding the representativeness of your organisation?

Q3.1. How does your organisation deal with criticisms for example pointing out certain features such as elitist, professionalised, bureaucratised, institutionalised characteristics?

Appendix B - List of Interviewees

Arsenjeva, Janina. [EDF Secretariat, Policy/EUropean Parliament Officer] Interview. 29 June. 2011. Brussels.

Langvad, Stig. [EDF, a member of the Executive Committee] Phone interview (recorded as a mp3 file). 4 July. 2011.

Bach, Amandine. [EWL Secretariat, Policy Officer/Project Manager] Interview. 29 June. 2011. Brussels.

Young, Suzzanah. [FEANTSA Secretariat, Communication Officer] E-mail interview. 4 July. 2011.

Lescrauwaet, Danny. [FEANTSA, a member of the Executive Committee] Interview. 30 June. 2011. Brussels.

Privot, Michael. [ENAR Secretariat, Director] Interview. 29 June. 2011. Brussels.

Quraishy, Bashy. [ENAR, the former Chair/the current Chair of Advisory Council of Eminent Persons] Interview. 14 June. 2011. Copenhagen.

* All interviews other than the phone/e-mail interviews were done in person. All interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed.