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## The Structure of Diversity among Migrant Rights Organisations in Europe: Implications for Supranational Political Participation

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## Abstract

European umbrella organisations that promote migrant and refugee rights seek to influence EU policy-making in the context of Europe's 'migration and refugee crisis'. From a functional representation perspective, their legitimacy rests on being representative of large constituencies that actively participate in their work. Yet past research on national migrant rights organisations underscores that, due to their diversity, priorities within the movement are not uniform. Different scholars come to different conclusions regarding the cleavages that define the movement. Moreover, it remains unclear how these cleavages impact participation in European umbrella organisations. This paper investigates these questions by empirically examining the cleavages among the membership base of two EU umbrella organisations: the European Council on Refugees and Exiles and the European Network Against Racism. Data come from a content analysis of member organisations' websites and interviews with directors of European umbrella organisations. Factor analysis techniques are used to assess empirically the different dimensions that structure diversity, examining several fault lines: identity/ideology, target population and worldview. The results point to cleavages that can differentially affect participation in the umbrella and present strategies used by leaders of umbrella organisations to encourage more active participation by certain types of under-represented member organisations.

## Keywords

EU policy-making; non-governmental organisations; immigration; asylum; migrant rights; umbrella organisations; political participation

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A growing body of literature focuses on functional representation by civil society organisations (CSOs). In broad terms, the literature addresses the potential role of CSOs in making European Union (EU) policy processes more democratic, helping to overcome the widely-noted democratic deficit. European umbrella organisations which work to promote migrant and refugee rights are specific CSOs that have gained access to EU policy-making and seek influence in the context of Europe's 'migration and refugee crisis'. They are tasked with aggregating preferences and representing the interests of their constituency. Their legitimacy rests on being representative of large constituencies that actively participate in their work (Kröger 2013). Yet past research on national migrant rights organisations underscores that priorities within the movement are not uniform. Moreover, certain members may be more willing to get involved in policy work and, structurally, some may be better able than others to participate in the work of the umbrella. These factors have implications for how well umbrella organisations are able to 'mediate between the national and the supranational' (Rumford 2003: 32) in combatting the democratic deficit.

The contribution of this analysis is to produce a better understanding of the specific cleavages that exist among the constituencies of European migrant and refugee rights umbrella organisations, which is an important first step in determining where the umbrella organisations might focus their efforts to increase their own legitimacy. The analysis focuses on the membership base of two separate EU umbrellas: the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, and the European Network Against Racism. It asks two questions: (1) how do the different issue priorities, target populations and ways of framing issues serve as the basis of defining different cleavages?; and (2) how can EU umbrella organisations draw on these divisions to promote more active participation, thereby more

effectively representing their constituencies and increasing their own legitimacy? Data are drawn from a content analysis of each national member organisation's website (spanning a total of 157 groups), supplemented by data from interviews conducted in July 2015 with the directors of several European umbrella organisations.<sup>1</sup> Factor analysis techniques are used to assess empirically the different dimensions along which diversity is structured among these populations. In doing so, several possible cleavages are examined, including identity/ideology, target audience and ways of framing work within a broader worldview. It is argued that a better understanding of the cleavages within the membership can potentially be used to know where more active participation is needed.

Why are these important questions to address? First, determining the main cleavages can, at a minimum, produce a better understanding of the roles and priorities of different members, particularly as these umbrellas seek to influence the development of a Common European Asylum System. It can, for instance, help shed light on who is most (and least) likely to engage with specific policy debates or issues at the EU level via the umbrella. The fact that the European Commission regularly consults and funds European umbrella organisations highlights their importance in supranational policy processes. From a theoretical standpoint, active involvement from the constituency, as opposed to just the umbrella organisation, is necessary for input to be considered legitimate (Kröger 2013) and to strengthen 'the democratic quality of policy-making' (Brummer 2008: 2).

Relatedly, such knowledge can be used to strengthen both the quality of representation by European umbrella organisations and their legitimacy as non-electoral actors by helping to promote more active involvement and participation by specific segments of the membership. Addressing these questions can help address the problem of 'façade representativeness' identified by Kröger (2014), whereby 'weak interest groups' and 'cause' organisations tend to be minimally, if at all, involved in EU policy-making processes by way of their membership in umbrella organisations. Ultimately, knowledge of the main divisions among the national organisations can be used as the basis for enhancing the quality of their participation in and representation by European umbrella organisations. In turn, these aspects are key factors in the push by the umbrellas to foster the creation of a supranational polity by Europeanising the political activities of their constituencies (Warleigh 2001) and the European Commission's expectation that civil society organisations can help overcome the EU's democratic deficit.

This analysis proceeds as follows. The next section examines the literature on migrant rights organisations in Europe to analyse the various divisions which define contestation as identified by previous research. It also discusses implications for participation in the work of the umbrellas. Next, the data and methods used for assessing the cleavages within the movement are presented, followed by the results of the statistical analyses. Following this, the interview data is used to develop and discuss strategies that directors of EU umbrella organisations can employ to make better use of the diversity in their constituencies, which can ultimately promote more active involvement. Finally, the conclusion orientates the findings of the study in the context of the relevant literature and discusses possibilities for future work.

## **PRO-MIGRANT ORGANISATIONS, DIVERSITY AND POLICY PARTICIPATION**

Issues of migration and border control are at the core of many political debates in Europe, including the recent 'Brexit' vote. In this context, the diversity that characterises the local and national organisations working as part of the migrant rights movement has been documented to some extent in the literature examining the political activities of these groups. Numerous studies have dubbed the migrant rights movement in general as 'fragmented' (Guiraudon 2001; Berclaz and Giugni 2005).

Past research has provided (often anecdotal) observations concerning some of its defining cleavages and different scholars come to different conclusions regarding the most important divisions. Some scholars, for example, note specific cleavages according to ethnicity or identity (Guiraudon 2001), whereas others highlight the geographical nature of diversity and how it leads to the promotion of different agendas depending upon the nature of integration and citizenship policies of groups' respective countries (Kastoryano 1996; Favell 1998; Koopmans and Statham 2000). Still other research stresses divisions in the modes of organisation, pointing out ethnic-based interest groups and contentious coalitions and further studies distinguish between pro-migrant versus anti-racist lobbying organisations (Fella and Ruzza 2012; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passy 2005).

There are at least two implications of this work: first, that migrant rights actors in Europe experience difficulty in finding common ground, identifying the most pressing issue priorities, establishing a meaningful dialogue and defining a common agenda for action, all of which contribute to the overall political weakness of the movement (Kastoryano 1994; Geddes 1998). Second, when it comes to their membership in European umbrella organisations, this great diversity results in 'façade representativeness', which limits substantive involvement in the development of supranational policy positions in that it makes the coordination of common policy positions much more difficult (Kröger 2014).

Much of the research that identifies and discusses such divisions is based on case studies or observational accounts of cleavages in specific organisations or sets of organisations. There have been no studies to date which empirically examine how diversity is structured across a wide range of migrant rights organisations throughout Europe as a whole. As a result, the specific cleavages that define the movement writ large remain unclear or unknown. Understanding these dimensions of contestation is important because, for one, they help define the focus of political action and impact the ways in which organisations carry out their operations and political activities. Dalton (1994: 12-13), for instance, argues that the identity of a social movement organisation influences its methods of attracting supporters, selecting issues to focus on, presenting viable solutions, forming alliances and choosing political tactics.

Prior research underscores cleavages based on ethnicity and, potentially, religion. Koopmans et al. (2005: ch. 6), for instance, highlight organisational divisions among different ethnic groups and Guiraudon (2001) discusses how those divisions prevented the articulation of a common agenda for organisations active at the European level. Analysing the involvement of national groups in one European umbrella, she explains how organisations representing different ethnic groups expressed antagonism publicly towards one another and sought to gain control within the umbrella. The main divisions in this particular case were between the Turks and the Moroccans (Guiraudon 2001: 170). Generally speaking, ethnic-specific organisations represent migrants of similar origin but studies have also identified similarly defined divisions among organisations representing specific religious groups of migrants. For instance, past case study research has centred on Muslim and Turkish migrant social movement organisations in Europe and their links with fellow migrants across borders (Amiriaux 1998; Ogelman 1998). In sum, *ethnicity and religion* are characteristics that, according to past studies, serve as the basis of defining cleavages among migrant rights organisations, as different groups advocate for the interests of specific ethnically- and religiously-defined constituencies.

Perhaps more prominent divisions are structured according to *issue agendas and policy priorities*. In terms of how we can expect groups' issue priorities to be structured, several cleavages can be observed by analysing past research on anti-racist and pro-migrant organisations. First, Koopmans et al. have observed a counter-mobilisation by anti-racist organisations against the far-right. As they explain:

[o]ne important dimension of this over the last two decades has been their intense campaigning to combat the rise of the extreme right in Europe, for which they have mobilised a counter-discourse against the extreme right's propaganda depicting migrants as a major threat to national identities (2005: 206).

As a dimension of contestation, one might expect, then, that evidence of such a public campaign should emerge in the empirical analysis of how issues are structured. Further dimensions which have been identified in the literature (and also by practitioners) centre on the promotion of political rights for migrants and ethnic minorities, as well as the extension of social rights to migrants (Koopmans et al. 2005; Fella and Ruzza 2012; Schnyder 2015). Based on these observations, a cleavage is expected among service provision organisations versus those that are more political and policy-focused.

Prior work has also argued that the content of claims-making should vary a great deal from one country context to another. For instance, referring to national institutions, Koopmans et al. argue that '[p]olitical resources, legitimacy, and resonance derived from these institutions help to make sense of the formation of specific group identities and the elaboration of particular political aims by actors mobilizing for migrants' (2005: 210). Echoing this argument, Guiraudon (2001: 170-171) observes that:

'national groups' tend to reproduce the incorporation and citizenship models of their host countries, thereby making dialogue difficult. Migrants from Scandinavia and the Netherlands favor multicultural policies, while those from France have internalized the assimilationist Republican model of integration. In some countries, such as Germany, legal discrimination is still very much an agenda that unites migrant groups...This is not the case in other northern European countries or in Britain, where the emphasis is on nonlegal [sic] discrimination (in housing or hiring).

Furthermore, Koopmans and Statham (2000: 217) have found that minority actors make claims which involve different types of rights, including citizenship rights, other civil and political rights, social and economic rights, cultural rights and anti-discrimination rights. One might expect some of these rights-based cleavages to emerge in the empirical analysis. In summary, the cleavages that define organisations' *issue priorities* should include public campaigns against the far-right, political rights and service provision to ensure social rights.

In addition to the above, a final area in which cleavages are expected concerns the *broader worldviews* of the organisations and how they frame the significance of their work. One possible dimension concerns anti-racist versus pro-migrant worldviews, with the former placing migrant and refugee issues into a broader anti-discrimination context involving human rights and the latter framing their work more specifically around the advancement of their target populations in the societies in which they live (Fella and Ruzza 2012). Whereas anti-racist organisations tend to advocate for inclusion on the basis of broader human rights principles of equal treatment, pro-migrant organisations tend to frame their work around the need to support more specific categories of migrants (Koopmans et al. 2005: ch. 6). In addition, past research suggests that organisations in East Central Europe (ECE), where the migrant rights movement is newer and domestic elites are not as supportive of citizen activism, may be more likely to frame their work around the importance of civic engagement and participation and its significance to democratisation. For example, in discussing ECE countries, Cisar and Vrablikova (2012: 143). note that '[a]lthough they democratized rather quickly in terms of their main formal institutions, these countries are behind old Western democracies in their level of political and civic activism ...'. This has implications for creating a

differential context for their political activities (Tarrow and Petrova 2007). In sum, the cleavages that define *broader worldviews* should include broad human rights principles (such as equal treatment), the need to support specific categories of migrants and principles of democracy (such as civic engagement).

The above observations highlight the difficulty of overcoming the various national priorities and contexts that have traditionally shaped organisations' work in the field of migration and refugee politics. Ultimately, this can create an obstacle to the potential Europeanisation of their political activities and to the EU umbrella organisations which represent their interests in EU policy-making. If representation is not just about outputs but also about process and inputs (Schmidt 2013) whereby a two-way relationship functions between the represented and the representative, the active involvement of these organisations in the development of EU policy positions is needed in order to confer legitimacy upon the umbrella organisations that operate on their behalf (Kröger 2013).

Depending upon the nature of their work, the national groups comprising the membership base of the umbrellas tend to fall into the category of either 'weak interest groups' or 'cause' organisations identified by Kröger (2013). More specifically, the former refers to 'constituencies such as the poor and socially excluded ... who generally do not enjoy the various sorts of capital necessary to organise themselves' (Kröger 2013: 592), while the latter refers to groups representing a cause, such as the environment, whereby 'those supporting the organisation are not those for whom the organisation acts as an advocate ...' (Kröger 2013: 591). Both types have been found to take part minimally, if at all, in the process of EU policy-making, such that EU umbrellas act on behalf of constituencies that lack active involvement in the organisation.

The need for active participation is made more acute in view of past research, which underscores that migrant and refugee rights organisations have indeed gained access to the EU and have done so relatively quickly, despite the divisions that characterise the movement. However, unlike some advocacy CSOs which receive institutional support, migrant and refugee rights organisations have worked proactively to fashion ties with specific EU institutions. They seek to influence outcomes mainly through lobbying strategies, which afford only limited opportunities to influence policy (Thiel and Uçarer 2014).

Indeed, the divisions among stakeholders and conflicting agendas in the development of a common immigration and asylum policy has some calling for the 'knocking into shape' of this policy field (Niessen 2001), with a legitimate and important role to play by non-elite actors. The dual norms of border security on the one hand, which portrays migrants and refugees as security threats, and humanitarianism on the other, which stresses the need for human security and international protection, underscore the conflicting agendas involved (Vaughan-Williams 2015). These conflicting normative frameworks highlight the difficult role of CSOs in the formulation of EU migration policy and provide context for the fragmented policy responses that have followed. Furthermore, although these CSOs are consulted by the European Commission, their expertise may be used as a strategic means of lending credibility to the Commission's proposals as opposed to improving policy (Boswell 2009). Do these factors imply that CSOs do not have a legitimate role to play in this area of supranational policy-making? Not necessarily, as they bring issues to the table that otherwise might be overlooked or simply ignored by elites; yet their democratic legitimacy depends, at least in part, on the substantive involvement of their constituency. Ascertaining the cleavages of the membership can serve as a first step in understanding where more targeted efforts are needed to promote involvement.

## IDENTIFYING CLEAVAGES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF TWO EU UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

To obtain data on migrant and refugee rights organisations, the national membership population of two large European umbrella organisations – the European Council on Refugees and Exiles and the European Network Against Racism – were examined. Each of these umbrella organisations has a broad and diverse constituency spanning each of the current EU member states and beyond. Altogether, the websites of 157 national organisations spanning a total of thirty-nine countries were analysed.<sup>2</sup> These groups comprise the entire membership population of the two umbrellas.

A content analysis of the website of each national organisation was conducted to code their issue priorities, target populations and broader worldviews (i.e., the language and discourse surrounding their work and purpose).<sup>3</sup> Each instance was coded in which a specific issue (e.g., health care, discrimination, asylum policy, psychological care etc.) and target group (e.g., illegal migrants, asylum-seekers, women migrants, youth etc.) was mentioned. Groups' broader worldviews were also coded, with a specific eye toward the language used to frame their mission and purpose (e.g., human rights, international responsibilities, advancing democracy etc.). To reduce the data and empirically identify the cleavages, the next step was to perform a factor analysis. Three separate factor analyses were conducted to identify the different dimensions of issue priorities, target populations and worldviews.<sup>4</sup> The final results of the factor analyses and the varimax-rotated solutions are presented in the following section.

## DOCUMENTING DIVERSITY: HOW ARE ISSUE PRIORITIES, TARGET POPULATIONS AND WORLDVIEWS STRUCTURED?

Tables 1 through 3 that follow display the results of the factor analyses that identified the different dimensions of organisations' issue priorities, target populations and worldviews (or discourses that frame their work). The figure in parentheses next to each variable indicates the total percentage of organisations which mentioned each factor on their website. The following discussion examines and elaborates on the different factors that define the cleavages among the membership.

In Table 1, the analysis identified five dimensions of issue priorities with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The first dimension – *legal and educational issues* – is composed of the following individual issue priorities: legal issues, intercultural information, education, and the general provision of information. The second dimension – *integration support and services* – comprises employment support, psychological care, general integration support and health care. Third, there is *political participation and activism*, which captures minority empowerment, civic participation, public awareness, the representation of migrants' views and general participation in political life. The fourth dimension reflects *rights and citizenship issues*, including social rights, citizenship and housing rights. The final dimension concerns issues relating to the availability of *public information and debate* over migration-related issues and includes access to information and the promotion of public debate.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that these dimensions should reflect (1) public campaigns against the far right, (2) political rights for migrants and (3) the provision of services to help secure social rights. Although there is no variable in Table 1 that explicitly mentions the far right, there is a dimension that reflects public information and public debate about migration and asylum issues. These public information campaigns typically focus on educating citizens about diversity and the benefits of living in a multicultural society. Such discourses effectively serve the function of counter-mobilising against far-right political rhetoric. In looking at the percentage frequencies, only a small proportion

of groups actually focuses on the promotion of public debate as a key issue priority (1 per cent), but 46 per cent focus on the related variable of raising public awareness (although this variable does load on a different factor). Furthermore, the *political participation and activism* dimension reflects a strong focus on political rights and political inclusion, as expected, raising key issues such as empowerment of minority groups and civic participation, among others. Lastly, as expected, organisations do provide services and focus on social rights, but these are reflected in two separate dimensions (*integration support and services* and *rights and citizenship*). Only a small percentage of groups explicitly incorporates social rights as part of their issue focus (2 per cent); integration support and practical services reflect a much stronger focus of their work, as might be expected.

*Table 1. Factor analysis dimensions: issue priorities of national migrant and refugee rights organisations*

Variable (% of organisations)	Legal and educational issues	Integration support and services	Political participation and activism	Rights and citizenship	Public information and debate
Legal issues (43%)	-.62				
Intercultural information (15%)	.62				
Education (30%)	.56				
General information (19%)	.47				
Employment support (13%)		.63			
Psychological care (15%)		.55			
Integration support (36%)		.54			
Health care (8%)		.51			
Empowerment of minority group (3%)			.69		
Civic participation (6%)			.58		
Public awareness (46%)			.50		
Representation of viewpoints (2%)			.47		
Political life (5%)			.40		
Social rights (2%)				.69	
Citizenship (1%)				.63	
Housing (9%)				.50	
Access to information (5%)					.68
Public debate (1%)					.51

Note: Principal component analyses identified five dimensions of issue priorities with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Entries are factor loadings of each issue priority. The varimax-rotated solutions are presented here.

Overall, one of the main cleavages that emerges in Table 1 is between service providers and politically-focused groups, which has implications for who is most and least likely to participate in the umbrella. Although much of the service providers' work concerns issues of migrant integration (which also concerns the umbrellas), these groups are perhaps least likely to be actively engaged in the work of the umbrellas due to their heavy caseloads. Moreover, interviews with the umbrella leaders confirmed they tend to lack the policy expertise that promotes participation in the umbrellas' topic-based working groups, which draft position papers on behalf of the membership on policy issues. Past work has shown that such organisations authorise the umbrella to work on their



behalf, even if they are not actively involved (Kröger 2013), but the extent to which the position papers and policy recommendations are representative of their interests remains an empirical question.

A separate factor analysis examined the target populations that organisations serve, representing those groups of central focus in their work. Table 2 presents the results of how these target population groups are structured. Factor analysis identified six salient dimensions of target groups with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, as follows: (1) *refugees, asylum-seekers and ethnic minorities*; (2) *displaced and stateless persons*; (3) *Muslim and women migrants*; (4) *unaccompanied minors and detainees*; (5) *youth and illegal migrants*; and (6) *African migrants and general vulnerable groups of migrants*.

*Table 2. Factor analysis dimensions: target populations of national migrant and refugee rights organisations*

Variable (% of organisations)	Refugees, asylum- seekers and minorities	Displaced and stateless persons	Muslim and women	Unaccompanied minors and detainees	Youth and illegal migrants	African and vulnerable populations
Refugees (47%)	0.82					
Asylum-seekers (38%)	0.80					
Ethnic minorities (24%)	-0.64					
Rejected asylum-seekers (1%)		0.74				
Stateless persons (4%)		0.68				
Displaced persons (10%)		0.68				
Muslim migrants (3%)			0.85			
Women migrants (7%)			0.77			
Unaccompanied minors (4%)				0.76		
Detainees (1%)				0.76		
Illegal migrants (5%)					0.71	
Youth (13%)					-0.61	
African migrants (6%)						0.67
Vulnerable groups (5%)						-0.65

*Note:* Principal component analyses identified six dimensions of target populations with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Entries are factor loadings of each target population. The varimax-rotated solutions are presented here.

Hypothesis 2 expected these dimensions to include a strong orientation toward ethnicity and religion. Although both variables are present and help define two of these six dimensions, a greater proportion of organisations focus their work on ethnic minorities as opposed to a specific religious group. More specifically, 24 per cent of organisations focus on serving ethnic minorities, which loads on the same factor as refugees and asylum-seekers. Ethnic minorities represent a sizable target population, with most organisations identifying this population in general terms, as opposed to focusing on a specific ethnic minority group. By contrast, only 3 per cent of organisations have an

explicit focus on Muslim migrants, which loads on the same factor as women migrants. Comparatively, slightly more organisations target their work on women migrants and refugees (7 per cent). Although some organisations do target ethnic and religious minorities (as predicted), it is refugees and asylum-seekers which comprise the dominant focus (47 per cent and 38 per cent respectively).

In general, these dimensions appear to reflect a cleavage among organisations that focus on specific categories of migrants versus those that aim at a more general target group. These specific categories, such as women, Muslim or African migrants and refugees, may or may not be reflected in the umbrellas' political positions, depending (at least in part) on whether the most active members reach a consensus on the need to include them. Moreover, the national organisations concerned with these more specific target groups tend to be smaller and operate with fewer staff, which could potentially preclude their active participation in the umbrella.

The final hypothesis considered how the broader worldviews of the various organisations are structured, reflected in the discourses that frame their missions and priorities. Hypothesis 3 predicted that organisations will use framing which reflects human rights principles (such as equal treatment and fairness) and the need to support specific categories of migrants and principles of democracy (including civic engagement). Table 3 displays the results of the final factor analysis. The results support two of the three predicted dimensions specified in hypothesis 3. More specifically, organisations do tend to invoke human rights principles and values in the discourses that frame their missions. For example, the dimension of *obligations and compassion* (which comprises dignity, respect, compassion and international obligations) reflects both an emphasis on states' human rights obligations, as well as the values that make those obligations important. In addition, the dimensions of *equality and cooperation*; *social justice and citizenship*; and *empowerment and legal justice* embody the universal human rights principles of non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and accountability and the rule of law. Furthermore, the human rights principles of universality and inalienability are reflected in the dimension of *unconditionality*. In addition to human rights principles, the dimensions that structure organisations' broader frames and discourses also reflect certain core values, as seen in the dimension of *fairness and understanding*, as well as a sense of international interdependence, as reflected in the *harmony and globalisation* dimension.

In addition, hypothesis 3 expected groups to frame their missions in terms of democratic principles. The dimension of *democracy and participation* reflects the use of democratic principles in the discourses organisations use to frame their work. This dimension includes important elements fundamental to democratic societies, including human peace, freedom, democracy, civil society participation, pluralism and the rule of law. In addition to these expected ways of framing their work, Table 3 shows that organisations also use discourses that involve societal problems, as seen in the *racism and xenophobia* dimension. Organisations, therefore, ground their work in contexts which invoke universal human rights principles and obligations, democratic principles and societal problems that may be viewed as a counter-mobilisation against the rhetoric of the far right. The framing of their work in terms of support for specific categories of migrants, as hypothesis 3 also expected, is not borne out by the factor dimensions. Rather, groups tend to use broader and more universal framing strategies as opposed to appealing to the plight of specific group types or categories.

Organisations which employ broader framing strategies that resonate with established EU policy areas, including anti-discrimination, may have a greater incentive to participate in the umbrella. In contrast, groups whose frames are more specific, or simply less defined by an existing EU policy space (such as harmony and globalisation or fairness and understanding), may face more hurdles in establishing issue linkages that resonate at the supranational level. Linking migrant and refugee

issues to an anti-discrimination policy frame has proven quite successful in the past, for instance, it resulted in the adoption of the 'Race Directive' in June of 2000 (Guiraudon 2003).

### **MORE PARTICIPATION, MORE REPRESENTATION**

Thus far, the goal of the analysis has been to document empirically and analyse the different dimensions that underlie the issue priorities, target populations and broader worldviews of national organisations that work on behalf of migrants and refugees in Europe. In this section, the findings will be used as the basis for developing strategies that leaders of European umbrella organisations can use to involve the national constituencies more actively in their work.

The interviews with leaders of umbrella organisations highlighted the problem of active participation from a diverse national constituency. For instance, one leader of a prominent umbrella explained that its most active members tend to be policy-focused groups as opposed to service providers, even though the former comprise a much smaller percentage of the membership compared to the latter. Moreover, the cleavages of the membership can serve to hinder participation; as one umbrella leader put it: 'It's impossible to put together a pan-European campaign' involving the entire network due to its diversity (interview, director of umbrella organisation, 21 July 2015). Given that certain segments tend to be more active while others lack any substantive involvement whatsoever, a relevant question to ask is how leaders of umbrella organisations can make better use of the specific cleavages of the national groups to help promote more active involvement. From a perspective of legitimacy that underscores process, fostering greater participation from the constituency would increase the legitimacy of the umbrella organisation and the quality of its representation.

The literature on EU legitimacy argues that the constituencies of EU umbrella organisations need to take an active part in the development of EU-level policy positions; umbrella organisations must actively involve their members in EU affairs to be seen as legitimate (Kröger 2014: 157). Otherwise, the umbrella risks the loss of legitimacy that comes from 'façade representation', whereby members do not actively participate in the organisation's work (Kröger 2014: 157). This argument assumes legitimacy rests on virtually only one form of participation – constituency involvement in the development of supranational policy positions.

However, interviews with leaders of several European umbrella organisations suggest that, given a diverse constituency, not all members are functionally able to participate in this way. Directors noted, for example, that some national organisations enter the membership already possessing the political knowledge and general wherewithal to play an active role in policy-making, whereas others may be less well positioned to do so without some capacity-building in certain areas. In speaking with directors of EU umbrella organisations, it was noted that some member organisations 'provide direct services, but don't do policy work', (interview, director of umbrella organisation, 8 July 2015). In addition, interests may diverge based on the target populations (constituencies) that the national organisations serve. Leaders of umbrella organisations expressed a general desire to promote more active participation by the constituency, even in view of divergent interests and priorities.

Some directors prefer to handle this diversity by organising working groups on various topics, assuming members will opt in based on interest. From here, policy positions are often compiled through a formalised process involving input from the members of the different working groups. Although the benefit of this approach is that it allows members to participate based on issue interests, the drawback is that less politically savvy groups (such as the service providers), or smaller organisations with fewer resources at their disposal, are often unable or unwilling to participate. In addition, organisations that focus on a certain target population, such as women migrants, may find

working groups that address issues of importance, but which lack a strong focus on their target group. In such cases, organisations may opt not to participate in issue-based working groups (interview, director of umbrella organisation, 8 July 2015).

Moreover, even the politically-savvy organisations may face barriers that prevent active participation in working groups. For example, because national groups tend to specialise in issues or target constituencies specific to their locality, they may lack information or expertise on the broader range of issue areas important to a supranational audience, which the working groups are organised to address. Because their work is contextualised by the situation in their own country, they may lack knowledge of EU-level issues and this may discourage their active participation. Beyond this, groups which wish to be politically active may simply be too burdened with their daily workload to manage to participate in a working group. The current structure within many large umbrella organisations reflects the assumption that national members already possess the necessary expertise and resources to participate in the development of the umbrella's policy positions.

An alternative approach that came to light during one interview highlights a different strategy, which some of the smaller umbrellas tend to employ. In essence, it involves promoting participation by strategically using the umbrella as a platform for targeted capacity-building and communication activities. As expressed by the organisation's director, this is seen as a prerequisite for meaningful participation in the formulation of policy positions given such a diverse membership base. The idea is that if certain groups lack knowledge or capabilities that would be needed to participate meaningfully in the formulation of policy positions, the umbrella serves as a vehicle for strengthening the national organisations in specific areas. As one director stated in speaking about her goals for the umbrella organisation: 'We make sure the members are aligned, active, and capacities are utilised. If there is a member with a weakness, we put them in contact with another member with that strength to help' (interview, director of umbrella organisation, 8 July 2015).

Thus, one of the main priorities prior to involving members in policy work is to create structures that facilitate communication among the membership through the organisation of communication and capacity-building working groups. One of the stated goals of the umbrellas that employ this approach is to 'strengthen migrant organisations at the country level' (interview, director of umbrella organisation, 21 July 2015). In one organisation, prospective members complete an extensive questionnaire prior to joining to help leaders systematically identify the issues of greatest importance, target audiences and weaknesses. Members of the capacity-building working groups subsequently attempt to identify projects that different national organisations can undertake jointly in an effort to expand awareness, develop skills and increase their overall participation in the umbrella. Moreover, the process of strategically connecting member organisations based on differences in knowledge or skill encourages socialisation, defined as 'the process by which actors acquire different identities, leading to new interests through regular and sustained interactions within broader social contexts and structures' (Bearce and Bondanella 2007: 706). This is one way to take advantage of diversity to help expand knowledge, encourage participation and ultimately to increase the legitimacy of the umbrella organisation. A worthwhile avenue for future research is to examine how these structures work in more detail and to assess their impact on participation within the umbrella.

## CONCLUSION

This research focused on two European umbrella organisations – the European Council on Refugees and Exiles and the European Network Against Racism – to identify empirically where cleavages exist among the national organisations that comprise their membership base. The need for more active

participation by the members was identified as a priority by leaders of umbrella organisations working in the field of migrant and refugee rights. Therefore, these cleavages were used as a starting point for proposing ways to involve certain segments of the membership more actively in the umbrellas' work and reduce barriers to participation that some members may experience. Empirically, there are many more cleavages that exist among the national constituencies (and they exist across multiple areas) than directors acknowledged in the interviews. This diversity was sometimes spoken of as an obstacle to promoting participation and therefore legitimacy, but a handful of EU umbrella organisations have been able to use it to their advantage.

Despite their internal cleavages, these European umbrellas have gained access to the EU political system rather quickly, as the European Commission seeks to legitimate its proposals in this policy field by consulting with these and other CSOs. The Commission's goal in doing so is to combat the democratic deficit that typifies the complex, opaque and technocratic style of supranational policy-making. The argument is that CSOs can act as a bridge between the national constituencies and the EU (Nanz and Steffek 2004), building the trust needed to legitimate supranational policy decisions. Yet, for the umbrellas' input to be legitimate, democratic-participatory arguments underscore the need for active involvement by the constituency in the development of policy positions. Without it, we are left with the problem of 'façade representativeness' that entails no substantive involvement in EU policy-making (Kröger 2013). In general, active participation across the membership strengthens the legitimacy of the European umbrellas in the context of functional representation and strengthens 'the democratic quality of policy-making' (Brummer 2008: 2) at the supranational level.

Identifying where internal cleavages exist can lay the foundation for future research which examines whose interests are represented well by the umbrellas and whose are not. Past research has not examined whether the issues of most importance to the national constituencies are actually represented in the policy positions of umbrella organisations. In addition, the divisions identified here can be used as the basis for further research that assesses conflict and cooperation within the umbrella organisations and how umbrellas arrive at their political positions given the potentially divergent priorities of the membership. Given the increasing attention paid in the literature to non-electoral modes of representation, these are important questions to address. Moreover, the findings can help add nuance to the research on the Europeanisation of organisations' political activities by examining the cleavages that make it more or less likely to occur. Finally, this study examined two of the large umbrella organisations as case studies, but future contributions can help develop a more nuanced body of knowledge by examining smaller umbrellas or those more focused on a specific subset of issues, such as the European Network of Migrant Women.

Past research has found that certain CSOs ultimately fail to Europeanise their members' activities in such a way as to foster the development of a supranational polity and address the EU's democratic deficit (Warleigh 2001; Kröger 2013). However, once leaders of umbrella organisations know the specific cleavages that structure the constituency, it becomes easier to foster participation in a way that actively encourages capacity-building. Diversity can therefore be strategically harnessed to strengthen the membership, foster greater levels of participation and potentially increase the legitimacy of the umbrella organisation.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> In all cases, interviews were conducted with the organisation's director. The terms of participation and consent require anonymity of the organisations be observed.

<sup>2</sup> The complete list of countries and national organisations is available as supplemental material.

<sup>3</sup> Several key sections of the websites were analysed, including the home page, 'About Us', 'History', 'Campaigns', 'Issues' and 'Current Projects' which included information about the issues of highest concern to the organisation.

<sup>4</sup> The initial dimensions were determined based on eigenvalues greater than 1.0 but were subsequently reduced to minimise the incidence of some single variables loading on their own factor. More specifically, the initial factor analysis for issue priorities yielded an initial solution comprising 14 factors. However, due to several variables loading on their own factor and in light of theoretical considerations from previous analyses of the dimensions of organisations' issue priorities (Dalton, Recchia and Rohrschneider 2003; Schnyder 2015), the final number of factors was reduced to five. The same process was employed for the other two factor analyses.

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