POLICY PROFESSIONALS IN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

STRUGGLING FOR INFLUENCE

Joanna Mellquist

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Abstract

The professionalization of civil society organizations coupled with an elite-driven policy process has fostered the rise of policy professionals in civil society organizations (CSOs). This dissertation explores the role and functioning of policy professionals in CSOs, describing and analyzing how CSOs' hiring of such expertise contributes to processes of professionalization within civil society, including what that entails from a normative perspective. It does so by analyzing interviews with and observations of policy professionals in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands. The main research question guiding the thesis concerns how we can conceptualize and understand the group of policy professionals in civil society and the role it plays in the professionalization of civil society. The analysis is based on field theory in combination with new institutional theory.

The study provides new insights into the role of policy professionals and professionalization of CSOs through four empirical studies. First, it conceptualizes the field of policy advocacy in civil society as a struggle to gain influence over internal and public policymaking. In this struggle, policy professionals' daily activities concern practices of influencing policy application and constructing several types of field-specific capital. Types of capital important for this subfield are, over and above social and academic capital, organizational capital and policy-political capital. While organizational capital restores the organization by fostering legitimacy, trust, and loyalty, policy-political capital, acquired from the political sphere, enhances the political professionalization of the field.

Second, a contribution of this thesis is to conceptualize policy professionals' different role orientations as policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators, and policy activists. These role orientations of individual policy professionals are in turn connected to strategies embedded in the logics of and relationships with actors outside civil society.

Third, by identifying how these policy professionals handle the sometimes-clashing logics of membership and influence, gaps between ideals and practices are found in policy professionals' day-to-day policy work. Policy professionals try to overcome these gaps by the means of decoupling, myth creation, and organizational hypocrisy, creating a discrepancy in that the organizations say one thing but do another.

Lastly, this thesis argues that the mediatization of civil society creates conflicts within organizations, in turn pushing CSOs to advance their work via branding, framing, and strategic communication that elevate the positions of communicators within policy teams.

One of this study's main contributions is made in relation to the professsionalization of CSOs, demonstrating how their roles are connected to organizational strategies. A second contribution is that of nuancing and extending the literature on and conceptualization of policy professionals by conceptualizing the subfield of policy professionals in civil society. This thesis reveals how the policy professsional-

ization of CSOs creates a new political landscape where competence relating to these areas is in demand, fostering the emergence of policy professionals as a cadre in civil society. A significant danger of this policy professionalization of CSOs is that decision making is placed more in the hands of these employees, rather than in the hands of the members the organization is supposed to represent.

Keywords: civil society, policy professionals, professionalization, organization, advocacy, strategy, member, mediatization, field theory, capital, decoupling, logic of influence, organizational hypocrisy, myth.

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This dissertation has been completed with the contributions of many people. It has been a truly collaborative process, and I owe many thanks to a large community of scholars, activists, professionals, and friends. First and foremost, this research could not have been completed without all the policy professionals who accepted my presence and gave me excellent input about their working lives and experiences. I am deeply thankful to all the interviewees for generously sharing their time and thoughts with me.

Writing this dissertation has been a grand journey. At times, the process felt like a smorgasbord where I could pick and choose between interesting thoughts, concepts, and debates, as the study crossed many disciplinary boundaries. At other times, the study felt like a piece of Swiss cheese, pompous and smelly, full of holes in need of covering up. At those moments, I was most grateful for the indispensable guidance and supervision I received from my two dear supervisors Adrienne Sörbom and Stefan Svallfors: without their expertise, support, and guidance, this thesis journey could never have come to an end.

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If the ultimate result resembles even a tiny slice of bread and butter, reflecting only a small share of the entire smorgasbord of literature, experiences, conversations, and thoughts involved in the research process, I will be most content.

Contents

List of papers

This thesis is based on the following four papers, of which one was co-written with Adrienne Sörbom. Papers I and II are reproduced here with the permission of the publishers.

Paper I: The game of influence: Policy professional capital in civil society
Journal article in *Journal of Civil Society*, published online in 2022
Joanna Mellquist

Paper II: Role orientation and organizational strategy among policy professionals in civil society
Journal article in *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, published online in 2022
Joanna Mellquist

Paper III: Policy professionals in civil society organizations: The myth of active members and organizational hypocrisy
Journal article under review
Joanna Mellquist and Adrienne Sörbom

Paper IV: Do communicators take over? Mediatization and conflicts in civil society organizations
Journal article under review
Joanna Mellquist

1. Introduction

> I can be the PR person who says, "You are selling a story, you have to package this." I can be the researcher who says, "This is completely without facts, sense, and reason. The causality is completely upside down here." I can also be the politician who says, "You know that won't work, you understand that, right?" (J-8 Swedish Policy professional)

In a report on professionalization, the Swedish umbrella organization for nonprofit organizations, Ideell Arena (2021) voiced concern over the increasing marketization of civil society, asking whether experts should increasingly run and direct nonprofit organizations and whether formal competence should trump nonprofit experience in civil society (Ideell Arena 2021:5). They were concerned that expertise and market values were taking over at the expense of nonprofit experience and trust based on elections. Before publishing the report, Ideell Arena gathered a group of employees and elected representatives to discuss the challenges of an increasingly professionalized civil society. The report and its authors describe concern for the future of civil society due to the increasing professionalization and marketization of the sector. These processes, they admit, entail greater demands in terms of professional competence and number of employees.

Extensive research has long since shown that the professionalization of membership organizations entails tensions between members and staff and between external and internal logics and pressure (e.g., Berkhout 2013; Dodge 2010; Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Hwang and Powell 2009; Maier et al. 2016; Sanders 2012; Sanders and McClellan 2014; Schmitter and Streeck 1999; Staggenborg 1988). The external pressure to professionalize arises from the possibility of gaining institutional influence (Lang 2013:71). In this endeavor, CSOs are increasingly squeezed between the logic of membership, i.e., serving their constituencies through democratic principles, the logic of influence, i.e., organizing their actions to attain influence in the policy process (Schmitter and Streeck 1999), and the logic of reputation (Berkhout 2013), i.e., entailing constraints in relation to media logics and in interactions with journalists. Research on the mediatization of politics has further described how policy actors are forced to devote more resources to media management and to adapt to the media logic to stay influential (Cook 2005; Esser and Matthes 2013; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; Strömbäck and Esser 2009). In the Scandinavian context, scholars have even noted that CSOs, to deal with these demands, have had to lean towards external consultants, think tanks, and PR firms for their policy work (Åberg et al. 2019; Öberg and Svensson 2012).

Three important changes related to civil society's contribution to public policymaking have created a new urgency to the study of professionalization in Swedish civil society: first, the de-corporatization of relationships between state and civil society (Hermansson et al. 1999; Svallfors 2015; Öberg and Svensson 2012); second, the increasing complexity of politics (van Aelst et al. 2017; Wood 2019; Eyal 2019); and third, CSOs' loss of members (e.g., Amnå 2008; von Essen 2019; Vogel et al. 2003). These changes have led civil society to engage in other forms of policy influence and have fostered the rise of so-called policy professionals (Svallfors 2020) in CSOs, calling for scholarly attention to this group and to the changes in power dynamics within CSOs that this group both causes and reflects. Understanding the role of policy professionals in civil society is of key importance when analyzing the process of professionalization within CSOs and the tensions between membership-based organizations and their growing professionalized expertise.

To investigate the relationship between hired staff, experts in policy advocacy, and civil society, this dissertation examines the phenomenon of policy professionals in CSOs. These experts work inside CSOs on public policymaking (Garsten et al. 2015). To investigate what they bring to their employing organizations and what their rise means to civil society, the example of Swedish membership-based CSOs will be used. For contextualization, the Swedish case is compared and related to the situation found in CSOs in the Netherlands and Latvia. One core argument of the study is that the professsionals now inhabiting CSOs' policy and communication departments have key positions, make strategic decisions, and are therefore (re)shaping organizational life. This is indeed a professional group in need of more scholarly attention.

To learn what these professionals' influence is like at the actual scene, I suggest looking into their practices as partakers of a field (e.g., Barman 2016; Bourdieu 1996; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). Field theory is here used to get a sense of the struggle to gain influence over public policymaking and to analyze the logics of working with advocacy and public policy in membership-based organizations. According to Bourdieu, fields are relatively autonomous, with their own sets of important capital, illusio (i.e., the reason to invest in the field), status, and norms as to what is good, bold, and desirable based on a practical logic within the specific field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98). By following this group, I want to understand the strategies, capital, relationships, and logics employed by them and the conflicts they stage and take part in. For several years, I therefore spent time with a number of policy professionals at CSOs, shadowing them in their workplaces, visiting steering meetings, advocacy workshops, and external seminars, and interviewing them about policymaking. By understanding their motivations, the capital they bring with them, and how they shape the CSOs that hire them, we can better understand ongoing processes of CSO professionalization as well as these professionals' strategic contributions to their employing organizations policy work. The term "policy" is here used to refer to "a set of ideas, or a plan of what to do in a particular situation, that has been agreed officially by a group of people" ("Policy," 2022).

In the endeavor to understand the role that hired civil society experts play in CSOs and in the professionalization of civil society, this thesis mainly draws on field theory, but in combination with new institutional theory. The latter perspective is drawn upon in the interest of conceptualizing the organizations that the policy professionals are employed at. Specifically, the theoretical viewpoint of new institutional theory renders an understanding of how organizations commonly respond to organizational logics and contradictory external pressures by decoupling their strategies from members (Meyer and Rowan 1977) or bypassing democratic practices (Berkhout 2013; Schmitter and Streeck 1999). Irrespective on the role civil society organizations are understood to fulfill, professionalization, placing greater influence in the hands of experts, has different consequences (Maier et al. 2016). Both with the view that civil society should be a civil public sphere (e.g., Edwards 2004; Habermas 1984), and the view that it serves a civic purpose, being a space where members form an important core of the democratic practice (Skocpol 2003), the rise of policy professionals, accelerating the delegation of political matter to experts (Wood 2019), could give rise to democratic backsliding.

A growing body of literature recognizes the importance of policy professionals in the production of public policy and politics (e.g., Garsten et al. 2015; Heclo 1978/1995; Svallfors 2020; Tyllström 2013, 2021). This group of political players—i.e., the public relations (PR) people and "spin doctors" of politics, sometimes referred to as the "third element" (Eichbaum and Shaw 2015)—is increasing rapidly in the political game, being part of the professionalization of politics. Earlier research has conceptualized the group as policy professionals (e.g., Heclo 1978/1995; Svallfors 2020). They are contracted experts working on policy outside public scrutiny, without the public having the ability to demand political accountability from them. Policy professionals are found within the state, the business sector, and civil society. Stefan Svallfors (2020) and others (Garsten et al. 2015) describe policy professionals' prominent position in the production of politics from a legitimacy perspective, indicating that their unclear and often invisible (to the membership) positions create poor conditions for demanding accountability (Garsten et al. 2015:227). Although previous studies of policy professionals have dealt with the role of professionals in party organizations (Craft 2016; Karlsen and Saglie 2017; Moens 2021; Panebianco et al. 1988) and of experts and investigators in trade unions (Garsten et al. 2015; Hellberg 1997; Wagner 2013; Wilensky 1956), the specific role of policy professionals in CSOs has been overlooked. Yet the urgency of this research is underscored not just by this research gap but also by the fact that policy professionals are a fundamental and important group, with strong influence on how and when CSOs act and, more importantly, are a group currently changing civil society in Sweden. We therefore need a better understanding of how and with what consequences this change is taking place.

Typical of the Swedish context and of CSOs in Sweden is the high level of general public trust in both civil society and state institutions (Trägårdh et al. 2013). Furthermore, many CSOs in Sweden have strong ties to the state, which in return views civil

society actors as important and commonly invites them to engage in policy decisions and advocacy activities (Arvidson et al. 2018; Trägårdh et al. 2013). One important model of organizing in Scandinavian civil society has been the popular mass movement organization (*folkrörelser*), mobilizing a large membership base and a democratic decision-making process at all organizational levels (Lundström and Svedberg 2003; Micheletti 1994). The legacy of the popular movement tradition and CSOs' prominent role in binding together an egalitarian welfare regime has led scholars to call Sweden "a popular-movement democracy" (Vogel et al. 2003). As mentioned above, the rise of policy professionals in relation to changes in the character of Swedish CSOs (i.e., loss of members) calls for empirical studies of what these changes mean for a normative understanding of civil society.

Aim and research question

One of the greatest challenges for CSOs is tied to reconciling the tensions between external and internal logics and pressure, to keep members and stay influential in order to contribute to societal change and democracy. Considering these challenges, the aim of this thesis is to explore the role and functioning of policy professionals in CSOs, describing and analyzing how CSOs' hiring of such expertise contributes to processes of professionalization within civil society, including what that entails from a normative perspective. The main research question guiding the thesis concerns how we can conceptualize and understand the group of policy professionals in civil society and the role it plays in the professionalization of civil society.

The study sets out to describe and explain the role and position of policy professionals at three analytical levels. First, at a field level, the thesis addresses the question of what is at stake in the field of civil society policy professionals. Second, at the organizational level, the thesis asks how CSOs respond to the clashing logics of membership, influence, and mediatization in relation to their hiring of policy professionals. Lastly, at the individual level, the thesis analyzes what policy professsionals strive for, what resources they bring and construct, and what capital they use when struggling in the field. In so doing, this study brings together literature on field theory, new institutional theory, policy professionals, mediatization, and the professionalization of civil society to study the development of civil society, influence, and democracy.

The study explores the role and position of policy professionals in civil society from the perspectives of the following four themes:

- A first theme concerns policy professionals in CSOs as a group (Paper I): How do they work? What kind of capital and social status do they create? What is the illusio, i.e., the reason to invest in the field, that policy professionals in this subfield attempt to construct?

- A second theme concerns policy professionals' impact on the organizations that hire them (Paper II): What role orientations do policy professionals working in CSOs display? How do these role orientations affect the strategies of these CSOs?

- A third theme concerns the relationship between members and elected representatives in these organizations (Paper III): What does working on policy in membership-based organizations entail in terms of relating to, and handling, the nexus of staff, members, board, and annual meetings? This question is raised in relation to the shift in civil society from membership organizations, such as popular movement organizations, to professionalized CSOs.

- A fourth theme concerns the mediatization of civil society and policy professionals' relationships with one another pertaining to this process (Paper IV): The issue centers on the competition between policy professionals and organizational conflicts, addressing the question of whether organizations put more energy and resources into communication and less into the actual thinking itself. How does increased mediatization affect strategic decision making within CSOs?

The analysis is drawn from qualitative data gathered in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands, through following policy professionals working in CSOs to address the themes of gender equality, environmentalism, and trade unionism. Swedish civil society is the example that the thesis explores empirically, but reflections are made based on the contrasting examples of policy professionals active in CSOs in Latvia and the Netherlands.

Thesis structure and development

Two experiences have been decisive for the writing of this dissertation: my experiences as an activist in CSOs, and my growing knowledge of the complexity of current policy production. My interest in this area developed while I was completing an internship at the Swedish Governmental Office, conducting an investigation of youth unemployment in which I was considering civil society participation. I found myself surrounded by these professionals, who were trying to influence public policymaking with regard to civil society. I saw the importance of skilled professsionalism when interacting in the policy process. These encounters were contrasted to my activities in various CSOs for twenty-five years, during which time I had seen myself as a social movement activist, most recently volunteering as a board member for a fairly large and professionalized CSO. This experience had sparked an uneasy feeling of not really being desired as an active member. I had the sense that the policy- and decision-making processes were not really happening at these board meetings. Members and board members were expected to attend meetings and congresses, but not as active parties that gave advice and participated in policy discussions, but rather as silent partners who gave the organization legitimacy and a mandate to work. Policy was

decided on by professionals working at the head office who had little contact either with us as board members or with regular active members.

Connecting these experiences with earlier research on policy professionals, I found that the literature on policy professionals in civil society was still limited and that professional employment in CSOs merited more scholarly attention. The focus of this dissertation is therefore on the group of policy professionals in civil society and the role they play for the professionalization of CSOs. My understanding of the research process is that it is important to be in the field, meeting those who are the target of investigation to build first-hand knowledge of the area of concern. Therefore, for several years, I went into the field to spend time with these individuals in the organizations where they worked. I collected data and interviewed, talked to, shadowed, and followed policy professionals in CSOs. My being in the field clarified the focus of the dissertation. Once I started to work with the material, it became even more evident to me that what I was studying were processes of professionalization. Alongside fieldwork, I gathered information from previous research, to find out what we know about the group of policy professionals. Above all, what do we know about the processes placing these professionals at the heart of civil society, and what relevant knowledge do we lack? What gaps could research on policy professionals in civil society address?

This is a compilation thesis comprising this introductory/linking paper and four papers. For each paper, I have taken my material and applied different theoretical perspectives as lenses through which new patterns of interpretation have caught my eye. In Paper I, I study the policy professionals as a field, examining the forms of capital and illusio important to the field. In Paper II, I take a closer look at the groups of policy professionals that I have studied, asking who they are in terms of motivation, background, education, and profession. What have they done earlier in their careers and what are their experiences of civil society? What drives them? The paper suggests that their motivations can be divided into different groups, which in turn entail different strategies that they apply in and for the organizations that employ them. In Paper III, co-written with Adrienne Sörbom, I change the lens by using new institutional theory, analyzing the relationship between the policy professionals and the members of the employing organizations. I consider how policy professionals handle the fact that they work in democratic organizations that ultimately should be controlled by their members and not by professionals. In interviews and conversations with policy professionals, conflicting comments about other policy professsionals often arose, highlighting the internal struggles in the subfield. Hence, Paper IV is about the pronounced conflicts between policy professionals in relation to the mediatization of civil society. What became obvious throughout the research process was not only the conflicts between policy professionals, but also the inevitable embedded conflict between an effectively professionalized civil society and an ideologically driven social movement ideal that can articulate fundamental social conflicts in

society. An attempt to analyze this conflict is developed in the conclusion of this introductory paper.

The thesis proceeds with a brief summary of the four papers, followed by a chapter on the conceptual understanding provided by new institutional theory and field theory, describing the concepts of institutional logics, legitimacy, fields, social skills, and capital. Then, an overview of earlier research on professionalization, membership-based civil society, and policy professionals is presented. The context and methodology are further discussed and presented. The introductory paper ends with a normative discussion of how the subfield and the roles of professionals in civil society can be conceptualized.

2. Summary of papers

This thesis is based on four empirical studies of policy professionals in civil society. One of these studies was co-written with Adrienne Sörbom (Paper III). Two of the papers have been published (papers I and II) and two papers (papers III and IV) are in the review process at the time of finalizing the thesis.

The game of influence

In Paper I, "The game of influence: Policy professional capital in civil society," the subfield of policy professionals in civil society is investigated. The paper concerns the first set of themes: How do they work? What kind of capital and social status do they create? What is the illusio that actors within the field attempt to construct?

Using field theory when analyzing interviews and ethnographic data, the study advances the understanding of these civil society policy professionals, adding to the literature on professionalization in civil society by conceptualizing the capital that they construct and bring to the organizations in which they work. For this paper, I followed a group of policy professionals at the Almedalen political week, during their workdays. Together with analyses of 25 interviews with Swedish policy professionals, the findings provide insights into three main themes: first, organizational capital, based on being active in associations, stands out as specifically important for these professionals; second, policy-political capital—knowledge, skills, and contacts derived from the political structure—is important within the field; and, third, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus, the analysis shows that the specific illusio for the policy professional field is influence. This alludes to the importance of successfully upholding the image of policy influence and is the return for which the players in the field are competing.

The results of this investigation show that the legitimacy, trust, and loyalty found in organizational capital are still key components for CSO professionals. However, policy-political capital brought from the political sphere could potentially reshape the norms of civil society. The importance of such capital creates opportunities for further political professionalization of the field.

Role orientation and organizational strategy

Paper II, "Role orientation and organizational strategy among policy professionals in civil society," centers on the second theme: What role orientations do policy professionals working within CSOs display? How do these role orientations affect the strategies of these CSOs?

In this paper, I analyze how hiring policy professionals to do the policy work of CSOs affects the organizations that hire them. As a group, policy professionals comprise various types of professionals, displaying different backgrounds, identities, and motivations. The paper is based on interviews with policy professionals in Swedish, Latvian, and Dutch CSOs. By analyzing individual policy professionals, asking questions about their identities and motivations for working with advocacy, and then through ethnographical observations following their work, this paper advances the understanding of how policy professionals' backgrounds and professsional identities are connected to organizational strategies and the process of professionalization. In so doing, the paper sheds new light on the dynamics of policy production and what the professionalization of politics is like in civil society.

The paper proposes categorizing policy professionals' role orientations in civil society as policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators, and policy activists. These role orientations of individual policy professionals are connected to strategies, which in turn are embedded in logics and in relationships with actors outside civil society.

Policy scholars typically work and identify with knowledge production; they are often called investigators, policy officers, or experts. In strategic policy discussions, they try to anchor policy content in research and often relate their work to the academic community. For policy lobbyists, their policy work goes in the direction of decision makers and direct influence. They bring knowledge and logics from the political sphere to civil society. Policy communicators work on media efforts, are driven by media logics, and relate to journalists as a pole of identification. Policy activists anchor the organization's policy work in the civil society tradition; they relate to and identify with the movement.

By proposing the distinct categorization of policy professionals' role orientations in civil society as policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators, and policy activists, this paper helps nuance the conceptualization of policy professionals, and the understanding of how policy professionals' backgrounds and professional identities are connected to organizational strategies and the process of professionalization within civil society. This conceptualization is of analytical value, because the balance between these categories affects dynamics within organizations and the work they do in relation to advocacy and policy, in tandem with their legitimacy. These results add to the rapidly expanding field of the study of professionals in civil society and the study of policy professionals.

The myth of active members and organizational hypocrisy

In Paper III, "Policy professionals in civil society organizations: The myth of active members and organizational hypocrisy" I (together with Adrienne Sörbom) ask what working on policy in membership-based organizations entails in terms of relating to and handling the nexus of staff, members, the board, and annual meetings. Using an

organizational perspective, the paper conceptualizes the different ways in which organizations and professionals handle conflicts that arise in this process. When interviewing and following policy professionals in membership-based CSOs, I invariably encountered talk about the importance of members. However, gaps between ideals and practices in the relationship between members and staff were found in policy professionals' day-to-day policy work. In day-to-day events at headquarters, the ideals of democratic membership-based decision making intersect with the practices of contemporary policy professionals' work schedules and the fast-changing everyday political landscape, resulting in gaps related to knowledge, strategy, and ideology.

Gaps related to professionals' relative knowledge advantage in education, information, and technical details created a situation in which policy-related activities were shaped by the staff at headquarters, rather than by members and their representatives. When it comes to the strategic gap, policy professionals were frustrated with members' and board members' lack of strategic political knowledge and sometimes even embarrassed by members' involvement or input regarding some policy issues. In practice, the policy unit dealt with this gap by avoiding members or attempting to compromise with them regarding their demands. Examples of ideological gaps between members and staff were found when either the membership or staff expressed more progressive ideas and policy solutions than did the other.

This study identifies how policy professionals handle these gaps by avoiding and decoupling policy work from member influence when it is not beneficial—hence, the effort to keep alive the myth of active members through the production of talk, branding, and images explaining to the movement itself that its legitimacy comes from member-organized activities. Another important finding was that when policy professionals try to overcome these gaps, this creates a discrepancy in that the organizations say one thing but do another. The discrepancy creates satisfaction in that effective policy work is possible, at the same time as the organization can celebrate the importance of its members. This creates what we understand as organizational hypocrisy, which, in the long run, could threaten the organization's potential for legitimacy and policy influence.

Mediatization and conflicts

In Paper IV, "Do communicators take over? Mediatization and conflicts in civil society organizations," I address the thesis' fourth and last research question: How does increased mediatization affect CSOs' policy work? What strategic tensions are found? How does mediatization affect CSOs' focus on communication and knowledge production?

This paper returns to the field analysis by analyzing policy professionals' strategic policy work and conflicts through interviews and observations in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands. Exposing the conflicts within a subfield such as civil society reveals how professionals with capital related to strategic media work have the power to set

the agenda of the organization's policy work. In analyzing the professionals' capital and how it operates within the field, the paper illustrates how capital connected to expertise and knowledge in specific policy issues is downplayed and how capital connected to strategy and media work in strategic policy discussions is highly valued.

The paper scrutinizes the strategic tensions found between "policy experts" and "communication experts"; more concretely, it studies tensions and conflicts over framing versus in-depth knowledge production in CSOs. By drawing on concepts of symbolic capital and organizational logics, the paper analyzes policy professionals' struggle to influence public policy. Mediatization is here used as a "sensitizing concept" to learn what the media's embedding in everyday life implies for the field of policy advocacy and for policy professionals' strategies in CSOs. In so doing, the main argument is that the mediatization of civil society creates conflicts regarding policy strategies in organizations, in turn pushing CSOs to advance their work by means of branding, framing, and strategic communication. Policy professionals with capital connected to media and communication skills are increasingly recognized as influential and powerful players within the field. Hence, in the professionalized CSOs of today, media and strategic skills are the capital over which much competition focuses.

The results indicate that the process of mediatization puts communicators at the center of policy units, which in turn is consequential for the strategies chosen for the organization's policy work. The increased mediatization of CSOs' policy work creates the risk that CSOs could lose strength in their production and communication of more complex knowledge, a situation of great concern.

3. Theoretical considerations

Two theoretical contributions have played a crucial role in the interpretation and analysis of the role of policy professionals in civil society: field theory and new institutional theory. As the study focuses on policy professionals and the organizations that employ them, we need new institutional theory to understand their impact on CSOs. From new institutional theory, the concepts of logics, legitimacy, and hypocrisy are used to highlight how organizations navigate external and internal pressures. Field theory is used to highlight the struggle to become consequential in changing and influencing public policy. This helps us understand how individuals compete in this subfield of policy professionals in civil society, including the resources they have, bring to, and construct within this field. Combined, the two perspectives give the opportunity to understand both how CSOs typically act as part of and in relation to (policy) professionalization, and how the individuals in these organizations form the dynamics, competition and tensions that partially drives the professionalization processes.

New institutional theory and organizations

According to institutional theory, organizations are greatly influenced by environmental factors such as available resources, opportunity structures, rules, and other external pressures. Organizations act according to established patterns, often described as path dependency, or by more subtle norms such as culturally specific practices (Hall and Taylor 1996:14). Peter Hall famously described institutions as "the formal rules, compliance procedures, and standard operating practices that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy" (Hall 1986:19). In this way, new institutionalism emphasizes that organizations are governed by institutions, and are not to be seen as independent actors governed by rationality (Brunsson 1986). They are rather to be seen as embedded in norms, traditions, etc., which in the case of CSOs necessitates paying attention to CSOs' external environment, pressure, and surroundings to understand their internal processes (e.g., Eikenberry and Kluver 2004:133). CSOs are, however, not without agency in these processes and can show resilience and navigate seemingly unbearable external pressures without losing their social mission (e.g., Kravchenko and Moskvina 2018). Examples of external pressure and environmental factors important for CSOs in this study are the dismantling of corporate structures, increasing media and market logics, and increasing demands for rationalization and efficiency (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Maier et al. 2016; Meyer et al. 2013).

The logics of members, influence, and reputation

Organizations' institutional embeddedness has the further consequence that organizations are dependent on their environment to gain resources and legitimacy. For CSOs to obtain resources from others, trust and legitimacy are important (Brunsson 1986). For the membership-based CSOs studied here, the logic of membership and the logic of influence are pivotal to gain legitimacy and resources. Theses logics originate, conceptually, from Philippe Schmitter and Wolfgang Streeck (1999), who wrote about organized business interests. According to them, interest organizations structure themselves to please and serve their constituent members and policymakers. The logics of membership refer to the organization's internal organizational structure, relationship with its members, representation of its members' interests, following of democratic decisions, etc. Organizations have to follow this logic "to offer sufficient incentives to their members to extract from them adequate resources to ensure their survival" (Schmitter and Streeck 1999:19). The logic of influence implies that organizations must follow certain ways of organizing, in relation to policymakers, lobbying venues, etc., to gain "adequate influence over public authorities" and to ensure their organizational survival (Schmitter and Streeck 1999:19). While the logic of influence grants access to policymakers, the logic of membership sustains profound engagement with members. The latter logic also involves the idea that members grant the organization legitimacy, political support, participation in protests or public events, and economic resources. Following this logic, organizations and leaders that can control their members and mobilize protests are also granted greater bargaining strength when negotiating with authorities and policymakers (Berkhout 2013:235; Lipsky 1968:1149). The tensions between the logic of membership and the logic of influence have been picked up by many interest group scholars (e.g., Berkhout 2013; Grömping and Halpin 2019) and civil society scholars discussing the professionalization of CSOs (e.g., Binderkrantz 2009; Maloney 2012; Skocpol 2003; Verba et al. 1995; Walker et al. 2011). In these discussions, external demands, for example, for managerialism and marketization, are seen as colliding with CSOs' representational functions and expected contribution to the common good, as discussed further here.

Following the logic of influence, CSOs need access and information from policymakers to be able to "offer various forms of legislative subsidies to policymakers" (Berkhout 2013:238). By handling these contacts well, maintaining access and advocacy efforts become important work tasks for the CSOs employing policy professionals. Policy professionals are also very much responsible for CSOs' media work, which can be analyzed using the "logic of reputation" (Berkhout 2013). The logic of reputation describes CSOs' relationship to the media and their quest to provide newsworthy policy-relevant information, drama, and actions (Berkhout 2013:240). Providing news, information and drama are demands which have been fostered by an increasing mediatization of politics (Esser and Matthes 2013; Strömbäck and Esser 2009). Mediatization is here used as a concept describing how media logic has become

decisive for how politics and policy processes are organized, and the media's "embedding in everyday life" (Couldry and Hepp 2013:195).

Examples of constraints related to these logics can be found in CSOs using insider strategies such as lobbying policymakers and that restrain their media presence or use of "voice" and protest, as it could risk damaging their inside lobbying efforts (Grant 2004). Regardless of the possible tension between media and access strategies, media work seems to be a strategy used by most interest groups to get "their" issues on the agenda (e.g., Binderkrantz 2012; Dür and Mateo 2013; Jacobs and Glass 2002). In summary, in this thesis, organizations' actions are defined and constrained by these three logics because of their interest in gaining support and legitimacy from members and the media and their endeavor to gain influence over public policy.

Legitimacy and hypocrisy

Organizational legitimacy is a condition by which the environment approves of an organization and its activities, a condition important for organizational survival (Brunsson 1986). Given this understanding, it becomes important to study how organizations react to threats of losing legitimacy. As organizations, stakeholders, and individuals can and do initiate projects and activities specifically to retain or perform legitimacy, the relational–processual aspect of legitimacy needs to be taken into consideration (cf. Egholm et al. 2020). Therefore, this study applies an organizational perspective stressing the use of legitimacy as both a property, i.e., something an organization may have (and loose) in the eyes of members and outsiders, and a relational process (cf. Egholm et al. 2020:8; Meyer and Rowan 1977:340). The combined processual and organizational understanding of how CSOs gain and uphold legitimacy features an analysis at the three levels: first, at the individual level, focusing on policy professionals' handling of these logics; second, at the organizational level, asking how organizations respond to external and internal pressures; and third, at the field level, focusing on the common understanding of what is important and what is at stake in the field.

Meyer and Rowan (1977:341) argued that organizations, in their urge to adapt to institutionalized demands from their environments, such as conflicting logics, create gaps between their formal structures and their practices. This type of discrepancy between organizations' public statements and practiced actions can be solved by practices of decoupling from structures (Maier et al. 2016; Meyer and Rowan 1977), creating organizational myths (Meyer and Rowan 1977), and/or organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson 1986). Organizational hypocrisy is used to ensure that organizations can uphold an image that gives them legitimacy and still express ideological visions and decisions about future commitments without the intention or ability to act upon them (Brunsson 1986). The term "organizational hypocrisy" refers to the organizational norm that "actors should be consistent in what they say, decide, and do" (Brunsson 2007:13). When this norm is not upheld, organizations resolve this dilemma by applying organizational hypocrisy as a solution to the problem of saying one

thing but doing another. This could be understood as an organization's response to conflicting demands from its environment, for example, demands for professionalization and efficiency conflicting with the social movement ideal of membership centrality (see Paper III), or as a response to mediatization in which CSOs tend to put more resources and influence into communication and less into the production of facts and thought (see Paper IV).

Field theory

With the overarching aim and research question focusing on the specific role of policy professionals in CSOs and how they contribute to processes of professionalization, the concept of field is valuable because it reminds us that the object of this study is the field, not individual persons or institutions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:107). Nevertheless, as individuals are participants in fields, the field perspective can be used as an aid for understanding how policy professionals relate to each other and to the organization and for asking questions about what drives them, what they struggle for, and how this struggle is expressed in the specific field. Furthermore, the field approach is commonly used in sociology and in the study of civil society to foster a relational perspective, focusing on the meso-level domain where members of the domain share some orientations (e.g., Barman 2016:442; Emirbayer 1997). The approach has been used in studying civil society elites in the EU context (e.g., Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Johansson et al. 2021; Uhlin and Arvidson 2022), the field of trade unions (e.g., Galli 2016; Mathieu 2021), and in the specific study of policy professionals in various organizational settings (Svallfors 2020), but never focusing specifically on policy professionals in CSOs. In this context, I use the field approach for three analytical reasons. First, the field perspective focuses on what the partakers in a field have in common, what they struggle for, and what is at stake in the field. In contrast to networks, the individuals and organizations in a field do not need to be connected to each other through a web of concrete contacts. The field instead highlights that the people or organizations active within it share an understanding of the importance of what they do and what is at stake within their field and what can be understood as "the rules of the game" (Fligstein and McAdam 2012:4). Second, compared with institutional logics, field theories tend to see reality as more contested. Change, in institutional theory, happens rarely and more often as an unintentional consequence than through organized intentions. In contrast, the field perspective sees constant change (Barman 2016:444; Fligstein and McAdam 2012:12) and competition (Bourdieu 1996; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) as the norm in fields. The focus on contestation and competition becomes important because policy professionals are part of the changing professionalization within their subfield. Third, I use the field concept to build knowledge and theory regarding professionalization in civil society, by establishing policy professionals working with policy advocacy in CSOs as a field in itself, existing as a subfield both of the field of policy professionals in general

and of civil society. The field concept allows me to analyze the institutional settings in which the CSOs are embedded, and to analyze policy professionals' backgrounds, experiences, motivations, roles, and functioning within CSOs.

An analytical consequence of this perspective, focusing on policy professionals in civil society as a subfield, is the understanding of this subfield as an emerging quasi-professional field (cf. Fligstein and McAdam 2012) of people working with policy advocacy in civil society. Research on professional fields often highlights the relational approach (Brante 2014). In this regard, the field of policy professionals at CSOs can be seen as a field where scientific knowledge is coupled with professional practice, linking "know-how" to "know-why." In this sense, being a civil society policy professional also means being part of a professional field. On this topic, Noordegraaf (2007:766) stated that professionals know "how to make sense of specific situations and signals and they know how they can and should react properly." Hence, expertise is not only about knowledge or functional knowledge, but also about reflexive and behavioral skills (Noordegraaf 2007:766). Applying a field perspective to the group of CSO policy professionals does not mean that they are seen as members of one profession, in the sense of having common titles and education and of seeking control over their field. Rather, I suggest understanding the rise of policy professionals in civil society as representing an emerging subfield and labor market both within the field of policy professionals in general (cf. Svallfors 2020) and as a subfield of civil society. Even though this study allows for an understanding of an emerging quasi-professional field, the focus of this dissertation is primarily on the professionalization that policy professionals take part in and are responsible for when working with policy advocacy in CSOs. In so doing, the study applies various tools from research on professional and strategic action fields and from Bourdieu's field approach to investigate policy professionals' positions, role orientations, strategies, conflicts, and relationships with other actors in this subfield. The use of social skills (Fligstein and McAdam 2012) and the construction of the intertwined concepts of illusio and capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) are of specific importance for this field analysis. In this dissertation, the terms "subfield" and "field" are used interchangeably when referring to the object of study for reasons of readability.

Resources and social skills

Niel Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2012) have stressed the importance of analyzing the field in relation to both the resources of social actors and their position in the field. Resources could be anything social actors use to gain influence, such as social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital. The actors' social position in the field is furthermore pivotal for their success (Fligstein and McAdam 2012:181). To identify key resources, Fligstein and McAdam (2012:172) proposed that empirical investigations should focus on three elements: rules, resources, and social skills. The concept of social skill functions as the bridge between what individuals do and the logics and structures that result from their actions (Fligstein and McAdam 2012:54). Social

skills describe how individuals strategically use empathy, shared meanings, and identities to advance what Fligstein and McAdam (2012:53) call "their existential and material interests" within a field. Socially skilled individuals such as policy professionals can read situations, knowing when and how to interact to achieve their goals and get others to work for them (cf. Svallfors 2020:23). Individuals with "social skills" often assume the role of "institutional entrepreneurs" (Dimaggio 1988:14) in that they often take part in reshaping institutional understandings and organizational practices. The understanding that policy professionals use social skills to advance their material and existential interests within their subfield and their employing organizations argues for a need to keep track of policy professionals' working strategies.

Struggle and competition

In field theory as presented by Pierre Bourdieu, the game metaphor is used to highlight the field as a site of competition and contestation (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). The game is played using different types of capital to gain access to power and consequential positions within the field. For example, in the field of education, academic and cultural capital are important to gain a position, whereas in the field of art, knowledge and familiarity with bourgeois culture are important. A person's familiarity with the field and the important associated capital is understood as the individual's habitus, i.e., embodied position and way of acting in the field. A field is defined as "the network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:97). To become an accepted player, the field has explicit norms and rules to follow, but these norms are not always easy to grasp from the outside. Bourdieu (2000:328) talked about the codification of access to a field. The field of art, for example, has a low degree of codification, and it is difficult for outsiders to understand exactly what norms must be fulfilled to be part of it. In the same way, it is not obvious to people outside the subfield of policy professionals what they are doing and how to interact to gain influence in the field. By using some of Bourdieu's concepts as analytical tools, I am able to analyze how the capital used and constructed in the subfield of policy professionals in civil society structures the policy professionals' positions in the field:

> The strategies of the agents depend on their position of the field, that is, in distribution of the specific capital and participation that they have on the field depending on the point of view they take on the field as a view taken from a point in the field. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:101)

Capital comprises resources important to a field that can be exchanged for influence and offer different types of power to its possessors (Neveu 2018:348). Although the agents depend on their structural position in the field, Bourdieu still stresses their ability to act within these structures. Social agents are not particles pushed around but are to be understood as agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:108). While the

field is a system of positions, the concept of habitus is used to refer to a person's acquired system of positions (Bourdieu 1977:72). Habitus is understood as the individual's embodiment of her or his social position, i.e., their way of acting and interacting in the world and in the specific field of study.

In the field, there is a constant struggle between players. What is at stake in this struggle is what Bourdieu terms the doxa, i.e., the field's common belief. The field often contains individuals with similar habitus connected to the doxa, and the closer one's habitus is to the doxa, the better one's "sense of the field." The reason players engage in this struggle is the illusio provided in the field (Bourdieu 1996):

> We have *stakes* (*enjeux*) which are for the most part the product of the competition between players. We have an *investment in the game, illusio* (from *ludus*, the game): players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98, emphasis in the original)

The doxa and the illusio define the field and provide its specific sense of what is taken for granted in the field and the reason why players invest in it. As fields are relatively autonomous, each field have their own practical logic and understanding of what is important in terms of central capitals, illusio and norms (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98).

Capital in the field

As described above, the metaphor of the game is central to the theory of fields. The players use and construct different forms of field-specific capital to win the game. These forms of capital are resources that can be material and/or cultural (Barman 2016). Bourdieu pays specific attention to four types of capital—social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital—which have specific importance to each field. For the subfield of policy professionals in CSOs, the focus is on social and symbolic capital, because economic capital is primarily important for the organization and cultural capital is somewhat less central in the political sphere. Bourdieu's understanding of *social capital* departs from other conceptualizations of social capital in how it is tied to social class. Bourdieu (1986:248) defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." Compared with Putnam (1995), who understands social capital as resources open to anyone, accessed through relationships and membership in associations, Bourdieu understands social capital as connected to context and social structures. In civil society research, the social capital approach often applies a more Tocquevillian understanding in which associations are understood as "learning schools for democracy," a place to gain social capital and where social trust is constructed (Putnam 1995:66). In this thesis, these views are combined, with the social network understood

as the core element of social capital, structured by social positions and education and central to other forms of capital in civil society.

Symbolic capital, which serves in the field as a form of credit or trust, is both collectively and individually constructed and held. The collective dimension is important because the study focuses on organizations and the subfield through its employees. The CSO can be the holder of symbolic capital, which gives it and its experts recognition and legitimacy in the subfield of policy professionals in civil society. Conversely, individual policy professionals can lend the organization their symbolic capital by operating within the CSO. In the game played, symbolic capital is the resource an actor is recognized for, and it is used as a tool to gain recognition in and power over the field. With this understanding, what should be recognized as symbolic capital is also exposed to competition and struggle, making it something at stake within the field (Bourdieu 1996). In this struggle, Bourdieu understands power as multifaceted and embedded in relationships and structures that are not always visible. Power in society, however, always originates from the control and ownership of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Harvey et al. 2020:3).

The field of civil society policy professionals

As the aim of this dissertation is to explore the role of policy professionals in CSOs and how they contribute to processes of professionalization, I suggest understanding the rise of policy professionals in civil society as representing a field in itself, existing as a subfield and labor market at the intersection of both the field of policy professionals in general and the field of civil society. This field perspective enables me to analyze civil society policy professionals' specific resources and the capital they bring and construct when struggling in this subfield. When asked, policy professionals would probably not say that they belong to a policy professional field; they would instead answer that they are parts of the fields of environmentalism, trade unionism, women's rights, or any other issue they are working on and for. That is to say, they would rather position themselves in relation to the issue than to generic expertise. However, in the studied field of policy professionals in CSOs, they share understandings of what is at stake in the field, very similar goals and methods, understandings of how to work with policy advocacy in civil society, and understandings of the forms of capital that are important to do this work well. Being successful and influencing the field would require that a policy professional successfully manage, create, and accumulate capital that is important for the field in question (cf. Harvey et al. 2020).

To explore what capital the policy professionals construct and are able to deploy, Paper I focuses on the forms of capital that are essential to the field, by arguing that organizational capital, based on being active in associations, stands out as specifically important for these professionals. Second, policy-political capital—knowledge, skills, and contacts derived from the political structure—is important within the field. The concept of capital, in combination with an analysis of organizational logics is also

explored in Paper IV, which analyzes the mediatization of politics, drawing attention to capital connected to media and communication. Here the argument is that the external pressure that mediatization entail, elevates communicators' position in the field and challenges the symbolic capital of the subfield.

Policy professionals' role orientations within the field are more closely investigated in Paper II. In this paper, the focus is on the kind of professional category policy professionals identify with and the professional methods they use, what their goals are like, and how a skilled policy professional can be defined. In this paper, another pattern emerges revealing policy professionals as comprising four distinctive role orientations with specific connections to their surroundings and to the field.

The common gain for which these professionals are competing is further understood as the illusio of the field: to be successful in shaping public policy from a civil society perspective (see Paper I). In this subfield, power is held by those who have influence. For CSOs, legitimacy is particularly important in order to gain power and influence. However, to achieve legitimacy, real power, and influence in the eyes of others, organizations need to deal with the internal and external pressures in the form of "the logic of membership," "the logic of influence," and "the logic of reputation." Paper III studies how this struggle unfolds in practice within this field, making use of the concepts of myth, decoupling, and organizational hypocrisy. From the viewpoint of policy professionals in civil society, this micro-sociological perspective is used to study how policy professionals deal with these logics to attain policy influence. This conceptualization describes what I define as the subfield of policy professionals and the struggle to attain influence over public policy from a civil society perspective is the broader focus of this subfield.

4. Situating the study in relation to previous research

Two research areas are especially important for situating this study: the literature on professionalization in civil society and on policy professionals. Furthermore, to analyze policy professionals' contribution to ongoing professionalization in CSOs, a closer look at what is specific to membership-based CSOs as well as what is at stake in civil society in general will be outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

What is at stake in civil society?

This thesis asks questions about policy professionals' roles in professionalization in membership-based CSOs: their strategies, capital, relationships, logics, and conflicts. To answer these questions, we first need to look into the different conceptualizations of civil society in earlier research. Second, we need to review earlier research on membership-based CSOs concerning their ideal–typical characteristics, the institutional logics that drive them, as well as the role of membership.

The ideas behind the description of "civil society," a "third sector," or a "public sphere" have been understood in many different ways over time, from the ancient Greeks until today, and are concepts that have been widely discussed and contested (Edwards 2009:6–7). The Tocquevillian tradition sees CSOs as schools of democracy and participation, and this perspective connects a strong society with a strong civil society (Edwards et al. 2001). Seen from this perspective, CSOs contribute to democracy by forming an arena for active participation and potential contacts with politics and policymaking (Edwards 2009). This perspective is based on the traditional sectoral model distinguishing civil society from the state and the market. The sectoral model understands civil society as "the third sector" or "the nonprofit sector" separate from the state, family, and economic spheres (Edwards 2004:20). Some argue that the quality of this third sector affects society's strength and economic growth as it produces societal trust and social capital, as a way of producing success for individuals (cf. Putnam 1995; Edwards 2004:26). According to this perspective, consequences of the professionalization of civil society include a weaker society and the diminishing of democracy (Skocpol 2003). Applying a public sphere perspective to civil society has a more radical potential, emphasizing the role played by civil society in and for social change (Edwards 2009:67). The public sphere perspective should here be understood as the nexus between civil society and public life, a social space for discursive debates among all citizens (Habermas 1991). At stake within this perspective are civil society political functions. Habermas (1984) has warned of the decline of the public sphere if the ordinary citizen is not guaranteed access to public debate. According to this perspective, in order to function, the public sphere needs

rational and robust arguments, influence, and equal access to the debate. These requirements create high expectations from surrounding society for civil society and CSOs: "Such a public sphere depends on a favorable organization of civil society. It is not enough that there simply be civil society or even civil society more or less autonomous from the state" (Calhoun 2011:276). Civil society should engage and give citizens access to political debates. According to Öberg and Svensson (2012), the following factors indicate the level of CSO contribution to democracy and the public sphere: CSOs' integration with public policy; CSOs' participation in public and national rather than local arenas or lobbying activities; and CSOs' ability to involve rank-and-file members (Öberg and Svensson 2012:251).

The role of membership

Members' influence and participation in CSOs are also debated and contested issues in civil society research (Ahrne and Papakostas 2003; Heylen et al. 2020; Knoke 1988). Normative and material incentives have been related to members who are more involved in organizations (Knoke 1988). However, being a member does not necessarily entail being an active member in the organization. Research on the role of membership in CSOs offers different rationales and incentives for individuals to be part of membership-based organizations (Einarsson 2012; Hirschman 1970; Knoke 1988). Following a calculative rational argument, a member can be seen as a consumer who will exit the organization if not pleased with the gains accruing from membership (cf. Einarsson 2012; Hirschman 1970). Some scholars have investigated the role of membership in different types of democratic organizations, distinguishing between, for example, public-interest groups and sectional groups (Binderkrantz 2009; Halpin 2006). Interestingly, Danish studies have shown that trade unions score the highest and patients' associations the lowest in terms of members' influence and democratic practices within CSOs (Binderkrantz 2009:675). Compared with other types of advocacy CSOs without members, such as think tanks, foundations, and what are termed non-membership advocacy organizations, membership-based CSOs are driven by a logic of membership, fostering deep relationships and commitment to members (Walker et al. 2011). Research on external demands on membership-based CSOs often highlight a risk of managerial thinking taking over at the expense of membership influence and CSOs' capacity to foster democratic principles (e.g., Binderkrantz 2009; Egholm et al. 2020; Maloney 2012; Skocpol 2003; Verba et al. 1995; Walker et al. 2011).

The CSOs studied here share some ideal–typical characteristics as membership-based organizations. They all have different rules that restrict who can be members. The sharpest distinctions are made by trade unions, in which membership is based on work titles, whereas other organizations in the same issue area require only that the members align themselves with organizational policy. Typical of membership-based organizations is members' equal right to influence the organization and run for positions within it (Hemström 2002). Most Swedish CSOs are structured in similar

ways, with the annual meeting electing a board, which in turn delegates day-to-day activities to hired staff (Einarsson 2012:42). Accordingly, members' decision making takes place at two instances in these organizations, i.e., at annual meetings and board meetings. At large organizations and meta-organizations, only elected delegates can attend annual meetings, so the democratic procedure moves further away from ordinary members, entailing three steps for decision making.

For this study, the focus is on people employed for pushing policymaking within civil society, and on the relationship between policy professionals and their employing organizations. In this thesis, most of these professionals are hired by democratically organized membership-based organizations, both umbrella organizations and organizations with individual members. Furthermore, these organizations self-identify as popular or social movement organizations, typically describing themselves as schools of democracy. They form part of broader civil society and are engaged in advocacy activities, but are also organizations providing their members with specific benefits. Importantly, they have all walked the path of increasing professionalization, and can be characterized as formal, professionalized, and often, but not always, driven by middle-class activists, creating limitations in interpretation and in potential generalization to broader civil society (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2020).

Although criticism has been raised regarding the Western and Anglo–American conception of civil society (Lundström and Svedberg 2003:223; Trägårdh et al. 2013; von Essen 2019), the sectoral model (Egholm and Kaspersen 2020; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014), the bourgeois conception of the public sphere (Fraser 1990), and the idea of a civil society as inherently good (Krzyżanowski and Ledin 2017; Ruzza 2021), I combine these understandings and define civil society as a public sphere that, if not inherently good, is inherently moral, built on fighting for the rights and benefits of its members. The CSOs studied here were once rooted in social movements, have different power bases, and, according to their organizational charters, must function democratically. In this context, the public sphere perspective is important because it allows for a focus on civil society's ability to form and function as an arena for deliberative democratic practices. However, integrating the Tocquevillian and public sphere perspectives, I argue that CSOs function both as democratic schools, with contentious repertoires and practices, and as structures in the voluntary sector, where people can meet, build social capital, and reside. By means of this combined understanding of civil society, the focus is on the roles that policy professionals play in and for the professionalization of civil society, identifying what that entails both from a normative perspective and in regard to CSOs' strategies, relationships to members, and possible contributions to democracy.

What is professionalization?

The professionalization of CSOs has been well studied in the social sciences (e.g., Heylen et al. 2020; Hwang and Powell 2009; Lang 2013; Saurugger 2012; Skocpol

2003; Walker et al. 2011; Wilensky 1956). Going back to first-generation sociologists such as Robert Michel and Max Weber, who developed important parts of their theories in relation to the professionalization of CSOs, it is obvious that phenomena such as civil society's democratic potential, bureaucratization, oligarchization, and marketization are still important themes in research concerning CSOs' potential contribution to democracy (Hwang and Powell 2009; Skocpol 2003; Staggenborg 1988).

According to Weber, professionalization occurs when an organization undergoes a process of bureaucratization. CSOs often start out as social movements having charismatic authority over their members, characterized by a non-rationality that is adverse to rules and economic considerations. In their emergence, these charismatic relationships have qualities similar to those of a calling or duty (Weber 1983:168). Weber stated that this charismatic authority always becomes either rationalized, or traditionalized. Routinization of the charismatic relationship occurs in tandem with bureaucratization and professionalization when employed officials, management, and, in particular, trained experts gain more power than the members of the organization (Weber 1994:150). The bureaucratic apparatus is furthermore created through both the centralization, division of labor, and socialization of the specific organization, creating a rational and efficient organization (Lang 2013; Weber 1983:183). Bureaucratization is a process closely related to rationalization and the development of modernity; it has common features in varied organizations such as governmental organizations, armies, factories, and CSOs (Weber 1983:198). Alongside formal hierarchies, democratic organizations also tend to develop strong informal hierarchies (Diefenbach and Sillince 2011). Unlike other organizations (e.g., the corporation), the structure of CSOs is based on voluntary and free participation.

Robert Michels (1911/1962) developed his sociological thinking in close relation to Weber and is best known for his "iron law of oligarchy," predicting that all organizations will inevitably fall into oligarchization in which a small group controls the rest. According to this theory, organizations will, despite any good intentions, become oligarchized as a result of a law-like mechanism. Studying party organizations, Michels concluded that several core ideas are crucial for this process in all organizations. First, all organizations are based on division of labor, which leads to specialization. Second, this specialization makes experts indispensable and advances the process towards hierarchization in which a few will lead the majority. These specialists become leaders who invent rules to maintain the hierarchical order; the leaders then isolate themselves and make their ruling permanent (Diefenbach 2019:549; Michels 1911/1962).

Michels' and Weber's theories have had a vast impact on organization studies: they should still be regarded as relevant understandings of how organizations and bureaucracies develop, and as warnings of how organizations can come to develop hierarchical structures (Diefenbach 2019; Leach 2005). At the same time, Michels' law-like mechanism has been contested by scholars who have shown that oligarchy does not

always, or necessarily, arise in all organizations (e.g., Diefenbach 2019:558; Leach 2005; Lipset et al. 1956; Rothschild et al. 2016).

Darcy Leach uses a Weberian understanding of power and distinguishes between formal and informal power when analyzing oligarchic tendencies in organizations (Leach 2005:324). Policy professionals would typically hold informal power. Leach defines formal power as given by the group, and a leader with formal power can enforce decisions, whereas "informal power is the ability to affect decisions by changing others' assessment" (Leach 2005:324). Legitimate formal power is defined as authority and legitimate informal power as influence (Leach 2005:324). As members of the organization have not elected the policy professionals, and in many cases do not even know of their existence, policy professionals can therefore, from this perspective, not be seen as holders of legitimate formal power. Yet, policy professionals are hired by democratically formed organizations to work specifically on policy and must therefore be understood as the holders of legitimate influence. If the influence of these professionals is exercised in legitimate ways, they are not necessarily seen as problematic in this model of oligarchy (Leach 2005:329).

Sabine Lang (2013) also uses a Weberian understanding of professionalization and has studied the process of professionalization within European nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). She defined professionalization as a condition that "signifies the authority of institutionalized expertise over the authority of other claims" (Lang 2013:71). This process goes hand in hand with a process in which organizations become more hierarchical and streamlined in their structure, entailing a loss of membership influence. According to this perspective, professionalization occurs when the organization's role expands, for example, towards shaping public policymaking, and more expert skills and knowledge are needed. Depending on the context, such expertise could be technical and legal knowledge, PR, and other specific understandings of the policy process. Professionalization should in this way be understood as an ongoing process with no end. Lang (2013:75) described how the development of a more rational and efficient bureaucracy has unintended consequences. On one hand, through professionalization and conforming to governmental and organizational demands, CSOs can find ways of accessing funding. This process may also lead to a hierarchization in which members lose influence and organizations become streamlined. Therefore, according to Lang, professionalization should not only be understood as an endogenous process, emerging from a desire for development, but as primarily caused by external pressure and something expected from other institutions and the surrounding environment. Scholars paying attention to the professionalization of civil society organizations (CSOs) have also shown how organizations, when adapting to external logics, can experience mission drift, cooptation, and goal displacement (Cornforth 2014; Maier et al. 2016; Rothschild et al. 2016).

Marketization and professionalization of membership groups

A large part of the current literature on the professionalization of civil society pays particular attention to logics pertaining to the marketization of the sector (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Sanders 2012; Sanders and McClellan 2014). This type of professionalization of civil society encourages CSOs to adapt a "market language" and to internalize market logics (Albareda 2020; Eikenberry 2009; Kravchenko and Moskvina 2018; Maier and Meyer 2011; Maier et al. 2016; Nickel and Eikenberry 2009; Wijkström 2011). Examples found in the literature are the developing of organizational brands and "business plans" (Hwang and Powell 2009; Stride and Lee 2007).

The American scholars Theda Skocpol (2003) and Robert Putnam (1995) have debated whether the decline in civic engagement is due to the rise of professionalized advocacy organizations with no or very weak member affiliations. These ideas have been contested, and member-less, professionally driven advocacy organizations have even been said to enhance civic engagement and foster civic infrastructure (Walker et al. 2011:1323). Examination of the relationship between paid staff and members has usually focused on professionalization relating to the loss of membership influence in membership-based CSOs (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Heylen et al. 2020; Jordan and Maloney 1997; Jordan et al. 2007; Maier et al. 2016; Skocpol 2003). Most of these studies suggest that professionalization decreases internal democracy and member influence (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Jordan and Maloney 1997; Jordan et al. 2007; Maier et al. 2016; Skocpol 2003). These results have also been challenged and researchers have suggested that the reliance on paid staff could affect member influence positively (Bolleyer and Correa 2022:13–15; Heylen et al., 2020). To date, there has been little agreement on what the reliance on paid staff brings to CSOs and their member involvement (Bolleyer and Correa 2022:13–15; Heylen et al. 2020; Karlsen and Saglie 2017:1332; Moens 2021), and far too little research has considered the role played by policy professionals in this process.

In relation to earlier research, the rise of policy professionals in civil society is here understood as part of a general ongoing and never-ending process of professionalization, in that the employees become key actors within their employing organizations (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Lang 2013). Policy professionals are thus recruited to organizations that have already undergone a process of bureaucratizetion, meaning that they are employed in top positions in large CSOs with a high level of functional differentiation, that is, a specialized division of labor (Albareda 2020). In this regard, this thesis will not study professionalization as a consequence of the hiring of policy professionals but will instead investigate their role in this process.

What is a policy professional?

The American political scientist Hugh Heclo first used the term "policy professional" in 1978, paying attention to individuals in "issue networks" and interest organizations in Washington. They were new players in the game, experts in various issues with

"detailed understanding of specialized issues that comes from sustained attention to a given policy debate" (Heclo 1978/1995:273). They had vast influence over policy production and were "issue skilled" that is well informed about the particular policy debate (Heclo 1978/1995:275). Jack Walker also used the term "policy professionals" to describe individuals in what he called "policy communities" (Walker 1981:93). A related conceptualization was that of a third American political scientist, John Kingdon, who called such professionals "policy entrepreneurs" (Kingdon 1984). Research on policy entrepreneurs focuses on how these employees handle and connect problems, solutions, and politics, described as different "policy streams." These three foundational texts describe the rise of policy professionals as a consequence of the increasing complexity of politics, characterizing them as a highly skilled subgroup working on policy without public awareness. As such, this new group of political actors was highlighted as embodying a political legitimacy problem at that time (Heclo 1978/1995:282). Still, research following from these texts has focused more on the organizations, policy streams, networks, and communities than on these specific actors (Svallfors 2020). Additional closely linked conceptualizations of this group of employees are spin doctors (Quinn 2012), hacks and wonks (Medvetz 2012), and policy brokers (Knaggård 2015). The term "policy broker" is meant to delineate those employed persons who frame public conditions as problems (Knaggård 2015). "Wonks" is a term that emphasizes how the group derives its authority from academic or technical identifications, while "hacks" would be those employees who are in the game for its own sake, concentrating on communication and political selling points, and "see[ing] communication as the core of politics" (Svallfors 2020:46).

Another linked research area concerns the recruitment and identity of the employed experts and reveals how political outcomes can be interconnected to the recruitment of specific groups within the state (Christensen 2013, 2017). Earlier research on such employees is somewhat scattered, having studied them in various sites such as governmental offices, political relations firms, and think tanks, and in their roles as political advisers and PR personnel (e.g., Garsten et al. 2015; Garsten and Sörbom 2018; Heclo 1978/1995; Howlett and Wellstead 2011; Medvetz 2012; Selling 2021; Selling and Svallfors 2019; Svallfors 2020, 2017a, 2017b; Tyllström 2021, 2013; Wedel 2009; Walker 1981). Within this stream of literature, there is a risk of defining these professionals too broadly, which could homogenize the group of policy professionals regarding both their national and organizational contexts. This thesis aims to nuance this debate by analyzing policy professionals' varying roles and role orientations within civil society. In so doing, the thesis attempts to contextualize and understand what policy professionals specifically bring to CSOs.

Christina Garsten, Stefan Svallfors, and Bo Rothstein introduced the term "policy professionals" in the Swedish academic debate in 2015 when addressing the increasing professionalization of the Swedish political system (Garsten et al. 2015; Svallfors 2015, 2016). In this context, it was demonstrated that policy professionals could be distinguished by not being elected to their positions and by promoting policy

change with a diffuse political mandate. As defined by Garsten et al. (2015), they are recruited professionals who work on policy change. Lately, several researchers have been studying these political actors using ethnographic methods (Garsten and Sörbom 2018; Nothhaft 2017; Tyllström 2013; Ullström 2011) focusing on lobbyism and agenda setting from an organizational perspective. Anna Tyllström (2009, 2013, 2021) has, within this research area, paid specific attention to PR and think tanks. In her research, she has demonstrated the increasing movement of employees from partisan organizations to PR organizations, and vice versa. This relatively new and emerging group of professionals is conceptualized by Tyllström as "PR politicians": they are part of the marketization of the political field by which political skills are brought to the field of PR together with more attentiveness to the business sector within the political sphere (Tyllström 2009:46).

Stefan Svallfors compared the field of policy professionals in Sweden with the same field in Latvia, the Netherlands, and Ireland, reaching the conclusion that they have shared features, generic skills, and a shared desire to be close to power (Svallfors 2020:53). At the same time, as in the case of lobbyists, policy professionals' knowledge is based on local knowledge and networks, so their skills and networks are highly local and hard to transfer between national contexts (Svallfors 2020:53). Still, and because of the similarities in how politics are structured, policy professionals as actors do very similar things and have similar skills in different contexts (Svallfors 2020:54).

Research on professionals in party organizations (Craft 2016; Karlsen and Saglie 2017; Moens 2021; Panebianco et al. 1988) and trade unions (Hellberg 1997; Wagner 2013; Wilensky 1956) represents an important exception to the otherwise scarce research on policy professionals in civil society. The last research area has focused on the role of experts and investigators versus that of elected representatives, ombudspersons (Hellberg 1997; Wilensky 1956), and trade union agents involved in the field of "Eurocracy" as forms of bureaucratic elites (Wagner 2013). In an adjacent research field of civil society elites, attention has been on chairpersons and CEOs (Johansson and Uhlin 2020), overlooking the role of contracted experts. However, just as governmental offices, trade unions, think tanks, and political communication offices have become the workplaces of policy professionals (Svallfors 2020), so have CSOs. Especially with regard to civil society, there is reason to look more closely at these professionals to understand what they bring to their employing organizations.

Policy professionals in CSOs

In defining policy professionals working in CSOs, I use Svallfors' three criteria: "they are employed, on a partisan basis, in order to ultimately affect policy" (Svallfors 2020:3). Being employed to work on policy, in contrast to being elected to office, means being hired and paid to develop the organization's policy and advocacy strategies. Furthermore, policy professionals, in contrast to the more neutral civil servant profile, work on a partisan basis in accordance with their own ideological and political understandings (see Svallfors 2020:35–55). Third, policy professionals work

specifically on policy, internally in the organization with a view to changing public policy. Policy professionals are, in the case of civil society, found at well-established CSOs connected to other CSOs and policymakers (Selling and Svallfors 2019).

In practice, the policy professionals studied for this thesis are all employed at the national offices of large CSOs, providing support and information to management, boards, and regional offices. The policy professional is one type of employed officer among others, working especially on public policy issues and not, for example, on fundraising, membership management or administration, in the organization. When working in the CSOs' research units, they are responsible for producing internal policy documents, investigations, etc. They also work in teams to change policy at a governmental level, lobbying policymakers, working on media efforts, attempting to create spin based on the organization's statements, and so on. Common titles of the policy professionals in the organizations followed in the fieldwork undertaken for this project are: secretary, investigator, chief investigator, analyst, expert, economist, lawyer, project manager, lobbyist, opinion maker, press secretary, informer, communicator, communication strategist, policy expert, policy advisor, and chief deputy. Analyzing policy professionals' roles in CSOs adds a theoretical understanding of professionalization, as they are the ones establishing the brand, image, and policy agenda of the organization. Their specific contribution as a type of officer, in the context of professionalization, sheds light on CSOs' position squeezed between different institutional logics, such as the logics of influence, membership, and reputation. The role of policy professionals in CSOs should therefore be understood and analyzed in tandem with the ongoing professionalization of politics.

5. Method

This exploratory study sets out to investigate policy professionals' lives and work processes through an in-depth study with the aim of building knowledge of the group in relation to current professionalization processes in civil society, by drawing on the example of Sweden. The broad methodological approach outlined in this section combines ethnographical interviews with shadowing techniques, with the aim of offering new insights into policy professionals in civil society (Czarniawska 2007; Dexter 1969/2006). The aim of using qualitative data and ethnographic methods is to acknowledge people rather than strategic plans in organizations (Nothhaft 2017). The choice to work with qualitatively oriented interviews and ethnographical field studies, was guided by the following research question: How can we conceptualize and understand policy professionals in civil society organizations? I argue that membership-based CSOs in Sweden exemplify the rise of policy professionals in CSOs and the subsequent conflicts that professionalization may entail for this field. My intention is to use this example to generalize some understandings regarding policy professionals' general impact on CSOs and on the professionalization of civil society in general.

In this methodological section, I first outline the national contexts for this study and, second, present the selection of interviewees and organizational context. In a second step, I discuss access, contact, and the work on the interview structure. I also describe the interviews undertaken in Latvia and the Netherlands, and the shadowing part of the fieldwork which was undertaken in Sweden. Lastly, I consider confidentiality, informed consent, and the coding process.

The example of Swedish CSOs

Swedish civil society has been internationally noted for its dynamic character and strong promotion of active membership (Wijkström and Lundström 2002:83; Åberg et al. 2019:638). It has even been argued that in Sweden (as in Scandinavia more broadly) there exists an organizational syndrome, assuming that everything that is important needs to be—and is—organized (Selle et al. 2018:33). Historically popular mass movements, such as the temperance movement, independent churches, and labor movement, emerged in the later nineteenth century and struggled to restructure society more broadly (Micheletti 1994; von Essen 2019). Swedish civil society is still characterized by a popular mass movement tradition (*folkrörelse-tradition*) in which affiliation with CSOs through membership still has an important role (Einarsson 2011, 2012; Einarsson and Hvenmark 2012; Hvenmark 2008; Hvenmark and Essen 2010; von Essen 2019; Vogel et al. 2003). Approximately 75 percent of the Swedish population has some form of membership affiliation with a CSO (SCB 2020).

Traditional popular-movement CSOs connected to the Social Democratic Party, such as trade unions and tenant associations, have had a rather strong position in the policy arena, with strong relationships to the state and good opportunities to influence public policy (Micheletti 1994).

Within the debate on the professionalization of Swedish civil society, two consequential shifts have been described: first, the shift from voice to service (Wijkström 2011:40), indicating that CSOs are increasingly occupied with the production of welfare services; and, second, the shift from active membership to volunteering, in which popular engagement has changed into social volunteering (Lundberg 2017; von Essen 2019). The latter change can be traced in a new discourse emerging from the Anglo–Saxon tradition and has reconstructed popular engagement from active membership to a more apolitical volunteerism (von Essen 2019:39).

The decline of popular engagement and loss of membership in most longstanding CSOs, coupled with the fact that more and more CSOs have specialized in producing welfare services for society (Ahrne and Papakostas 2014), has led to a more diffuse distinction between active membership and voluntary work (Harding 2012), indicating a break with the mass movement tradition (e.g., Amnå 2008; von Essen 2019; Vogel et al. 2003). These changes have even prompted scholars to talk about a change in the social contract between civil society and the state (Lundberg 2017). Gavelin (2018) discussed a change in terminology in the Civil Society Bill (Prop. 2009/10:55), with a heading term "dialogue and consultation" entailing a discursive shift—"from 'popular movements' to 'voluntary sector', to 'idea-based organisations', to 'civil society'"—reflecting how both political visions of civil society and their self-definition have changed over time (Gavelin 2018:91).

For the purpose of studying policy professionals in civil society, three additional trends need to be commented on. As stated by way of introduction, these changes are important for CSOs' policy influence. First, one of the major institutional changes Sweden has witnessed over the last thirty years is the decline of corporatism (Hermansson et al. 1999; Svallfors 2015; Öberg and Svensson 2012). The decline of the corporatist relationship, that is, structured relationships and negotiations between the state and CSOs, has meant that organizations have had to find new ways of organizing their relationship with the state to pursue and change policy (Hermansson et al. 1999:40–45; Svallfors 2015). The weakening of corporatist structures had the greatest impact on trade unions and other CSOs with strong ties to the state, whereas more network-based social movements were less affected. Trade unions had to step up their lobbying agenda and "find new ways of reaching decision makers" (Öberg and Svensson 2012:261). This change has also led to more diffuse network-oriented approaches by which trade unions seek to influence policy (Campbell and Pedersen 2015; Öberg et al. 2011; Öberg and Svensson 2012). Consequently, in the interest of efficacy in the policy arena, trade unions need to work more actively with access strategies and lobbying, increasing the need for expertise in processes of political influence.

Generally, for CSOs the weakening of corporatist structures has led to a decline in the use of government commissions and referrals as a way of impacting policy. Earlier close and corporate relationships between the state and CSOs have been replaced with what is referred to as "dialogue" and "consultation" (Gavelin 2018:92). Instead of meeting and discussing policy within the agendas of governmental commissions, CSOs have had to create their own reports, policy proposals, and media outreach and compete on the "policy market" in order to affect public policy (Åberg et al. 2019:642, 2020; Lundberg 2017). In this change, two important tendencies have been noted: first, the business sector has gained greater influence over politics and, second, membership-based organizations have seen a decrease in influence (Hermansson et al. 1999). In other words, at the same time as CSOs have lost political influence, the business sector and for-profit organizations have gained greater influence on politics and public policy (Amnå 2007:179–180; Hermansson et al. 1999; Lindvall and Sebring 2005; Lundberg 2014, 2017; Wijkström 2012). These changes have also led to new trends, in which knowledge produced by civil society has been transformed and think tanks have constructed a new niche producing knowledge and "doing 'voice'" (Åberg et al. 2019:646).

Second, most CSOs have experienced a considerable decline in membership affiliations (Einarsson and Hvenmark 2012; von Essen 2019), at the same time as headquarters have professionalized and grown in the number of employed staff (Amnå 2007; Papakostas 2011a). Civil society has in this regard seen a gradual reorientation from mass movement organizations to smaller professional organizations. When social democracy lost its hegemony in Swedish politics, the previously hegemonic position of popular movements was also lost (Micheletti 1994). As a consequence, the Swedish policy and civil society arena has changed in character, and a more liberal, pluralist field has emerged (Åberg et al. 2019, 2020), paving the way for a new political landscape and creating a new space for policy professionals and think tankers. In this development, Ahrne and Papakostas (2014) noted that the relations among CSOs have changed as well. They described a densification in which more and more organizations engage fewer and fewer members, producing a situation in which the organizations have more contacts with one another than with their members (Ahrne and Papakostas 2003, 2014; Papakostas 2011a). This situation entails the rationalization and professionalization of organizational work, further weakening ties with members (Ahrne and Papakostas 2014; Papakostas 2011b).

Third, the increasing complexity of politics (Eyal 2019; van Aelst et al. 2017; Wood 2019:3) has meant that that political matters have tended to be put in the hands of "experts" in various capacities (Wood 2019:3). This change has, according to some scholars, accelerated delegation to experts and professional consultants (Wood 2019; Åberg et al. 2019; Öberg and Svensson 2012); hence, participation in policy processes could also be said to have been professionalized.

Contextualization and generalizations

To better understand what is specific and what is universal within the subfield of policy professionals in Swedish civil society, I make some comparisons with CSOs in Latvia and the Netherlands. This broader selection of CSOs was made strategically with distinctive institutional settings in mind. By using data from the Netherlands, with its strongly professionalized CSOs, and from Latvia, situated somewhat outside the Western context in which CSO studies are usually conducted (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2020; Jezierska 2015), my intention is to deepen and nuance the analysis of policy professionals' roles in Sweden. A key reason for choosing these two national contexts relates to the matter of scale. Scale, referring to size and population, is important for both the formation of elites (which could also have meaning for the formation of the policy professional field) and their interaction in networks and with members, matters that differ between smaller and larger countries (Ihlen et al. 2021; Katzenstein 1985, 2003).

Also, the distinctive institutional settings found in the Netherlands and Latvia are of importance for the choice of these two national contexts. In the Netherlands, the development of civil society and organizational structure must be understood as extremely dense, with many strong and well-organized interest groups (Andeweg and Irwin 2014). The organizations and arenas where policy professionals act could therefore be understood as more developed than in the Swedish subfield. In the Latvian example, on the other hand, there is a less-developed civil society with organizations struggling (more) with funding issues. Using these two small European countries with distinct civil society cultures is productive, because it supports a more contextualized analysis regarding the rise of policy professionals in Swedish CSOs. The contextualized analysis is primarily used to comprehend what is specific to the Swedish context and what could be generalized to other contexts. To do this, some background on the institutional and historical setting of CSOs in Latvia and the Netherlands is needed.

Latvian CSOs

To understand the structure of Latvian civil society, consideration of the Soviet legacy is important. This legacy is central for understanding Latvia's relatively weak civil society and small number of members in organizations. The experience of communist rule is said to still trigger a critical stance toward any form of collectivism, for example, with trade union activism and feminism having been associated with Soviet internationalism, suppressing the ethnic Latvian nation (Lazda 2018; Lulle and Ungure 2019). During the post-Soviet era in the 1980s and 1990s, Latvia experienced increased mobilization and the marked reinvention of civil society in the popular movement for independence, in which many new CSOs arose. Scholarly attention in post-socialist areas has often focused on CSOs being squeezed "between mobilization or NGO-ization" (Jacobsson and Saxonberg 2013:255), but has also contested this simplistic view and demonstrated how organizations and activists can oppose the

professionalization and bureaucratization of externally sponsored CSOs (Jacobsson and Korolczuk 2020:126), illustrating how organizations reconcile tensions between business logics and their social missions (Kravchenko and Moskvina 2018).

Because of the focus of this study—i.e., employed policy professionals—the fieldwork undertaken concentrated on larger professionalized CSOs. Although Latvian civil society is largely made up of small NGOs, many organizations tend to have some staff, which indicates a quite professionalized civil society, run by strong leaders, yet with little possibility of mobilizing people (Huber 2011; Lindén 2008; Uhlin 2010:844). Compared with CSOs in Sweden and the Netherlands, formal CSOs in Latvia are characterized by fewer active members, smaller numbers of employed staff, and fewer economic resources and can in this regard be seen as weaker (Howard 2003; Uhlin 2010). The subfield of policy professionals in civil society is significantly smaller than in the Netherlands and Sweden, and many professionals are hired on a project basis, rather than as members of permanent policy teams. Relevant to the policy professional scene, it is also noted that in the Latvian example we find fewer think tanks and lobbyist organizations active in policy work.

CSOs in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, civil society has a longstanding pluralist and largely organized policy advisory system that can be traced to the legacy of "pillarization." Pillarization was a form of vertical segregation of the population into groups or pillars according to religious or political interests that created persisting strong ties between government administrations and pillarized interest organizations (Dekker 2019; Habraken et al. 2013; Van Dam 2015; Van den Berg 2016). In this structure, volunteering had an important role, and people could go from being members of sports or youth organizations, to being members and then board members of interest organizations, and, further, into professional careers within one pillar (Dekker 2019:75). Since the de-pillarization, civil society has been more directed to the public and recently also towards the market and service provision. Still, CSOs in the Netherlands have a long history of well-developed relationships with governmental institutions and are expected to lobby and advocate for social change (Government of the Netherlands 2014; Wessel et al. 2020). Furthermore, the Netherlands is a country with a high population density of CSOs and citizen groups engaged in lobbying, and these organizations have become key players in setting the agenda and defining problems (Timmermans 2015). In the Netherlands, there is also a more developed scene of private organization lobbying of the government, which is a more accepted form of political action than in either Sweden or Latvia (Svallfors 2020). Compared with Sweden, where think tanks are a relatively new phenomenon strongly dependent on finance from trade unions and business associations, think tanks in the Netherlands are tied to political parties with parliamentary representation. Another salient feature of Dutch CSOs, important for the policy professional subfield, is the trade unions' knowledge production. Compared with Sweden, where trade unions have employed many policy

professionals, in the Netherlands, trade unions together with employer federations employ researchers at more politically neutral research centers, geared towards advice and statistics rather than politicized policy professionalism (Svallfors 2020:9).

Common features across organizational contexts

When interpreting data from the Swedish subfield of policy professionals in light of data from Latvia and the Netherlands, it becomes obvious that the infrastructure of civil society is the basis on which these professionals operate. To develop policy professional work at an organizational level, a constant stream of money is needed. Without stable incomes, CSOs cannot hire and retain valuable employees or retain their knowledge. The physical location, with a head office in the city center where these actors can organize their work, is also crucial. For Latvia, with extremely high rents for facilities in central Riga, this means that few organizations can develop these professional policy teams because of lack of funding for rent and stable employment. Context is also decisive in terms of historical differences. As shown by Kerstin Jacobsson (2012) regarding the role of socialist legacies in Poland, history continues to interact with contemporary opportunity structures. Even though the sample size is small in this study, it is probable that the differences captured in interviews reflect discrepancies in the history of how collective action has been organized. On the other hand, if we turn to the Netherlands, where professionalization and institutionalization have gone a step further than in the Swedish example, we see clear signs of an even stronger division of labor between policy professionals' role orientations (see Paper II). Based on the empirical work and on an analysis of various websites, the dividing lines are clearer between lobbyists, investigators, and communicators in Dutch professionalized CSOs. Many policy professionals use the term "lobbyists" to describe themselves and, in comparison with the Sweden and Latvian organizations, the Dutch organizations seem to have larger and more clearly defined policy teams.

Despite described institutional differences between CSOs in the three national contexts and between the three policy contexts (i.e., trade unions, environmental organizations, and gender equality organizations), analysis of the data shows that policy professionals display quite similar characteristics regarding, for instance, professional backgrounds, identities, and strategic work. The intention of using interviews from Latvia and the Netherlands was to comprehend the special features of their organizations to better discern what is distinct and contextual about policy professionals in Sweden and what is conceivably universal within the processes of professionalization related to policy professionals in Swedish civil society. The analysis made it clear that the differences between the groups of policy professionals, for example, between communicators and experts, were of greater analytical importance than those pertaining to national context. The main story to be told is therefore that of policy professionals in CSOs based primarily on generalizations from the Swedish context. Regarding this thesis' understanding of professionalization as an overarching process, the material and this research cannot account for the analysis and comparison

of professionalization processes within and among the three national contexts or among civil societies in general. The analysis can, however, say something general about policy professionals' specific role in processes of professionalization within CSOs.

Material

Within the project, I conducted 38 qualitative and semi-structured in-depth interviews (e.g., Weiss 1994) with policy professionals at 22 CSOs in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands. The interviews were conducted in three stages. First, ten interviews were completed, following up the Garsten et al. study of policy professionals from 2015. The professionals were selected from this earlier sample of Swedish policy professionals, including a mix of policy professionals still working in the same positions and policy professionals who had changed their positions.

In a second phase, 14 interviews were conducted with policy professionals at three strategically selected CSOs in Sweden. The organizations are all membership-based advocacy organizations working within the sectors of gender equality, environmentalism, and trade unions. I concentrated on policy professionals working in organizations where policy advocacy was important and the members were seen as important for this process. These CSOs (as well as the CSOs from the first sample) are old, institutionalized, professionalized, and have formal bureaucratic structures. They self-identify as social movement organizations aiming to contribute to societal change in some way. The selected organizations are all well established and recognized as partners in governmental processes and as important policy advocates by the public. In these CSOs, I only interviewed informants who worked specifically with changing public policy. These informants were first identified by researching organizational websites and going through their staff members' LinkedIn profiles.

Third, to relate and contextualize the experience in Sweden, 14 interviews were conducted with policy professionals in Latvia and the Netherlands in similar advocacy fields. The aim of interviewing these informants was mainly to reflect on the Swedish findings. As I have selected organizations working on environmental, gender equality, and trade union issues, they could be used as examples of potentially contrasting instances in the study of policy professionals functioning within these organizational fields. Still, the study cannot be said to represent the whole of civil society in the respective studied national contexts.

Access and contact

The informants were contacted through email. In the email message, the overall purpose of the research was stated as "to study employed groups who influence policy content and forms," with a specific focus on professionals in CSOs. It was further stated that "we are interested in you and your thoughts about the organization of policy work in civil society."

The first two interviews with members of the new sample (the second phase of data collection) were conducted as a pre-study to test the new semi-structured interview guide. It was easier to find informants who agreed to participate in the research at the organization where I had a personal entrée. At the first interview, it became clear that the published work from the previous project (see Garsten et al. 2015) was well known. The informant used the term "policy professional" about himself and described a strong identification with the concept. The informant had furthermore received study visits from political science students in the role of a policy professional. To avoid this kind of research interaction and the possibility of skewing statements regarding their identities, I later removed all the terminology connected to previous work on policy professionals. I additionally removed the term "policy professional" itself from the invitation letter. These interviews were all held at the main offices of the organizations, with one exception for an informant on parental leave. The interviews lasted one and a half hour to two hours. Overall, gender and age were evenly distributed throughout the group of informants, with the youngest informant being aged 25 and the oldest 65 years.

Interview structure

Previous research has framed policy professionals as part of the political elite (Garsten et al. 2015), which is why Dexter's (1996/2006) understanding of elite interviewing has been beneficial. However, elite interviewing can be conceptualized not only as interviews with informants who are part of an elite, but also as interviews with people who do not see any advantages from being interviewed (Dexter 1996/2006). Hence, these interviewees can be any individuals who are treated with special care when the interviewer needs to be taught and enlightened by them. To gain as much expert knowledge as possible, multi-interpretable questions were used to give more freedom to the interviewee to structure the interview herself (Dexter 1996/2006), instead of simply answering predetermined questions. Also making use of Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) understanding of active interviewing, the interview data are understood as collaborative data created jointly by the interviewee and interviewer. In these specialized interviews, the informant teaches the interviewer about his or her world and problems. The informants are understood as knowledgeable, an understanding that has guided this project, via a social constructionist understanding of knowledge. Holstein and Gubrim (1995) expressed it as follows: "Meaning is socially constructed; all knowledge is created through the action taken to obtain it" (p. 3). On the other hand, this understanding of coproduction does not mean that the result can be seen as depending on the interviewer. In the phase of re-interviewing the informants, two interviewers, including myself, worked with very similar interview guides, and when comparing the results and statements, the interviewer effect did not seem to have influenced the material.

A semi-structured interview guide from the earlier project was redeveloped to suit this group of actors. The guide was semi-structured with themes corresponding to

the empirical questions in order to investigate the interviewees' background, daily work, networks, thoughts on careers and the future, and relationship with civil society and its members. An important theme was political power and influence in the policy process of the organizations where the interviewees were employed.

The coproduction of data allowed the interviewer to take an active and reflexive role in the interviews. This reflexive role was specifically important since many of the informants were well experienced in talking about their work, framing their incentives and ambitions. In the interview situations, I was sometimes flattered by the situation, embraced in a stimulating and intellectually fluent, captivating conversation. I was then forced on several occasions to remind myself that I was interviewing a professional who knew very well how to frame her statements, reminding myself to be more "on guard" and to ask critical questions. At other times I was pleased by how willing policy professionals were to participate and speak freely about controversial aspects of their work. The interview material is very rich and filled with remarkable anecdotes and statements about political life in general and civil society in particular.

Interviews in Latvia and the Netherlands

An understanding of the importance of context-dependent knowledge, asserting that concrete and contextual knowledge is necessary in research, guided this stage of the project. In the Latvian and Dutch contexts, which I did not fully understand, gaining expert knowledge was crucial for the possibility of developing new insights. The interview guide was translated to English and reworked. Contextual questions were added to broaden my knowledge of the specific situation of advocacy work and policy change in Latvia and the Netherlands.

The reflective field studies started with a pre-study visit to Riga and Amsterdam for some field orientation. I contacted some scholars and policy professionals in person who advised me to contact some influential organizations in the sectors of gender equality, environmental issues, and trade unions. Compared with Stockholm, in Riga and Amsterdam, it was quite hard to gain access to the field and get agreement from informants willing to participate in the study.

Initially, I sent nine invitations to informants in Riga but received only one answer. Later, by following recommendations I found four informants willing to participate in the research, and they recommended other coworkers in the field. On the first interview trip to Riga, three interviews were completed. Two of the informants were employees working full time as policy advisors at the organizations where the interviews were conducted. The third interviewee had a different fulltime position outside the policy field and worked on the side as a policy advisor for three different CSOs. After learning about the condition of civil society in Latvia, and especially the often-inadequate funding situation, the criteria of being employed full time as a policy professional was adjusted so as not to overlook important actors in the field. From these initial interviews, I got recommendations for other important actors and support in gaining access to the field of policy professionals in Latvia. In a second phase,

five additional interviews were conducted with informants from Latvian CSOs. To understand the context of civil society and the field of policy professionals, two of these interviews were conducted with elected representatives of CSOs and three were conducted with fulltime policy professionals at three different CSOs.

When researching the field of CSOs in the Netherlands, it was easy to gain access over the Internet and many CSO websites had information in English about their work. I consulted some websites that gave overviews of the field. I also consulted a researcher at one university about the selection of NGOs. When starting to invite interviewees, however, it was difficult to make contact with people who were willing to participate in the research. Email addresses were not always listed on the CSO websites. Often, it was only possible to obtain the email addresses of the managers, who refused to participate. I usually tried to contact the informants directly at the level that I was interested in, and not only the managers. When reflecting on my experiences in the Netherlands, seen in light of those in Sweden and Latvia, the field in the Netherlands did not seem as transparent in giving out information about employees. On two different field trips to the Netherlands, I conducted six interviews with key persons at policy teams at six large CSOs.

Shadowing

Following the example of prominent researchers studying policy professionals using ethnographic methods (Garsten and Sörbom 2018; Nothhaft 2017; Rhodes 2011; Tyllström 2009; Ullström 2011), the aim of the shadowing part of the study was to study the networks, contacts, work, relationships, and development of these actors up close (Czarniawska 2007). The shadowing part comprises 80 hours of observations of policy professionals in Sweden, covering their relationships with one another and with elected representatives, policymakers, and CSO members. The interest lay in attempting to understand their status in their organizations and relative to other actors in the field (Jerolmack and Khan 2014). This was important in order to determine how policy professionals are received when they interact, for instance, in meetings or seminars and how they are perceived by others in the field. Another aim of the shadowing was to investigate descriptions of the relationship with CSO members: when and how they were visible, or when they interacted with and/or talked of members, and how policy professionals relate to them in action.

The shadowing took part in four activities, following different actors in various policy processes (cf. Czarniawska 2007). First, five of my informants were shadowed at the Almedalen week in Sweden, a political fair for politicians, lobbyists, journalists, CSOs, trade unions, political parties, businesses, and lobbying organizations who meet, mingle, and discuss politics in what has been described as a mediatized "spectacle" (Wendt 2012), "the world's largest democratic meeting place" (Region Gotland 2018:1), and "the marketplace of politics" (Östberg 2013). During the Almedalen week, I followed informants from morning to night, gathering 50 hours of observations. Second, three types of policy processes were selected during which I could

follow the informants at their organizations' offices, when working together with other professionals. At one organization, I followed a process of policy influence and agenda setting in relation to the European Parliament election. This including being present at steering committee meetings while following six informants over a six-month period. Second, I followed two organizations in their process of developing new policy. At one organization, one of my informants worked on drafting a report expressing the organization's new stance on a core political issue. The process later involved workshops with members and elected representatives who advised and took part in the policy-formulating process. In the second case, I shadowed four informants at an internal policy workshop setting the organization's strategy for political influence regarding one policy issue. At the third organization, I followed two informants lobbying politicians and governmental authorities regarding two particular policy issues. The shadowing data were gathered over one year and include a journal, meeting notes, and field notes, allowing rich descriptions of policy professionals' working conditions.

Confidentiality and informed consent

When contacting new informants, they were all provided with a letter stating the purpose and methods of the research, as required for informed consent (Israel and Hay 2006:61). Careful measures were taken to ensure that the informants were not exposed to risk or discomfort in connection with their participation in the study. The informants were informed about how the material would be stored, for how long, and who would have access to the material. The informants were assured that their information would only be used for research and that all quotations would be anonymized when used in printed research. After the interviews, the informants had the opportunity to read through the transcripts to complement, add, or withdraw information and statements. Half of the informants used this opportunity and added new comments. The comments usually clarified a sentence or added a name or organization that had been omitted from the transcripts. None of the informants withdrew from participation after reading the interview transcripts.

For the interviews, it was important that all contracted experts should be able to participate voluntarily without asking their managers. In ethnographic fieldwork, such as shadowing, it can be hard to decide whose informed consent must be obtained (Israel and Hay 2006:70). The informants whom I wanted to shadow all asked their organization head if it would be acceptable if I followed them during meetings. One of the organizations asked for a specific document stating the purpose of the research and the shadowing, which was processed by management before they agreed to allow me, as a researcher, to follow them at Almedalen.

At all internal meetings I attended, the informants whom I was following informed other participants about my role and attendance. In addition, I usually introduced myself before the meeting started. I was unable to ask all attendees separately if they approved of my presence, which would have allowed for a higher ethical standard. However, in no instance did any participant object to my presence. In any case,

researchers should be able to work in public spaces without obtaining informed consent from all participants (Israel and Hay 2006:76). Most of the informants included in this study occupy relatively powerful positions and are adult experts with policy influence. In the case of observation taking place in public or semipublic spaces, I therefore believe that extra precautions in terms of obtaining individual informed consent are not needed. When it came to members or visitors participating in the meetings I observed, I was, in contrast, more careful about using quotations or information from these individuals.

All my informants were promised confidentiality both as individuals and regarding the organizations they work for. This was to ensure that the informants would feel free to talk openly about sensitive strategic or political questions (Israel and Hay 2006:78). Assuring confidentiality was sometimes difficult since the community of CSOs is quite small, and organizations are headquartered in the same area and meet at the same types of political events. Informants often asked me who else I had been talking to or following. I always answered that I, for confidentiality reasons, could not answer such questions. When I interviewed more than one person at an organization, the informants sometimes discovered this by themselves, and when I followed several informants, this was obviously known among their closest staff. When doing shadowing fieldwork at the Almedalen political week, the informants were able to identify some other organizations and informants who were included in the study, because we encountered one another at events.

When conducting interviews in Latvia and the Netherlands, I was forced to work more on building trusting relationships since the research and my university were not known in these contexts. I tried not to expose the other organizations and informants, but this was harder since I had to ask for advice about other organizations and informants that might be interesting for the research. Using this snowballing technique to find informants risked exposing the informants to one another, which was especially likely in the smaller civil society in Latvia. In this context, I was even more careful when reporting material and disclosing personal information and political opinions stated by the informants.

Coding and making sense of ethnographic data

The choice to work with thematic analysis (Evans and Lewis 2018), exploring themes and patterns in the interviews and ethnographic field studies, was guided by the broad research question of how to conceptualize and understand policy professionals in civil society organizations. Although the coding, theorizing, and processing of qualitative material starts immediately during interviews and fieldwork (Berner 1989), in the more planned analytical process, I was inspired by an abductive approach, iterating between theory and the empirical material throughout the research process (Meyer and Lunnay 2013). In this work, my view is that abduction is a genuinely active process that, with help from theory and nodes, builds the empirical material

(Aspers 2007:165). In this coding phase of the project, all interviews and observations were transcribed and coded in NVivo, first by using the technique of provisional coding (Layder 1998). In the first step, the coding involved the separation and sorting of the material. After extensive reading of the transcripts, the material was coded in terms of background themes, noting the type of actor (e.g., communicator, expert, and elected or employed representative), type of material, place, and type of organization. For the observations, the place, person, and direction were also coded in what was said. Who was speaking, for example, an expert, communicator, chairperson, manager, member, politician, or affected party, was noted (Aspers 2007:168) These codes are themselves meant to be neutral and should be understood as defining how the material is structured.

Second, a test coding was conducted in an open and inductive way, identifying themes in the material (Glaser and Strauss 1967) that were later adopted as core codes and categories (Layder 1998). Initially, I test coded four interviews; I then reworked my coding schedule, adding new themes that were missing. After coding ten interviews, I had too long a structure and I found myself having trouble following the logic and description of every code; I therefore reworked the schedule to make my themes broader. The themes of the papers have partially emerged from this coding. What I found in this coding gave me reason to ask new questions, which in turn led to new papers.

In practice, the process of coding this extensive qualitative material included returning to the material with new questions, adding theoretical understanding, and hence reworking the entire coding schedule for every new paper. Each paper is based on an interest found in the themes from the initial inductive coding; I then added more theory-driven, or theory-initiated, codes for every paper. For Paper I, codes were constructed focusing on capital and illusio and "the feel for the game" (Savage and Silva 2013:113). Here statements about resources drawn upon, such as education, networks, and work experience, were operationalized as capital (see Paper I). At times, a whole paragraph was coded according to a theoretical theme, and sometimes only the sentences that were bearers of the meaning in focus were coded. In this deductive coding process, the material was coded based on my knowledge of the field and on the theoretical definitions. For Paper II, the coding centered on creating four conceptual role orientations based on self-identification, education, previous careers, background, and motivation, and connecting these to theory on advocacy strategies (see Paper II). In Paper III, institutional and organizational theories were added to the coding process, which included the conceptualization of gaps between policy professionals and members concerning knowledge, strategic competence, and ideologies. These codes were based on a theoretical understanding of new institutional theory and the creation of myths in organizations. For the fourth and final paper, I coded the entire material looking for conflicts and tension in strategic work connected to theory on the mediatization of civil society. In this work, I had to be careful to avoid any research interaction in which I might have asked specifically about

conflicts. Instead, I searched for statements concerning the best way of influencing policy. As research and academic writing are not to be understood as a linear process, I should mention that this process also included a large amount of theorization, coding, writing, and drafting of papers and ideas that never fitted or worked out and therefore were never included in the end results.

6. Summary and discussion

This section summarizes and discusses the main findings of this study by analyzing the role of policy professionals within CSOs. The discussion is separated into four themes. First, the conceptualization of the subfield of policy professionals in civil society is outlined. Second, I discuss the main contributions regarding policy professional's role in the professionalization of civil society and in relation to the literature on policy professionals. Third, I examine the specific legitimacy issues pertaining to the subfield of policy professionals in civil society. Finally, I discuss some of the normative implications of the rise of policy professionals in civil society in general, answering the following question: How does the rise of policy professionals in CSOs affect the development of civil society and contribution to democracy?

The field of policy professionals in civil society

An initial objective of the project was to understand policy professionals' role and functioning in CSOs. This understanding was primarily developed through conceptualizing policy professionals as of a subfield of policy professionals in civil society. The field of policy professionals in civil society can be described in terms of its inhabitants (Bourdieu 1996). It is a specific social subfield within civil society and within the broader field of policy professionals. The subfield of policy professionals in civil society has its own rules and its own measures of what is good, professional, and desirable (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:98). The policy professionals in this field aspire to affect public policy from a civil society perspective. They perform policy advocacy work for their CSOs using several types of field-specific capital relating to media management, expert knowledge, strategic communication, knowledge of the policy process, and civic culture. The field is inhabited by spin doctors, policy officers, opinion makers, press and PR managers, communicators, and policy advisers. Some of these people call themselves lobbyists while others prefer the term "movement intellectuals." What they all share is their investment in the field and their interest in changing public policy. In the field we find organizations and institutions, as well as individuals who participate in policy workshops and policy teams. Besides the studied CSOs, the broader field of policy advocacy also contains specific communication and PR agencies, and other types of organizations such as think tanks and private research institutes, also competing to influence public policy. Policy professionals operate in varying spaces inside and outside the organizations that employ them. They visit government authorities and parliament hearings. Some of them operate in EU-based organizations, others only in their national contexts, and the logics of their actions and career choices can be understood and traced to their positions in the field (cf.

Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Uhlin and Arvidson 2022; Wagner 2013). Some of the field's inhabitants manage public opinions, organize public meetings, and attend hearings. Others are occupied with writing research reports, debate papers, and following internal debates on Twitter. What is at stake in the field, using Bourdieu's terminology, is the illusio of that field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), i.e., influencing public policymaking.

The analysis shows that policy professionals in the subfield of civil society, as in other political spheres (e.g., Heclo 1978/1995; Kingdon 1981; Svallfors 2020; Walker 1981), can be described as a highly skilled subgroup of political players working on policy outside public awareness. Policy professionals' positions in the field, conceptualized through their role orientation and use of capital, are central to an understanding of how they struggle to gain influence over internal and public policymaking. This struggle is centered on the game of influence. In this game, policy professionals' daily activities concern practices of influencing policy. The illusio is created with the intention of influencing public policy—or at least the appearance of influencing policy—as the illusio is socially constructed and unmeasurable. For civil society organizations, this means that hiring policy professionals is an investment in framing, expert knowledge, advocacy, and agenda-setting capacities focusing on media attention and how to achieve policy impact, partly at the expense of members, who are only indirectly part of this illusio.

Taking a closer look at this subfield's inhabitants, some of the informants came from markedly "political families" in which political debates were always happening at home, but most did not. Looking at their social background more broadly, many of the policy professionals came from a middle-class background and had parents with academic degrees. From fieldwork and interviews, it was noted that academic education is essential for entering the field. Many of the informants were employed as "experts" or investigators, and social science, economics, communication, political science, and statistics were among the most common areas of education. Among communicators, political science was a common educational background, coupled with studies in journalism or communication. Education is essential to gain a position as a policy professional, but it is not enough. They are skilled individuals in the sense that they are good at creating contacts and making other people work for them (Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Svallfors 2020). In general, policy professionals are not interested in positions at governmental authorities, as they are associated with an inertia that does not suit these professionals with their drive and ambition. Nor are most interested in the academy, as they want to spearhead change, not manage knowledge. Typically, a career in a political party is not of interest, as becoming a politician (in the party-political sense) is "a point of no return." It is impossible to work with all parties once one has a "recognized color" and has entered the messy field of party politics. Working as an advisor to an elected politician, on the other hand, is seen as a career step for most policy professionals in civil society, a step that makes one in demand on the policy labor market.

As found in earlier research, the policy issues and stances of the employing organizations need to align with the policy professionals' own interests, otherwise they would never work for them (Garsten et al. 2015; Selling and Svallfors 2019; Svallfors 2020). However, policy professionals do not embody their organizations, and independence, as in being able to form and express ones' own ideas, is highly valued among many policy professionals in civil society. Therefore, it is consequential for them to uphold and cultivate their own public trustworthiness and legitimacy. Many of them cultivate their own name or brand as influencers in civil society or in the political world. They would not sign just any opinion paper merely because they are employed by a given organization. Geographically, these people are situated in metropolitan areas at CSOs' headquarters. As a group they are characterized by having detailed understanding of particular policy issues and knowledge of how policy is shaped at a governmental level. As professionals, they also share abilities to write well and easily, and to shape opinions through text. In general terms, policy professionals are understood as a group of political specialists who bring particular knowledge or skills to their organizations (cf. Hellberg 1997; Svallfors 2020; Wilensky 1956:2).

The subfield of policy professionals in civil society is inhabited by individuals with a similar habitus who closely follow their chosen policy issues, take part in policy debates, follow the same Twitter accounts, and show up at very similar venues for debate and leisure. Using Bourdieu's terminology, they share the field's illusio, and they are all invested in the field to influence society. The policy professionals who informed this study are skilled actors in that they know what they do, have a good "sense of the field," and know how to interact in the public policy process.

The field of policy professionals within civil society is a subfield of the larger field of policy professionals, existing at the interface of civil society and the other spheres where such expertise is active. Policy professionals' strategies and role orientations are further explained by their position in the field (cf. Barman 2016:446; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Capital important for this field is defined as resources that can be material and/or cultural and that offer different types of power to their possessors. The field of policy professionals in civil society is, like other fields, governed by specific "rules of the game" and by a shared understanding of "what is at stake," i.e., the illusio of the field. Through this constructivist perspective on knowledge, applying Bourdieu's field theory, this thesis enlarges and extends the analysis of civil society policy professionals' struggle to exert influence by making three contributions. First, regarding the question of what kind of capital and social status policy professionals in this subfield create, this study finds that they bring and construct several types of capital, both field-specific capital useful in the subfield of policy advocacy in civil society (cf. Georgakakis and Rowell 2013) and capital found and used in other fields.

The conceptual analysis tells a story of how policy professionals use and construct field-specific capital to influence public policymaking. In this endeavor, social capital entailing trust and interpersonal relationships is useful in the subfield and comes from practical experience, consisting of issue-related and social knowledge. Civil

society constitutes an important pole where individuals create and acquire social and organizational capital. Organizational capital is specific to the subfield of civil society; I understand it as a form of capital that yields resources connected to practical knowledge of organizing, meeting management, activism, and ideological debating skills. It is a highly valued type of capital in civil society and something that professionals and leaders are recognized for. Although organizational capital is highlighted as a specifically valued capital, loaded with both practical and symbolic value, it is found to be challenged by new policy-specific capital (Paper I). Policy-political capital is typically derived from working in the broader field of politics, from experience as a political advisor in political parties or government offices. In this study, the struggle over what type of capital should be understood as the most valued capital in the field represents an attempt to conceptually develop the theory of what is valued by policy professionals within the subfield of civil society, while also adding knowledge to the policy-professional field in general.

Second, studying the effect of the mediatization of politics, it seems as capital derived from the media sector has become central to civil society policy work (Paper II). Strategic media work and agenda-setting ability as well as branding, framing, and strategic communication are all strategies increasingly in demand due to the ongoing process of the mediatization of civil society. Therefore, media-related knowledge and experience emerged as a form of capital highly valued—but also criticized—by the professionals. Together, these forms of capital challenge traditional civil society values and resources and push communication skills to the center of policy work in civil society. Using Bourdieu's terminology, the analysis indicates that the rise of policy professionals has affected what could be understood as the symbolic capital in the field.

Third, one key finding relating to the use of capital concerns the variations among policy professionals and their different role orientations—policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators, and policy activists—which make use of different types of capital (Paper II and IV). Based on different role orientations, policy professionals use either internal or external capital when working. Policy activists use, create, and draw on internal civil society capital, whereas policy communicators and lobbyists use more external capital found in the business, media, and governmental spheres. The consequence of hiring the various forms of policy professionals in relation to the professionalization of CSOs will be further discussed in the next section.

Policy professionalization and the struggle to influence

One of this study's main contributions is made in relation to the professionalization of CSOs, secondarily in relation to the literature on policy professionals. Regarding professionalization, the point of departure for this thesis started from the backdrop of the dismantling of corporatist structures coupled with the rise of policy professionals. These changes have driven the economization of politics and the market-

ization of civil society still further (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004:138). As such, the elite-driven policy processes described here are distinct from the processes earlier found in the corporatist political landscape in Sweden and elsewhere. These changes have created a new political landscape where competence relating to these areas is in demand, fostering the rise of policy professionals and their emergence as a cadre within civil society.

Earlier research relating to policy advocacy work in civil society has suggested that interest groups gain access through various specialized strategies and media efforts, and that their success is related to employing staff for this work (e.g., Binderkrantz 2005; Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Grafström 2021; Grafström et al. 2015; Staggenborg 1988; Vesa and Binderkrantz 2021). Comparing these findings with those of other studies confirms that there is a market for policy professionals and political ideas within CSOs (cf. Selling and Svallfors 2019; Svallfors 2020). In relation to earlier studies, describing changes in CSOs pertaining to professionalization and the hiring of more staff (Heylen et al. 2020; Hwang and Powell 2009; Maier et al. 2016), this study has outlined the specific process of what I term *policy professionalization*. Policy professionalization entails a need to hire policy professionals for specialized policy change work. A central aspect of this professionalization is related to understanding policy professionals as an expression of continued rationalization processes. As policy professionals are hired in their capacity of improving the organizations, knowledge production, policy influence and media work, their very existence in policy teams enhance professionalization of policy work in CSOs. This policy professionalization increases the development towards a more elite driven, mediatized and marketized civil society.

Moreover, policy professionalization in CSOs is related to external and internal pressures, such as mediatization and changes in the surrounding political landscape pertaining to marketization and de-corporatization. The logic of reputation, i.e., pressure to follow media logics (Berkhout 2013), the logic of influence, in this case the pressure to gain access to policymakers, and the logic of membership, i.e., following democratic principles (Schmitter and Streeck 1999) are logics that collide in CSOs' strategic policy work and that policy professionals need to deal with (Paper III). These logics establish the basis for certain strategic choices rather than others and form part of a struggle over what CSOs should primarily do.

However, the somewhat unclear term "policy professional" encompasses a large set of skills and professional traits, thus suffering from too broad and unclear a definition. With regard to political impact or issues of legitimacy, policy professionals working in trade unions or women's organizations certainly have some things in common with economically powerful shadow elites (Wedel 2009, 2014), political advisors (Craft 2016; Eichbaum and Shaw 2015), and corporate lobbyists (Garsten and Sörbom 2018 Tyllström 2009; Tyllström and Murray 2021). In other respects, however, they are quite distinct. In particular, the constant need to attend to the fact

that they work for democratic membership-based organizations is something that makes their work quite different from that of other policy professionals.

In relation to earlier research on policy professionals, this study is an empirically based contribution that extends and develops this literature by distinguishing between the different groups and role orientations within policy teams, i.e., policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators, and policy activists. As such they give rise or contribute to diverse possible development paths for their employing organizations. A result of the empirical investigations (papers II and IV) shows that some, but not all, policy professionals spur the development towards a more mediatized and marketized civil society, while others hold back and anchor their organizations in the social movement tradition.

In relation to the closely related research field of civil society elites (e.g., Johansson and Uhlin 2020; Uhlin and Arvidson 2022), policy professionals in civil society can neither be understood nor conceptualized as an elite group. However, the micro-perspective offered in this study permits us to scrutinize the composite of political personnel recruited specifically by CSOs. In so doing, the analysis shows how role orientations are embedded in institutional settings that promote certain commitments and skills useful to the field (Paper II and IV). The distinction between the different groups and role orientations of policy professionals within policy teams is important because it sheds light on what different policy professionals bring to, and the possible risks facing, the subfield of civil society.

The situation is indeed complex, and this study recognizes that CSOs need to develop professional policy strategies in order to compete on the policy market. In this regard, it must be seen as a good thing that CSOs can develop in-house policy professional teams, versus having to rely on consultancy firms, for their policy work (Åberg et al. 2019; Öberg et al. 2012). However, this policy professionalization has also made it more expensive to compete in the process of policy change. Policy professionalization can therefore lead to a rise in economic and democratic inequality among CSOs and interest organizations.

The study demonstrates that conflicts over influence, recognition, and symbolic capital have also sharpened conflicts and tensions in the field. Moreover, by using Bourdieu's conceptualization, this micro-sociology enables us to see a larger conflict linked to the consequences of professionalization, marketization, and mediatization in civil society. The internal conflicts in the policy team between the different role orientations (papers II and IV) mirror larger societal conflicts concerning legitimacy and the role of civil society outlined in the next two sections of this discussion.

Policy professionals and legitimacy

Returning to current Western debates on professionalization and to Weber's (1994) and Michels' (1911/1962) understandings that bureaucratization and oligarchization are inevitable and occur in all organizations (Weber 1994:150), we first need to note

that the studied organizations are old and institutionalized. They have already walked the path of professionalization and have formal bureaucratic structures. Most of the studied organizations have elected leaders with delegated legitimate authority (see Leach 2005; Weber 1994). Policy professionals are hired within this structure. As described above, policy professionals are hired to influence policy, develop content for the organization, and promote its agenda because they possess certain skills in generating spin, analyzing the policy process, and proposing amendments and are supposed to have the leverage and discretion to do so, otherwise they would not work for the organization. Yet, they are to do this work inside a social movement framework, which requires a slow process characterized by democratic inertia.

Thus, it is not straightforward for members to hold employed experts accountable for their actions. According to how democratic governance in membership-based organizations is arranged, members who are critical of the organization should hold the elected representatives, not the staff, responsible. This is the way CSOs are run (Hvenmark and Einarsson 2021). According to this logic, the rise of policy professionals within CSOs would not have implications for issues of illegitimacy in the organizations, because according to organizational charts and charters there exist ways to criticize those elected representatives who hire experts. Still, doing this does not directly implicate the hired professionals. The mandate of policy professionals is in practice blurred in relation to members and leaders in that they are hired and not elected to positions and exert vast influence over their organizations' policy directions. This central but partially hidden position, behind elected representatives, within CSOs calls for attention.

Following Leach (2005), who distinguishes between formal and informal power and influence, illegitimate influence would arise when a decision is disproportionately influenced by a policy professional to whom members have not given a mandate, or if the policy professional oversteps the scope of her or his mandate (Leach 2005:326). In Leach's words, "authority becomes illegitimate when it becomes coercive, and influence becomes illegitimate when it becomes manipulative" (Leach 2005:327). Within this model of the oligarchic tendency, policy professionals become a problem if their influence is exerted in illegitimate ways.

The empirical analysis has illustrated how policy professionals use multiple strategies to uphold, gain, and perform legitimacy. In the example of Swedish membership-based civil society, the results indicate that policy professionals relate to members in policy processes by using organizational hypocrisy, i.e., saying one thing but doing another (Paper III). In their daily work, the tension that may arise between the logic of members and the logic of influence (cf. Berkhout 2013; Schmitter and Streeck 1999) is conceptualized as gaps in the policy process between the policy professionals and the members they are to represent. The gaps that these policy professionals speak of are found in the intersection of listening to active members and the need for efficiency in the policy production that they are hired for. These gaps partly occur due to differences in education in and knowledge of policymaking. How-

ever, these gaps are also a consequence of the specific position of policy professionals and their tasks in CSOs. As such, the employed professionals and the on-the-fly temporality that is central to their working situation conflict with the ideals of members actively running the organizations. Policy professionals are hired in professionalized CSOs to work on public policy, handle the institutional demands of member influence, and improve efficacy. They use strategies that entail producing talk, creating field-specific capital, using decoupling techniques, upholding myths, and even using organizational hypocrisy as means to conceal the gap between the ideal of the social movement and the everyday practice of organizational life in the in the CSO (Paper III). Even though the professionals are aiming to do good for the organizations that employ them, staging such tactics potentially delegitimizes their authority and influence, along with the legitimacy of elected representatives. These representatives are not part of this study, but they are obviously implicated in the work of hired experts.

Unlike the literature on policy professionals in other fields of society (cf. Garsten et al. 2015; Heclo 1978/1995; Svallfors 2017a, 2020), the focus here is on how legitimacy can be gained and managed as a resource for CSOs. This study does not suggest that policy professionals should be understood as an illegitimate power elite. Having employees to do policy work in a democratic organization with elected representtatives need not be a problem leading to oligarchization. Still, a democratic structure is not in itself a guarantee of the absence of oligarchy (Leach 2005). Instead, it can be useful to study the micro-efforts that policy professionals and CSOs make to manage, uphold, create, or even perform legitimacy. As the empirical analysis has shown, CSOs and their policy professionals use multiple techniques to handle the tension pertaining to the sometimes-clashing logics of membership, influence, and reputation (Berkhout 2013; Schmitter and Streeck 1999). Instead of analyzing the rise of policy professionals as a legitimacy crisis, as an end of the discussion, I argue that the micro-study of policy professionals, seen from the constructivist and critical perspective of Bourdieu's field theory, highlights the constant processual management of legitimacy within CSOs. In turn, this facilitates an advanced understanding of how the struggle to handle external and internal pressures and to gain legitimacy unfolds in CSOs. The legitimacy conferred by CSOs' members is indispensable for their organizations' survival. What is more, it is indispensable for policy professionals' own positions within the CSOs and for their influence over public policy. I argue that the activity of policy professionals should be understood in a processual and relational manner, creating an overlap between the processual and property aspects of legitimacy (cf. Egholm et al. 2014, 2020). However, for matters pertaining to legitimacy, how CSOs are perceived by the world and how their policy professionals present themselves are important for CSOs. It is not good for CSOs that policy professionals' activities are sometimes seen as or confused with what is commonly understood as lobbying. It is also of great importance to monitor that policy professionals' influence remains legitimate and is not conflated with manipulative, illegit-

imate forms of influence (Leach 2005). How policy professionals are perceived has consequences and risks becoming a problem for CSOs' attaining of legitimacy.

Returning to the departure point of this study, I do share some of the concerns raised in the discussion cited in the introduction of this study by the Swedish civil society community (cf. Ideell Arena 2021). Following policy professionals, it is clear that they do their absolute best for their organizations. They are often deeply engaged in social change and in the social issues they work on. Nevertheless, the fact that they want to influence policy and are part of a labor market could increase their willingness to take "shortcuts." They want to win, to succeed in exerting influence on behalf of both the organization and themselves. This striving to win the game sometimes clashes with member democracy (papers I and III). Excessive policy professionalization could therefore risk advancinga civil society where experts run the CSOs, produce their goals, and decide what is important for the organization, rather than working for the members of the supposed social movements they are meant to represent. The influence of policy professionals, like that of other groups that hold power within organizations, could have a conservative as well as radical impact on the organizations' policies (Leach 2005; Voss and Sherman 2000). As demonstrated in Paper III, policy professionals can, together with a minority of members, successfully push through radical (or conservative) top–down initiatives against the will of a majority of members, block member initiatives from revitalizing the organization, or just follow their own political ideals. It is therefore important to monitor their influence and the group of policy professionals taking office in CSOs.

Policy professionals, civil society, and democracy

Returning to the debate over civil society and what functions CSOs should have in societies, let us dwell on the idea of civil society as a public sphere (Edwards 2004; Habermas 1984). Summarizing earlier discussions of professionalization and this thesis' findings regarding policy professionals' role in it, it could be argued that the disappearance of members from several movements' organizations in parallel with the growth of policy professionals as a group means that the policy professionalization of civil society risks undermining CSOs' deliberative contribution to democracy. The commodification of news, arising from the logic of reputation, fosters the increasing mediatization of civil society (Paper IV). This trend, combined with the logic of influence, fostering the marketization of the sector, selling public discourse as a product to consumers and policymakers rather than treating civil societies voices as a sphere of free communication between society's members, obviously clashes with the logic of membership and threatens the potential inclusiveness of civil society (Paper III). These trends could have a negative effect on civil societies' capacity and traditional democratic ability to bind together an egalitarian welfare regime. When social debates become strongly mediatized, and arguments and influence become commodified, civil societies' hoped-for deliberations between CSOs, citizens, and

policymakers could be lost (e.g., Habermas 1984; Öberg and Svensson 2012:251). Hence, if the aim is to contribute to democracy in a broad sense, it is not enough for civil society to influence media and policymakers through, for instance, lobbying and public relations "conducted in hidden arenas or closed offices; it must be connected to the public sphere" (Öberg and Svensson 2012:251). For actual deliberation to take place in the public sphere, members of the public need robust arguments and equal access to the discussion, and CSOs need to involve their rank-and-file members. Another danger of enhanced policy professionalization is the potential for CSOs to become more oriented towards consensus building, seeking access and negotiating rather than addressing societal conflicts.

Social conflicts and collective identities are important for political movements. However, the post-political condition, evident in the rise of experts, managerial logics, technocratic governance, and consensus-driven decision making (Mouffe 2005b; Swyngedouw 2010:225), creates difficulties in channeling discontent through parties and popular movements (Mouffe 2005a, 2016). According to Mouffe (2005a, 2016), this refusal to recognize conflicts and antagonism has ignored people's need for passion in politics. Relating to this discussion, Mouffe (2005a, 2016) distinguishes between the political and politics: the political is a concept with an ever-present antagonistic dimension that cannot be removed or diminished; politics, on the other hand, comprises the practices, institutions, and discourses used to organize the political. The difference between these dimensions is that a one-dimensional use of the latter creates a situation in which conflicts are reduced to differences in opinion or position, possible for anyone to have, beyond the left–right dimension, instead of fundamental ideological differences springing from material conditions. Acknowledging this insight, it would be an important contribution if CSOs, and their policy professionals, instead of primarily dedicating themselves to the gritty details of politics, playing the game of influence with other professionals, would devote more time to working for the political in Mouffe's sense, by using shared emotions (Petrini and Wettergren 2022) to instill passion, ideology, and commitment (which some already do) into their associated movements. With that effort, CSOs' future capacity to contribute to the good society (Edwards 2004:10) or even a vibrant public sphere (Habermas 1991) may increase.

To conclude, by revisiting the uneasy feeling of not being listened to as a member, and the relationship between policy professionals and elected representatives, a troubled feeling remains after this tour of the battleground of CSO policy professionals. Viewing members as principals of the organization (Abrahamsson 1993; Hvenmark 2008; Hvenmark and Einarsson 2021), they are important because they are the source of the organization's legitimacy. Hence, their role in CSOs is a question of power and legitimacy. I therefore argue that although CSOs need to develop their skills in policy production, we also need CSOs that can articulate "noisy politics," i.e., conflicts important for pursuing critical polices (e.g., Crouch 2004; Culpepper 2011;

Mouffe 2005a; Svallfors 2015). Essential conflicts are important for the dynamics of politics and for civil society.

This thesis has addressed the inevitable embedded conflict between an effectively professionalized civil society and an ideologically driven social movement ideal that can articulate fundamental social conflicts in society. When and if policy professionalization means that change only can take place within a given system, a system that may actually work against the very purpose of change, it is of great concern. To resolve the social problems that these organizations address, that is, battling economic, social, and gender-based inequality, climate change, and many more problems, organizations may have to think and operate outside the media and market logics rather than developing capacity, skills, and strategies within them. Addressing the policy professionalization of civil society and associated questions has given rise to the question of whether CSOs strive for political change must be conducted like this, within this given system. In response to that question, I would argue that the enhanced policy professionalization described here, which submits to the media and market logics, risks creating a situation in which civil society might lose its ability to exert pressure from below. Thus, this paradoxical condition of professionalizing in order to develop the skills necessary for exerting influence, which threatens the basis of social movements, may not be all bad (Harvey 2014:3). As Wendy Brown (2008) has reminded us, both visions and political practice are needed to win the future and, in this endeavor, this paradoxical condition can perhaps allow room for these two opposing tendencies, i.e., professional versus movement ideals, to coexist as functional ideals, although occasionally causing friction. A solution to an ongoing situation in which civil society is losing influence, members, and legitimacy could therefore, beyond a focus on policy professionalization, be to place a greater emphasis on revitalizing movements by visualizing conflicts, engaging members and making use of shared emotions and the mobilizing value of passion.

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Finally, I want to reflect on this study's limitations and what could be important continuations in future studies. Basing this study on the views of policy professionals working inside CSOs puts certain limitations on the analysis of CSOs' contribution to democracy. Although this study did not specifically study the dilution of member influence, the rise of policy professionals in CSOs is understood as consequential for civil society's contribution to democracy. Furthermore, studying large and professionalized CSOs entails certain limitations regarding generalization to broader civil society where many other types of organizations, social movements, interest groups, and activist groups play crucial roles in civil society's overall contribution. In the same vein, it must be noted that the analysis was primarily based on Swedish CSOs, which entails other types of limitations regarding the findings and the ability to generalize to other civil society spheres. Sweden, with a civil society structure featuring a rela-

tively strong membership focus, could be seen as an outlier. Still, the legacy of a popular movement tradition in the voluntary sector, in which members have a strong position in CSOs, has allowed for an analysis of policy professionals' relationship to the logic of membership. In other contexts, the possibility of shedding light on individuals and organizations dealing with this issue might have been less explicit.

As the empirical analysis showed that policy professionals in the three different contexts displayed very similar characteristics in terms of working strategies and identities, and that differences pertaining to national context were of little importance, the main story told is of the subfield of policy professionals in large and professionalized CSOs. The trends and practices found in the Swedish example can probably be found in other contexts and organizational settings involving a contested relationship between members and recruited experts, although they may appear in slightly different combinations. Although findings regarding the subfield of policy professionals in civil society can be applicable and useful in other contexts, it is important to clarify, again, that this thesis cannot account for the comparison of the general processes of professionalization of civil societies within and among the three national contexts.

This research has raised many questions in need of further investigation, one of which concerns members' role in policymaking. Further research would benefit from the member's perspective on the process of policy professionalization as well as from examination of the actual power that members do hold in these organizations. Other examples of how CSOs avoid the potential problems of members' influence through organizational solutions could also be of interest. Further research would also profit from more in-depth analysis of intra-organizational relationships between different types of organizations and in other policy areas than gender, environmental, and trade union issues. One important topic would be to assess the role of policy professionals in what could be described as "uncivil" society organizations, such as think tanks and political projects working, for example, on anti-gender-issues, populist, or climate-denial campaigns. A deeper and more extensive cross-national comparison of policy professionals influence in CSOs would also be of interest.

Sammanfattning (Summary in Swedish)

En ökad politisk komplexitet, i kombination med ett mer professionaliserat civilsamhälle, främjar framväxten av policyprofessionella inom civilsamhällesorganisationer och aktualiserar frågor kring deras traditionella demokratiskapande roll och förmåga. Avhandlingen studerar civilsamhällets professionalisering genom att analysera observationer och intervjuer med policyprofessionellt anställda – det vill säga anställda med huvuduppgift inom politisk påverkan, kommunikation, sakkunskap och utredning – på civilsamhällesorganisationers huvudkontor i Sverige, Lettland och Nederländerna. Den huvudfråga som avhandlingen behandlar rör hur vi kan konceptualisera och förstå de policyprofessionella i civilsamhället och den roll de spelar för dess professionalisering. Avhandlingen använder sig av fältteori i kombination med ny institutionell teori för att skapa nya insikter om hur denna grupp av experter påverkar organisationers strategier, produktion av kapital, legitimitet och ytterst deras demokratiska funktion. Avhandlingen består av fyra delstudier som fokuserar på policyprofessionellas roll i medlemsorganisationer.

Den första delstudien rör policyprofessionella som ett fält. Den visar på hur olika grupper av policyprofessionella för med sig och skapar kunskaper och kapital när de rör sig mellan organisationer på arbetsmarknaden. Det policyprofessionella fältet förstås som en kamp för att få inflytande över internt och offentligt beslutsfattande. I kampen om inflytande används och konstrueras fältspecifikt kapital. Kapital som är viktigt för detta område är – förutom nätverk, kontakter och akademisk utbildning – organisatoriskt kapital och policypolitiskt kapital. Medan organisatoriskt kapital skänker organisationen legitimitet, förtroende och lojalitet, bidrar det policypolitiska kapitalet, hämtat från den politiska sfären, till en politisk professionalisering av fältet.

Delstudie två argumenterar för vikten av att skilja mellan olika typer av policyprofessionella. I civilsamhällesorganisationer konceptualiseras policyprofessionellas olika rollinriktningar i fyra grupper: policyforskare, policylobbyister, policykommunikatörer och policyaktivister. Dessa rollinriktningar är i sin tur kopplade till individernas val av strategier, som i sin tur är inbäddade i institutionella logiker och i relationer med aktörer utanför det civila samhället.

Ett exempel på logiker som påverkar fältet är den potentiella konflikten mellan medlemslogiken och inflytandelogiken som studeras i delstudie tre. Civilsamhällesorganisationers specialisering i arbetet med policyprocesser ger dem mer kompetens kring politiska strategier. Det innebär att policyprofessionella får ett kunskapsövertag gentemot medlemmar och valda representanter, vilket i sin tur skapar gap mellan de policyprofessionella och medlemmarna. De policyprofessionella försöker övervinna gapen med hjälp av vad som förstås som frikoppling av policyarbete gentemot med-

lemmar och skapande av myter kring medlemmarnas centrala roll i organisationer. Strategierna leder till organisatoriskt hyckleri, det vill säga en diskrepans i vad organisationerna säger och vad de gör. Ytterligare extern logik som studeras i delstudie fyra är mediatisering (organisationers anpassning till en medialogik) för att påverka politiska beslut. Studien visar hur mediatisering av det civila samhället driver organisationer att avancera sitt arbete med varumärkesbyggande och strategisk kommunikation, vilket i sin tur höjer kommunikatörernas status inom policyteam och skapar konflikter inom organisationer.

Sammantaget visar avhandlingen på vad som kan beskrivas som en policyprofessionalisering av civilsamhällesorganisationer, vilket skapar och är en konsekvens av mer elitdrivna påverkansprocesser inom civilsamhället. Avhandlingen bidrar dels till studiet av professionaliseringsprocesser inom civilsamhället, dels till att nyansera och utöka litteraturen och förståelsen av policyprofessionella. Den beskrivna policyprofessionaliseringen av civilsamhällesorganisationer skapar ett nytt politiskt landskap där policyprofessionell kompetens efterfrågas inom civilsamhället. En betydande fara med framväxten av policyprofessionella som arbetskår inom civilsamhällesorganisationer är att beslutsfattande i högre grad läggs i händerna på dessa anställda, snarare än i händerna på medlemmarna som organisationen ska representera.

Nyckelord: civilsamhälle, policyprofessionella, professionalisering, organisation, opinionsbildning, strategi, medlem, mediatisering, fältteori, kapital, frikoppling, inflytandets logik, organisatoriskt hyckleri, myt.

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Paper I

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The Game of Influence: Policy Professional Capital in Civil Society

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the field of policy professionals in civil society. The main objective is to gain knowledge on this subgroup of policy professionals, who are exerting vast influence over civil society organizations' policy development. Using field theory when analysing interviews and ethnographic data, the study contributes to our understanding of these civil society policy professionals, adding to the literature on professionalization in civil society by conceptualizing the capital that they construct and bring to the organizations in which they work. The findings provide insights on three main themes: First, organizational capital, based on being active in associations, stands out as specifically important for these professionals. Second, policy political capital – knowledge, skills and contacts derived from the political structure – is important within the field. Third, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus, the analysis shows that the specific *illusio* for the policy professional field is influence. It implies the importance of successfully upholding the image of policy influence and is the return that the players in the field are competing for.

KEYWORDS

policy professionals; civil society; field theory; professionalization; capital

Introduction

I have been shadowing a team of policy professionals since early morning at the Political Week in Almedalen, the biggest political event in Sweden. The group consists of a number of policy professionals working at a Swedish civil society organization (CSO) that self-identifies as a popular movement. It is now late in the evening, and the group is meeting to evaluate their day of advocacy work. About half the group are communicators and half are 'experts'. The chair of the organization is still at a seminar and cannot attend this meeting. The project manager begins by thanking everyone for the day's work, pleased with the seminars that were organized. At one of the debates, eight members of parliament were present, she recounts. The press and communication manager continues by reviewing the day's media attention: one newspaper has written

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about the organization's election reports, and one of the organization's experts has been interviewed for a magazine. Another magazine has written an article about the organization's work in Almedalen, and a newspaper has published their debate article criticizing government policy. It is clear that it has been a good media day. The manager continues by bringing greetings from the association's two in-house street fundraisers, who have recruited 29 members during the day. The group cheers and applauds the work – 29 new members in one day – that's not bad!

After completing a round of evaluation, it becomes clear that the group is tired. It has been three long days filled with political advocacy work, during which they have all worked from seven in the morning – preparing breakfast for the first morning seminar – until late at night, participating in business mixers or preparing communication strategies for the next day. Before ending the meeting, the project manager asks everyone to help out a little bit more, by stacking chairs and unpacking the event tent for the next day. A policy officer apposes; today, some people from the [governmental] authority were there, and I was moving chairs instead of talking to them. Can't we pay someone for that? Not 100,000 but maybe bring in a member?' There ensues a discussion of how best to prioritize time and effort, and whether it would be feasible to hire members for such physical tasks as making sandwiches, stacking chairs and even operating the sound system. One of the female experts blows a whistle and gets everyone's attention. 'Can I talk now? It works differently for everyone. For me it works fine to make sandwiches at 07.00, set up the tent and then host a seminar. I know my schedule. Why don't you make a separate schedule for everyone?'

During the meeting it was obvious that they were pleased to have recruited more members, yet in this post-meeting discussion, the attitude towards members (whom these professionals essentially work for) appears to be distanced. These professionals do not want to carry chairs; they see themselves as carriers of knowledge and expertise. To analyse these specific actors' contribution to civil society professionalization, we need to know more about the game in which they are players and the capital used in this game. To understand this, I suggest looking into the practices of these professionals as partakers of a field, in the sense used by Bourdieu (1996). By exploring the types of capital that they bring to the organization we can better understand ongoing professionalization of civil society at large, and specifically regarding policymaking. Through this conceptualization we can detect both what these civil society professionals bring to the organizations that employ them and how their contributions are used. Following these actors over time, it is obvious that they possess certain types of skills and experiences of importance for the influence that their employing organizations may exert in policymaking at large. These professionals and their peers inhabit a space between social movements and expert organizations, exhibiting both activism and professionalism. They make sandwiches and mingle with politicians, and as policy actors, their work has not been entirely visible to their members or to scholarly attention.

The focus of this article is therefore twofold: first to analyse these actors' potential contribution to professionalization in civil society through an in-depth analysis of the particular capital forms that they bring and construct, and, by drawing on the term 'illusio' to understand what success means for these professionals and the organizations

they work for. A large part of earlier research on the professionalization of civil society has focused on exogenous causes of professionalization, especially state regulation and state funding (Fraussen, 2014; Ivanovska Hadjievska & Stavenes, 2020; Salgado, 2010; Suarez, 2010), demonstrating how an organization's financial capacity determines the process of professionalization and the balance between volunteers and paid staff. Another strand of literature has shown how professionalization has meant that organizations become business-like, by employing more professionalized and management-oriented staff (Flöthe, 2019; Grossmann, 2012; Hoffmann, 2011; Jäger & Beyes, 2010; Maier et al., 2016), thus recognizing the critical role played by individuals. Here, field theory and theories on capital have made promising contributions when focusing on capital specific to civil society players (Broady, 1998, 1990; Hellberg, 1997; Nordvall & Malmström, 2015; Putnam, 1993, 2000). One recent example demonstrated the importance of symbolic capital for civil society elected elites in Europe (Johansson & Uhlin, 2020; Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2020). However, the group of employed policy professionals has generally been overlooked. Filling this research gap, the article focuses on policy professionals working in advocacy or member-based organizations, to describe a relatively new field in civil society, showing how these actors' forms of capital are shaped and made use of within the organizations.

Second, this article aims to contribute to the literature on policy professionals while increasing the knowledge of policymaking within CSOs. The growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of policy professionals in policymaking at large has taken notice of the presence of these actors in civil society (Garsten et al., 2015; Selling & Svallfors, 2019; Svallfors, 2020). Nevertheless, focus has mainly been on policy professionals working in organizations such as government offices, lobbying firms, think tanks or political parties (Åberg et al., 2020; Nothhaft, 2017; Rhodes, 2011; Sörbom, 2018; Svallfors, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Tyllström, 2013, 2021; Ullström, 2011); the role and contribution of policy professionals in civil society is still in need of more in-depth knowledge.

The case used for this article concerns policy professionals working at 10 different Swedish CSOs based in a social movement tradition (folkrörelser), demonstrating a large member base and a democratic decision-making process at all levels of the organization (Lundström & Svedberg, 2003). Attention is placed on these actors as partakers of a field in civil society and as a subset of policy professionals. They differ from the broader group of policy professionals studied so far, in that they are involved in a civil society sphere, which is strongly associated with democratic values (Edwards, 2004), and they work on a mandate from member organizations. One important feature of the Swedish case highlighted in this article is the high level of general public trust towards both civil society and state institutions (Trägårdh et al., 2013). Many of these CSOs have strong ties to the state, which in return views civil society actors as important and commonly invites them to engage in policy decisions and advocacy activities (Arvidsson et al., 2018; Micheletti, 1995; Trägårdh et al., 2013). Sweden has even been called 'a popular-movement democracy' because of the production of social capital and the role these organizations play in binding together an egalitarian welfare regime (Vogel et al., 2003). Arvidsson et al. (2018) speak about a Swedish 'culture of advocacy' that has allowed and expected actors to voice criticism of both policies and public actors. Supposedly, they have been both tied to the state and still free to criticize it. In Sweden,

however, the decline of corporatism, with weakened ties to the state, has provoked two important tendencies: the business sector and for-profit organizations have gained a larger influence on politics, while the more direct political influence of advocacy and member-controlled organizations has decreased (Amnå, 2007, pp. 179–180; Hermansson, 1999; Lindvall & Sebring, 2005; Lundberg, 2017; Wijkström, 2012). Consequently, CSOs have had to find new ways to gain policy influence, such as by lobbying and constructing informal networks (Hermansson, 1999; Lundberg, 2017; Svallfors, 2017a). These new strategies foster the employment of 'expert' communicators and 'spin doctors', here conceptualized as policy professionals, as key players in policy work (Brady et al., 2015; Johansson & Nygren, 2019).

The article is based on a study of these contracted 'experts' working in popular movements' CSOs. Over a couple of years, I have interviewed and followed a group of such experts employed in 10 organizations, whom I term 'policy professionals' (cf. Heclo, 1978; Svallfors, 2020). The study's main objective is to gain knowledge about the forms of capital needed for this group, exerting vast influence over these organizations' policy development, and about their role in an increasingly professionalized civil society. Moreover, inspired by Bourdieu's field theory (1996), the article contributes a theoretical conceptualization of the findings in terms of the game and illusio these policy professionals bring to the field of civil society. By studying these professionals, this article raises two overarching research questions:

1. What forms of capital do these professionals bring to and construct within the field of CSOs active in policymaking?
2. What is the illusio that actors within the field attempt to construct?

In the first of four parts I present a brief literature review on professionalization of civil society. The next section handles theoretical dimensions, first, the concept of policy professionals and, second, field theories. The third part concerns the methodology used for this study. The fourth section presents the findings, focusing on different forms of capital and the illusio of influence.

Theoretical Considerations

Professionalization of Civil Society

The professionalization of CSOs has been a well-studied theme within sociology and the study of social movements, and in research on associations and interest groups, investigating logics of membership and logics of influence (Ahrne & Papakostas, 2003, 2014; Lang, 2013; Saurugger, 2012; Skocpol, 2003). According to Weber, professionalization occurs when an organization undergoes a process of bureaucratization (Weber, 1994). The bureaucratic apparatus is created through both centralization and socialization of the specific organization (Weber, 1983, p. 183). Professionalization is in this article understood as a process that 'signifies the authority of institutionalized expertise over the authority of other claims' (Lang, 2013, p. 71), such as claims derived from the social movement members or other stakeholders. The development of a more rational and efficient bureaucracy has unintentional consequences. On the one hand, through professionalization, CSOs may stop being the 'other', for instance, by engaging in

governmental negotiations or becoming more business-like. Bureaucratization and professionalization are not only an endogenous process, emerging from a desire for effectivization and rationalization, but also something expected by tax authorities and funding organizations that push this process from the outside (Lang, 2013, p. 75; Suarez, 2011). Professionalization of CSOs can lead to a legitimacy problem: when CSOs become more influential but also rely more on employed staff, they risk losing the representative character that they used to gain a legitimate place in policy work and governance structures (Klüver & Saurugger, 2013; Saurugger, 2012).

Research has focused on professionalization of civil society in the broader context of a loss of engagement in associations, where both CSOs and political parties have lost members (Amnå, 2008; Harding, 2012; Vogel et al., 2003; von Essen, 2019). Some studies have focused on civil society professionals and targeted an increasing gap between members and elected representatives (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011; Vogel et al., 2003). Other important strands of research focus on structural changes such as marketization (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Wijkström & Einarsson, 2011), Europeanization (Lang, 2013; Meeuwisse, 2019), professionalization of trade unions (Hellberg, 1997; Wilensky, 1956) and civil society elite activism (Lindellee & Scaramuzzino, 2019, 2020). Wilensky's early study of trade unions in the United States is an exception in the field, describing this group of organizations as a case of institutionalized social movements where a managerial revolution took place when an increasing number of experts became contracted and gained power over the unions (Wilensky, 1956, pp. 237–239). In the Swedish trade union sector, one early study claimed that the capital of trust was more valued than academic knowledge, but that economists had a significant influence on the trade unions' policy development (Hellberg, 1997, p. 227).

Conceptual Considerations

A 'policy professional' does not hold a profession in the traditional sense (based on specific education, etc.), nor do policy professionals develop or express one particular identity. They are termed policy professionals because they are employed to work with policy, in contrast to elected representatives or members who also develop policy content (Svallfors, 2017). In the organizational context, their positions are located outside of the democratic electoral system of the organization. They are contracted as 'experts' to support and serve the elected board as it works to achieve the organizational goals decided upon by the members. I understand the employees studied here as inhabiting a field of professionals active within civil society who share some common characteristics. However, policy professionals are a boundary-spanning category of professionals (Medvetz, 2012), with both their activities and networks spanning organizational boundaries within and outside their field (Svallfors, 2020). In this context it is also implied that many CSOs' policy professionals are boundary crossers who move between societal spheres, elected positions and work tasks.

To define policy professionals, I add to Wilensky's classification of experts in unions, who are (1) full-time employees hired by the organization and responsible to elected officials and (2) persons of knowledge who bring specialized knowledge or skill (Wilensky, 1956, p. 22), by suggesting that the knowledge and the work that policy professionals do has to concern public policy (Svallfors, 2017). They are responsible for

developing policy documents, lobbying politicians, creating spin based on the organization's statements, writing reports and debate articles and so on. Common titles for the policy professionals at the organizations followed in the fieldwork undertaken for this project are *Chief deputy, Director, Secretary, Investigator, Chief investigator, Analyst, Expert, Economist, Lawyer, Project manager, Lobbyist, Opinion maker, Press secretary, Informer, Communicator, Communication strategist, Policy expert, Policy advisor* and so forth.

Field theory is used by many sociologists as a conceptual framework to study civil society (Barman, 2016). A field is often defined as being composed of all those actors, individuals or organizations, who recognize themselves as co-actors in the specific field (Bourdieu, 1996; Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008). I argue that the policy professionals that I study recognize themselves as partakers in the field of civil society, but also that they are part of a broader field of policymaking. The diagram below illustrates my understanding of the intersection of spheres where policy professionals-at-large work. Adjacent arenas are the business sector, the state sector and the media sector. The general group of policy professionals inhabit an arena that crosses all these sectors, and many policy professionals move between organizations. The arena where civil society and the policy professional arena intersect is of specific interest here Figure 1.

Following Bourdieu, the field is understood as a configuration of relationships where '[t]he strategies of the agents depend on their position on the field, that is, in distribution

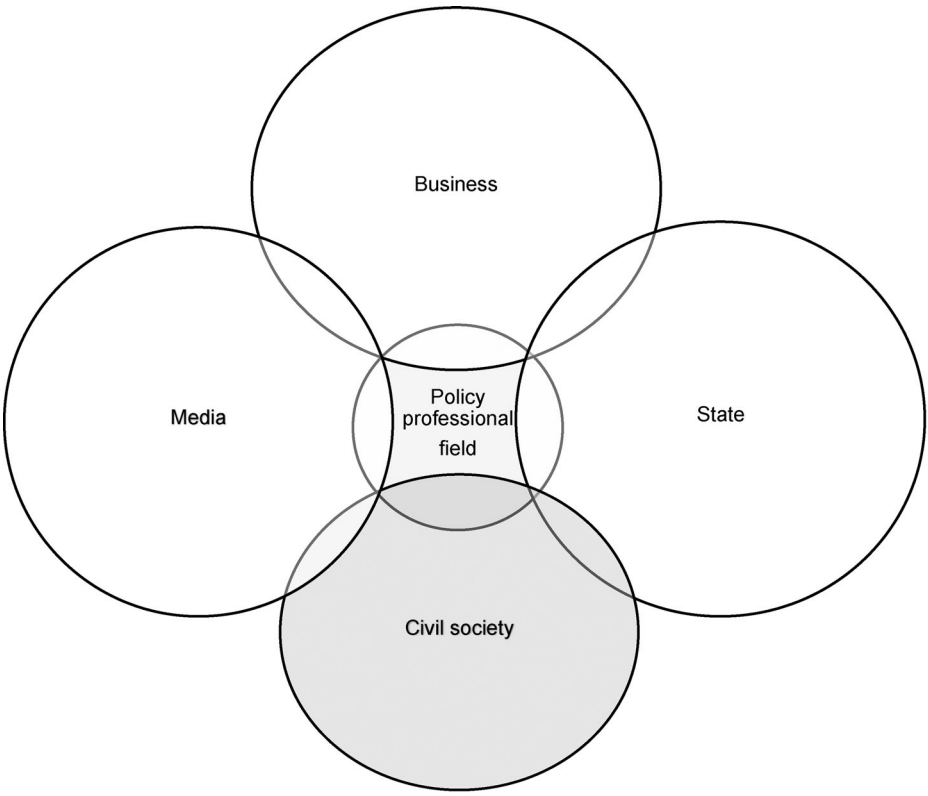

Figure 1. Intersecting fields of policy professionals.

of the specific capital and participation' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). The policy professional field in civil society is investigated through looking at both objective structures of the field, 'the game itself', and the capital important for the field, 'the feel for the game' (Savage & Silva, 2013). Additionally, I analyse the game played out in the field, using what Bourdieu termed the *illusio* of the field. Illusio is not to be confused with illusion; rather, it is a concept that highlights the actor's interest in the field and his or her willingness to invest in and commit to it (Bourdieu, 1996; Colley & Guéry, 2015). As will be demonstrated, I understand the object of this game as to become consequential within the field, and for the organizations where these professionals are employed. This game is played drawing on and constructing a number of forms of capital, and a goal of this study is to identify the properties and efficient characteristics, that is, the specific forms of capital, that are important to this specific field (cf. Bourdieu, 1996), resources that may be material and/or cultural (Barman, 2016) and can be drawn upon in the interest of influence in the broader context of policymaking.

First, *social capital* is understood as resources that are accessed through relationships and membership in associations and is important for the creation of social trust (e.g., Putnam, 1993). This view of social capital asserts the importance of associational involvement of citizens (cf. Putnam, 2000). It departs from Bourdieu's recognition of the term, stressing more of a Tocquevillian understanding, where associations are understood as schools for democracy. This understanding of social capital is, in this article, however, combined with a Bourdieusian understanding of social network, viewed as the core element of social capital and of key importance to other forms of capital in civil society. Bourdieu (1985) defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (1985, p. 248). Thus, social capital in the field of policy professionals gives individuals returns through their social networks, such as recommendations for employment, suggestions, support and job opportunities. It includes both collective and individual goods, as the specific exchange can be important and of value for a larger community, not only for individuals (Ferlander, 2007).

Second, Bourdieu (1996) points towards the importance of *symbolic capital* as both collectively and individually owned, and as something at stake and used as a tool. Symbolic capital is the resource an actor is recognized for, and it is therefore (also) a relational type of capital by nature. The autonomy of the field is measured through the degree of accumulated symbolic capital, which is built over years of being active in the field (Bourdieu, 1996). The symbolic capital works for the field as a form of credit or trust. The actors who are seen as having more symbolic capital become freer and bolder and thus are in a better position to act independently (Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 97–98).

Third, in addition to Bourdieu's categories of social and symbolic capital, a distinct form of capital related to civil society in Sweden, termed *organizational capital*, has been found useful in the Swedish popular movement tradition (Broady, 1990). Organizational capital is, in essence, resources acquired through associations and central educational institutions such as 'adult education institutions'. This form of non-formal education has proven to be highly valuable in terms of gaining political power in Sweden (Broady, 1998, 1990; Nordvall & Malmström, 2015).

Fourth, *policy political capital* can be seen as a contribution of this study that adds knowledge on capital specific to the policy professional field at large. Earlier research has pointed out that knowledge about the political system, such as knowing the game, framing problems and accessing information through important networks, is a general resource found in the field of policy professionals (Selling & Svallfors, 2019; Svallfors, 2017a). This combination of political knowledge, experience and social skill (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012) is conceptualized here as *policy political capital*. This form of capital is not to be confused with what Bourdieu (1999, p. 27) terms political capital, which refers to what a political or union elite, through their position, can acquire in the form of material assets. Instead, policy political capital is, as we shall see in the empirical part of the article, viewed by the actors in the field as knowledge and skills that are important in the production of public policy. As such, it is a form of capital that is both produced and asked for within the field.

These four forms of capital are useful for the policy professionals of the CSOs studied here and will be interpreted as an indication that these professionals form a specific field where these types of capitals are of value.

Method and Case Selection

Data Collection

Empirically, the article builds on 25 semi-structured in-depth interviews with policy professionals working in civil society in Sweden (Dexter, 2006). The interviews were conducted in Stockholm with policy professionals working at 10 different CSOs. For each policy professional, additional biographical and career data were collected through organizational websites, personal websites, and Twitter and LinkedIn profiles. The sample of informants includes policy professionals working at five different trade unions and five larger CSOs with varying political focuses; this selection was made to include CSOs with well-developed policy teams and a strong organizational capacity (Albareda, 2020). Still, each organization self-identifies as a social movement organization, which was important for the analysis focusing on member-based social movement organizations and not on professionalized lobby organizations. All informants were current or recently departed contracted staff at the national offices of the respective organizations, working specifically with policy development. The interviews varied from one to two-and-a-half hours in length.

Additionally, 80 hours of observation were conducted, shadowing policy professionals at three of these organizations. Several researchers studying policy professionals have used ethnographic methods (Garsten & Sörbom, 2018; Nothhaft, 2017; Rhodes, 2011; Tyllström, 2009; Ullström, 2011), and following their example, the combination of interviews and shadowing techniques was used in the interest of offering enhanced understandings of the role of policy professionals within civil society, partly by being able to study up close the networks, contacts, work, relationships and development of these actors (Czarniawska, 2007; Dexter, 2006; Jerolmack & Khan, 2014). The observations included steering meetings, internal policy development workshops, outward-looking arrangements such as policy debates and the political summit of Almedalen (which was referred to in the introduction) – where all CSOs, trade unions, political parties, businesses and lobby organizations meet. Journalists from all newspaper and broadcast

channels are also there to mingle and discuss with politicians, lobbyists and the public (Region Gotland, 2018). During this political summit, I followed five policy professionals from morning to night, gathering 50 hours of observations.

Data analysis was conducted following an abductive and qualitative tradition, not trying to prove a theoretical thesis, but unfolding how something might be, in this case, the field of civil society policy professionals (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013; Shapiro, 2002). All interviews and observations were transcribed and coded in NVivo. After extensive reading of the transcripts, codes were constructed focusing on resources and illusio and 'the feel for the game' (Savage & Silva, 2013). Statements about resources drawn upon, such as education, network, family background and work experience, were operationalized as capital. The term illusion, on the other hand, was operationalized from statements and situations when informants where upholding the image of and talking about their individual and their organization's policy influence. Table 1 presents an overview of codes used in the analysis:

In the next sections, these codes are described and elaborated to indicate the illusio constructed in this field, together with the forms of capital drawn upon in playing the game of the field of civil society professionals.

The Game Played

The Illusio of Influence

Returning to the political week of Almedalen 2018, I investigate the illusio that drives the field forward. Here, policy professionals take part in the game where they struggle for success and influence within the field. This 'game' is especially prominent during the political week in Almedalen where politicians, parties, policy teams and actors such as companies and state agencies work with agenda setting and advocacy. During the week, seminars, meetings, parties and demonstrations are held side by side in the small area of the city; this year, 2018, 1929 unique organizers (most of them interest groups of various sorts) conducted 4311 events over eight days (Region Gotland, 2018). The political week is an open event, and there is no charge to attend. It is, however, a costly project to arrange seminars and rent facilities and housing. The game in the field is already visible in the preparations leading up to the event. In one interview, an informant describes the importance of drawing the right players to their corner of the field:

Table 1. Coding scheme.

Coding scheme	Operationalization	Examples
Illusio of influence	To appear as if influencing public policy	Performative practices and the idea of influencing through agenda-setting activities
Social capital	Social networking resources	Know-how, debating skills, organizational ability and networks
Academic capital	Resources and knowledge gained from academia	Expert knowledge and technical skills, such as writing, statistical methods, etc.
Organizational capital	Resources based on being active in associations	Basic organizing skills, working with member involvement and ideological training
Policy political capital	Resources derived from the political and governmental structure	Knowledge, skills and contacts derived from the political and governmental structure
Symbolic capital	Resources and recognition derived from the civil society sphere	Language and rituals of grassroots activism related to civil society, and history of social movement

> *We almost always manage to get a minister. This year we will have group leaders in parliament … . But we have had party secretaries, we have had the youth federations' chairs for the past three years. It's not too bad. Not everyone succeeds in doing that. (JCS-19)*

According to this logic, the more established the players, the larger the crowd attracted, which increases the gains of the game – as well as the stakes involved. This was made clear when one of my informants had to step down from being a moderator of the event he was organizing, because, unexpectedly, the General Director of the responsible governmental authority was to participate, meaning that the President of the organization stepped in to take the moderator role instead. The seminar 'had to be matched with a heavier player'. In this way the players pay tribute to those with a more leading position, thereby reproducing their positions in the field. After the seminar, I asked the informant if he was satisfied with the attendance. Did enough of the 'important people' attend? Interestingly, his answer points more towards the panel than the audience:

> The audience is not as important. It is important that the audience is crowded, and it's good that there are a lot of young people in place, so the issue appears to be a future issue. But it is the panel participants we want to influence, not the audience. (Observation JOA-3)

For this informant it was considered important that the panellists see the organization's ability to attract interest and understand that young people care about the issues of the CSO. Still, the audience and the public are foremost a backdrop for 'the game', and not actual players or actors that the organization wants to enrol for its ideas. Thus, the significant policy change sought happened during the actual panel discussion when the panellists could see the importance of this specific CSO, through its performance.

It is hard to measure the effects of the efforts put forward during the political week. No one in the field knows exactly how much of their work contributes to social change, but everyone believes that the efforts influence policymaking, at least down the line. It is a game where the most influential player impresses with larger seminars, interactive events, blog posts and growing groups of communicators and staff on site. Consequently, every year they all invest in new seminars and campaigns and set up new communications services and so on. During the week, the actors compete over which tent has the best programme, which food is the most climate smart, which seminars are best attended and which organizations are heard the most and have the most publicly recognized policy proposals (Region Gotland, 2018).

In policy-related activities such as these, the actors attempt to shape and form what is considered imperative in their field, which is to exert influence over policymaking. However, as the outcomes of these attempts are uncertain, *it is the game about how policy is produced* that forms the core of these practices. They are performative in the way they constitute the field and the idea of influencing through such activities. As such, the practices restore confidence and interest in the game itself. With Bourdieu's conceptual apparatus, one can speak of a specific *illusio* for the policy professional field: the illusio of influence (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 330). This specific illusio implies succeeding by cutting through the noise to publish an important debate article or to have one's background research quoted in legislative text. It is this possible gain, this illusio, that the players are competing for. The policy-professional-of-civil-society-organizations game circulates around whose policy proposal goes through, which voice becomes the most consequential and where public opinion goes. The actors at Almedalen are reviewed

daily, and the illusio is created in the civil society policy professional field (cf. Bourdieu, 1996) with the very intention of winning the field's illusio and cutting through the noise with their specific policy proposals, to appear as if they are influencing public policy. It is important here to bear in mind that the informants use the *appearance* of influence; the illusio is socially contracted and not measurable. To be successful in this game requires that others view the organization and the policy professionals as influential.

Interestingly, in interviews with policy professionals about career choices and recruitment processes, this illusio arose as an important criterion for accepting a job offer. As one interviewee put it:

> If the position does not mean power and influence, I decline. Then again, power and influence are not enough for me. I want power and influence, but I also want to feel that what I do actually plays a role. And that it's intellectually challenging. (J-8)

For a job to be attractive to this group, the position needs to be strong regarding the illusio of the field, that is, it must be strong in the appearance of influencing public policy. However, belonging to and staying in the field means appearing to influence other agents in the field; those without voice and influence will not be among the important players and will lose their positions in the field.

If the image of influence is the illusio of the field, what makes the game worth playing, the different forms of capital elaborated in the next section are resources the players bring to, use and construct in the field.

The Combination of Knowledge and Network

When asked about what skills are essential to succeed in their field, most informants talk of the need to be sociable. Of course, to be an expert you have to know your area, but that is not enough; success comes out of networking. One informant describes this, saying that one needs to be knowledgeable about the issues but also to be a 'communicator' and have a certain social ability. I ask what she means, and she responds:

> [You need] to be able to create relationships. Relationships should not be underestimated. A straightforward and trustful relationship is important. (JCS-44)

Being sociable and skilled in networking is thus a key capacity. However, this capacity needs to be combined with being connected to influential others in the field. That is how one gains social capital in the field. Being able to send a text message or a message via Facebook to decision-makers is a good way to receive information or services. To this end, it is imperative to have strong ties to what are perceived as influential networks, as one interviewee describes it:

> I get them to participate (in seminars) because I know them, so it is much easier for me to get them in than if someone else would call. If you don't know the right people, you are just a random person. (J-10)

It is notable how this informant makes use of social capital within the field. According to this logic, well connected also means important. Having interpersonal relationships built on trust gives access to networks, knowledge and other resources important to the field. It is easy for a well-connected person to call someone for a favour when the acquaintance

goes back 30 years. In this manner, the policy professionals can exchange contacts, knowledge and experience for influence in the field. Importantly, though, these assets become capital only if they are useful and drawn upon.

Organizational Capital

There is an overlap between social capital and *organizational capital*, here meaning experiences of active participation in associations. To have organizational capital requires knowing people from civil society. Still, in the interest of understanding this particular group of policy professionals, there is an important distinction to be made by separating these into two forms of capital. For the civil society policy professional, many contacts, skills and resources come from being active in 'the movement', as informants would term it. The professionals in this group often have a solid background in associations and have a long history of volunteering in CSOs and developing strong ties to their communities. They have typically taken on central positions such as chairs or board members of the organizations they were engaged in. In this manner, they have had rather elite positions within the organizations and are not typically grassroots activists.

Organizational capital is understood in the field not only as contacts within civil society; it also entails civil society trust in this person as an organizer, based on the knowledge, for instance, of how to arrange meetings and practise argumentation for debating ideological and issue-based questions. That is to say, if social capital is partly based on time spent together and long relationships, organizational capital is more often linked to practices and specifically having a spatial quality. Through participating in the same boards, attending the same meetings and demonstrations and having a track record from other CSOs, organizational capital is constructed. Organizational capital is high on the qualification scale when asking for valuable resources in the field. It refers to 'knowledge that cannot be taught at the university'. As one interviewee said:

> The association experience I have acquired through many of the years of running associations, I believe, has been important. I know how the economy works, how to get people committed. It has probably been invaluable for the work I have ended up in. Generally, and especially here. Without that, I don't think I could have developed this work. So, the experience of working locally in associations from the lowest level is central. (J-14)

Student networks, newspapers, women's associations, reading circles, adult education institutions, investigator networks are central for becoming a policy professional in these CSOs. The comment below illustrates how organizational capital – here termed 'ideological education' – can be important in the recruitment process:

> I am ideologically educated in this. I know what a union does … . I am quite active in the Social Democrats (political party). I have been to party training sessions and leadership training. The Bommersviks Academy and such leadership training within the party. And my boss is also a very active Social Democrat. This would sound pretty awful if it were a right-wing organization, but when you work at a union, things like this are important. (JCS-25)

This form of capital is thus acquired through one's own engagement in social movements. Like social capital, organizational capital is linked to networks, but it adds a level of loyalty through years of participation. At the same time, there is some variation to be found among the policy professionals regarding what types of organizational

background work as capital. As suggested by the quote above, for investigators and policy experts working at trade unions the ideological education from social democratic organizations, including youth associations, may be decisive for one type of organization, but not for others.

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital is the capital that the individual policy professional is mostly recognized for – it provides access, legitimacy, respect and a good reputation in the field (Nordvall & Malmström, 2015). Symbolic capital is self-evidently context dependent; it varies depending on what counts in the field. In this field, organizational civil society capital could be understood as symbolic capital. However, not all actors who could claim organizational capital could claim symbolic capital, which is the reason for analytically separating these concepts. Symbolic capital is more than an expansion of organizational capital, not merely based on knowledge of 'how popular movements work'. Symbolic capital is not experience that is gained through practice per se; symbolic capital is gained when a player is recognized for that experience:

> I work in a people's movement, an interest organization. Not only because I have the knowledge and I have an academic education … . It is also assumed that I share, as it is called when we are employed, 'the values of this social movement'. In some sense, it is the reason why my employer hired me, because I believe in some form of common idea. (J-6)

Symbolic capital in the field of civil society professionals is thus the recognition of values, of being attributed as faithful and dependable, from years of activism, which in turn can be exchanged for legitimacy in the field. An expert who can display this type of capital is valuable for the organization because he/she has authenticity to speak. Moreover, with an employee who holds symbolic capital, the organization can expect loyalty, as the person's interests are aligned with the organization's. The language and rituals of grassroots activism are thus connected to symbolic capital rather than an actual activity. When identified as such a legitimate and committed player in the field, one can tap into that collective source of symbolic capital, which may render legitimacy, but also demands loyalty.

Policy Political Capital

When analysing the material, a fourth form of capital specific to this field emerges: *policy political capital*. This type of capital is a combination of political knowledge and social skills – having experience of how politics work and being able to read and use this knowledge beneath the surface of official rules. Policy political capital typically is established through the experience of working as a political adviser for a political party, as a press secretary at the government offices or in some other expert capacity in politics. As commonly explained by informants, having political skills means having politics in 'one's blood' and knowing how politics is organized. In practice, it means knowing how and when to intervene to be able to influence policymaking. It involves knowing when in a process it is possible to be influential, taking strategic decisions, reading budgets and making judgements about which races are worth running and what policy gaps exist.

For this form of capital, networks are also imperative. In contrast to social capital, however, which favours networks in general, and organizational capital, which acquires

networks in civil society, policy political capital requires networks in politics. Hence, being acquainted with many and diverse people in the political arena is an important resource in and of itself. Therefore, having been political adviser in a Swedish government office appears to be key to a civil society policy professional career. An example of this is an informant who describes the following:

> We have now recruited a new chief economist. He was previously a political adviser in government and is quite young. Now there are many of his former colleagues who are political advisors … . I realize that my contacts in the political world are becoming old, but on the other hand, they are becoming more and more qualified. Those I was involved with as a political advisor at the end of the nineties are now the state secretary and ministers. This means that you have an incredibly easy access to them. (J-10)

Here, it is possible to note how contacts, knowledge and experience from early on are exchanged for influence and become capital when they are made useful in the field. Former classmates or colleagues become important contacts who initially suggest career paths and later offer direct input to policymaking. When asked about networks and strategies to develop networks, most informants describe their networks as a consequence of earlier work experiences, and not necessarily as something strategically developed. Contacts from previous political workplaces are important resources for the individual and for the organization where the policy professional works. It appears that policy political capital could give access to the field on its own, without needing the other types of capital. Talking about this issue, an informant said:

> Then a job came up at a civil society organization, so I applied for it, and it was a completely different world. But I got it on merit, not that I had any issue-relevant background, but since I had worked in parliament. That's the reason they gave when they called back. It had a lot of weight when it came to their choosing me.
>
> Author: Was all that knowledge useful to you within the organization?
>
> Yes, it was, to some extent. I had quite good knowledge of the persons working there, in parliament, which members could do something in certain areas of concern. Who were driven in what areas and who were potentially able to listen to the issues that the organization were working on. At the organization they did not have good knowledge of how to read a state budget and so on, but I had learned that when I worked at parliament. Such things were very useful. (JCS-18)

As indicated in these quotes, policy political capital contributes to the production of knowledge and social skill for the civil society organization. As such, it may be consequential when trying to influence policymaking.

Conclusions and Contributions

This article has identified the field of policy professionals working with policymaking in civil society organizations in Sweden as a field of imputed policy influence. These policy professionals constitute a category of professionals who generate various forms of capital of importance to civil society but pertaining to and departing from different fields. Organizational and symbolic capital are tied to the civil society field, whereas policy political capital is more tied to the governmental and media fields. Social capital is important for and related to all fields.

However, the presence of policy political capital may, more than the other forms of capital, indicate what professionalization of politics in civil society looks like. Having political experience or knowledge, either from work within a party organization or from work in government offices, is a resource that opens up considerable opportunities. Knowing how to get it right is their skill and the pursuit of their work. Having this type of political background is therefore of specific consequence for the role that policy professionals may play in civil society policy teams. Policy influence becomes a game where you can buy, hire or win influence rather than the position of the organization. In combination with the specific form of symbolic capital constructed in the field, gained by recognition as an activist from within civil society, legitimate influence is feasible.

The results in the article indicate three contributions for understanding the role that this particular subset of policy professionals plays for the professionalization of civil society. In relation to Hellberg (1997), these findings suggest that legitimacy, trust and loyalty found in the organizational capital, and additionally the symbolic capital, also described by Lindellee and Scaramuzzino (2020), are still key components for civil society organizations' legitimacy and a specific form of capital for policy professionals in this field (cf. Svallfors, 2020).

Second, the empirical analysis demonstrates that policy political capital is potentially reshaping the norms of the field of civil society. The employing of the holders of such capital opens possibilities for not only further political professionalization (Brady et al., 2015; Hermansson, 1999; Johansson & Nygren, 2019; Lundberg, 2017; Svallfors, 2017a), but also potential conflicts (Kreutzer & Jäger, 2011). These types of capital could be conceived as part of a power struggle between various types of agents and forms of capital in the civil society field at large. Loyalty to the organization is important, but policy political capital, as suggested by the data drawn upon here, is becoming more important and may become a core element in civil society policy work.

Contributing to the understanding of professionalization, in the sense of developing professional and influential policy teams within the CSOs, leading to a legitimacy problem (Klüver & Saurugger, 2013; Saurugger, 2012), these findings suggest that the risk of running into legitimacy problems could be tied to a unilateral use of policy political capital, while a more evenly distributed use could both maintain and strengthen the organizations' legitimacy both internally and externally.

Third, the analysis suggests that the specific illusio shaped and upheld within and by the civil society policy professionals is influence. It implies that the image of policy influence is the game in play within the field, and the prize that the players are competing for. Being situated in a policy team of a well-regarded, large CSO gives access to a position in the field ripe with possibilities to influence others, if played well (cf. Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 181).

Revisiting the group of policy professionals holding an evaluation meeting at Almedalen, and the discussion on what to prioritize in advocacy work, it is clear that the rise of policy professionals in civil society brings both professionalism and commitment to civil society. Still, compared to elected staff and members, their situation is ambivalent – full of 'spin' and action, but also precariousness. Those belonging to the field of civil society policy professionals are supposed to create the illusio of 'influence'; if they do not succeed, they will lose their positions in the field.

Although this case is context specific and with its limitations, findings could potentially be used to understand the same group in other countries as well. For further research it would therefore be of interest to analyse this group in different national contexts.

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Paper II

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Role orientation and organizational strategy among policy professionals in civil society

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Abstract

How does hiring of policy professionals, to do the policy work of civil society organizations, impact the organizations that hire them? Policy professionals constitute a growing group of actors who populate many interest groups, working with advocacy and influencing public policy. As a group they comprise various types of professionals, displaying different backgrounds, identities and motivations. By analyzing individual policy professionals, asking questions about their identity and motivation to work with advocacy, and then through ethnographical observations following their work, this article contributes to the understanding of how policy professionals' backgrounds and professional identities are connected to organizational strategies and the process of professionalization. In so doing, it sheds new light on the dynamics of policy production and what professionalization of politics looks like in civil society. The article proposes a categorization of policy professionals' role orientations in civil society as policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators and policy activists. This conceptualization is of analytical value, because the balance between these categories affects dynamics within organizations and the work they do in relation to advocacy and policy, in tandem with their legitimacy.

Keywords Role orientations · Civil society · Advocacy · Policy professionals · Strategy

Introduction

How does hiring professionals, to do the policy work of civil society organizations (CSOs), impact the organizations that hire them? Scholars have noticed how professionalization of politics combined with increasing political complexity, including a mediatization of political life, has created a new political landscape (e.g., Svallfors 2020; Nothhaft 2017; Rhodes 2011; Ullström 2011; Johansson and Nygren 2019;

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Trapp and Laursen 2017). For civil society, these changes, together with professionalization and institutionalization of civil society (e.g., Lang 2013; Hwang and Powell 2009) whereby interest groups, CSOs and political parties have lost members (e.g., Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003; von Essen 2019; Vogel et al. 2003; Amnå 2008; Harding 2012; Ahrne and Papakostas 2003 2014), have created a new field of work where professionals have taken on important roles in producing advocacy and policy content. Policy professionals constitute a growing group of actors who populate many interest groups, working with advocacy and influencing public policy; this group has mainly been studied in relation to public policy, think tanks and lobbyism (Garsten et al. 2015; Svallfors 2020; Svallfors 2017; Tyllström 2019; Sörbom 2018). The aim of this article is, however, to study what it means for civil society and member organizations to hire these professionals to do the policy work, and the consequence for professionalization in the field. It, therefore, contributes both to the literature on professionalization in civil society and to nuancing the research on policy professionals in general.

Professionalization of civil society, describing the process of nonprofit organizations becoming business-like and the tension between managerialism and volunteering, has been well studied in the social sciences (e.g., Salamon 1999; Skocpol 2003; Sanders and McClellan 2014; Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Maier et al. 2016; Saurugger 2012; Maier and Meyer 2011; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011; Heylen et al. 2020; Lang 2013). Studies have also analyzed a variation of professionals and what they bring in the form of professionalization; see, for example, Hwang and Powell's (2009) contribution on professionalized staff integrating professional and managerial ideas into interest organizations. Scholarly attention has often been put on the educational background of leaders and managerial staff; less is, however, known about policy professionals, these 'experts' working directly with policy, and their consequence for civil society (Suarez 2011; Saurugger 2012; Jutterström et al. 2018).

The study of policy professionals in civil society is important because of the group's vast influence over advocacy, policy and strategy. By interviewing and following these professionals over a few years, this article analyzes role orientations and strategy in policy teams working at professionalized CSOs with a high level of organizational capacity. Following Albereda's understanding, '[o]rganizational capacity relates to those organizational elements that enable groups to act in an efficient and professional manner while internally generating expertise-based information' (Albareda 2020: 489).

The analysis draws on ethnographic data and 38 interviews with policy professionals working at 22 CSOs from Sweden, Latvia and the Netherlands. By analyzing role orientations among policy professionals in civil society, the article provides insights into the dynamics of policy production and what professionalization of politics looks like in civil society, raising two questions:

- What role orientations do policy professionals working within civil society organizations display?
- How do these roles affect strategies of these CSOs?

In the first part of the paper, I review relevant academic literature on strategy and professionalization in civil society. Next, I propose some theoretical dimensions and earlier conceptualization of the field of policy professionals. The third part concerns the methodologies used for the study. The fourth section presents findings, focusing on the role orientation of policy professionals and their connection to strategy. The article ends with a discussion on how these findings can be understood in relation to professionalization of civil society.

Professionalization and strategy in civil society

Professionalization of civil society organizations has been well studied in the social sciences (e.g., Wilensky 1964; Skocpol 2003; Hwang and Powell 2009; Saurugger 2012; Heylen et al. 2020; Lang 2013). Most of these studies suggest that professionalization, that is, having employed experts in charge (Salamon 1999), decreases internal democracy in CSOs, leading to a potential loss of its function as a school of democracy in the Tocquevillian sense. The study of leaders and paid managerial staff in CSOs shows that professionalization and formalization affect the structure and maintenance of CSOs and their strategies; the more professionalized, the more division of labor is likely to be found (Staggenborg 1988: 590; Suarez 2011). Recent scholarship has, though, noted that hiring professionals does not always have to be associated with loss of democratic values; rather, it could facilitate membership influence (Heylen et al. 2020). A professionalized organization is here understood as containing three important features; autonomy, centralized structures and functional differentiation with professionalized staff dedicated to specific tasks at the headquarters (Albareda 2020: 492). This type of professionalization is, however, not only an endogenous process, emerging from a desire for effectivization, but also something pushed for from outside; expected by tax authorities and funding organizations (Lang 2013: 75; Hwang and Powell 2009).

Intending to answer the question of what hiring employees with a particular role orientation means for an organization's overall functioning and advocacy strategies, this section reviews earlier research that has investigated strategies and institutional logics connected to professional staff. Most research on civil society strategy, however, focuses on strategy at an organizational level, overlooking the agency of policy professionals. As Christensen (2017) demonstrates, with the example of economists within the state, focusing on the recruitment and the identity of employed experts has the potential to reveal how political outcomes can be interconnected between specific groups within the organization (Christensen 2017). In this regard, research on boundary crossing, skills and abilities among lobbyists, and the revolving door phenomenon that covered the individual professional's role in policy production, is of importance (e.g., Selling 2021; Holyoke et al. 2015; Timmermans 2015; Tyllström 2013; Lindgren and Wåhlin 2001), indicating that experience, communication strategies and personality play a role when individuals work with policy (Holyoke et al. 2015); however, not only skills but individuals are transformed as they travel between organizations and institutional fields (Tyllström 2019).

Important attempts to analyze this category of professionals have pointed toward two major categories, those working to produce arguments and those working to get the message out: hacks and wonks (Medvetz 2012), or thinkers and doers (*fixare och klurare*, my translation, Garsten et al. 2015). Within this the group of doers, communicators and spin doctors have been analyzed as important carriers of media logics, bringing these ideas to civil society (Quinn 2012; Grafström et al 2015; Trapp and Laursen 2017). Within trade unions, professionals have been studied in a historical perspective, investigating relationships between professionals, experts and intellectuals (Hellberg 1997: 24; Wilensky 1956). Drawing on earlier research in this field, this article analyzes this group of experts as a field of policy professionals with varying role orientations and varying impacts on the production of policy and strategies at their organizations, contributing to a more nuanced portrayal of the group of policy professionals.

Scholars have used a variety of terms to define strategy and policy engagement of CSOs (e.g., Johansson et al. 2019; Grossmann 2012; Binderkrantz 2005; Halpin and Fraussen 2017; Albareda 2020). Some scholars distinguish between insider and outsider groups using different strategies (e.g., Grant 2000, 2004; Maloney et al. 1994). Insider strategies entail direct contact with policymakers, whereas outsider strategies entail media campaigns and mobilization of members. This division has been challenged by the understanding that most political groups use both strategies (e.g., Beyers 2004; Binderkrantz 2005; Trapp and Laursen 2017). Lately, strategies connected to digital advocacy and social media, and hence, communicators, have also arisen as a field of research (Brady et al. 2015; Johansson and Scaramuzzino 2019). Other scholars have noted the importance of access, informational lobbying by interest groups, and particularly, expert information (Binderkrantz et al. 2017; Flöthe 2019; Nownes and Newmark 2016). Regarding these later strategies, it has been noted that policymakers are in need of specific information, which CSOs can provide, at the same time as CSOs are in need of access to policymakers (Binderkrantz et al. 2017). This creates resource dependency, where information becomes a source of influence (Flöthe 2019: 168).

To sum up, in order to successfully attain policy influence, CSOs need a variety of specialized professionals generating expertise, each focused on different strategies—inside, outside, expert information and member engagement. This article connects these strategies to varying role orientations among the policy professionals studied in this paper.

Conceptualization of the policy professional field

The literature on policy professionals is still an emerging field, and policy professionals are still an understudied group in the European context. Heclo (1978) coined the term policy professionals in writing about issue networks in the American context. Garsten et al. (2015) introduced the term policy professionals in the Swedish context, by addressing the increasing professionalization of the Swedish political system. Studies have also focused on these actors in Latvia, the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden to broaden and contextualize the understanding of these actors in

a European context (Svallfors 2020). According to Svallfors, policy professionals are recruited and appointed to pursue policies within the state, lobbying organizations and civil society, and their particular skills are 'the ability to frame problems, to know the game and to access information' (Svallfors 2020: 121). Contrary to the terminology, policy professionals are as yet not understood as a profession (Brint 1994; Abbott 1988). They should rather be seen as a heterogeneous group, which nevertheless can be distinguished from other political actors by three criteria: 'they are employed, on a partisan basis, in order to ultimately affect policy' (Svallfors 2020: 3). Being employed, rather than elected to work with policy, means being hired to develop the organization's policy and advocacy strategies. Doing it on a partisan basis means working in accordance with one's ideological and political understandings, in contrast with a more neutral civil servant profile (see Svallfors 2020: 35–55). In practice, in the case of civil society, policy professionals are employed at the national office, working with policy[1] and communication, providing support and information to management, boards and regional offices. They are responsible for producing internal policy documents within a CSO and/or attempting to change policy at a governmental level, lobbying politicians, creating spin based on the organization's statements or writing debate articles and so on. Common titles for the policy professionals at the organizations followed in the fieldwork undertaken for this project are as follows: Secretary, Investigator, Chief investigator, Analyst, Expert, Economist, Lawyer, Project manager, Lobbyist, Opinion maker, Press secretary, Informer, Communicator, Communication strategist, Policy expert, Policy advisor, Chief deputy and so forth.

Following Svallfors (2020), I understand policy professionals as political actors inhabiting a particular field, with specific rules, expectations and resources. Conceptualizing policy professionals as partakers of the field in which this group is investing enables analysis of how the field is interconnected to various institutional arenas and contexts, such as state and governmental authorities, the business sector, media, academia and civil society, illustrated in the figure below (cf. Medvetz 2012: 37) (Fig. 1).

Earlier research has mainly looked at policy professionals as a broad group of actors in all of these contexts. In this article, however, the focus is on policy professionals working in advocacy or member-based organizations in civil society, as illustrated above.

Policy professionals are understood as a boundary-spanning category, less bound to institutions, more loosely regulated at their workplace and with fewer credentials than other professionals (Svallfors 2020: 28). They are also seen as boundary-crossers who travel between fields and change organizations frequently (Lindgren and Wåhlin 2001). Changing fields is linked to a self-reflexive identity construction understood as a process; this process is important for the field of civil society, since many policy professionals in civil society during their careers move between organizations such as political parties and other CSOs (Selling and Svallfors 2019).

[1] Policy here means 'a set of ideas, or a plan of what to do in a particular situation, that has been agreed officially by a group of people' (Policy 2020).

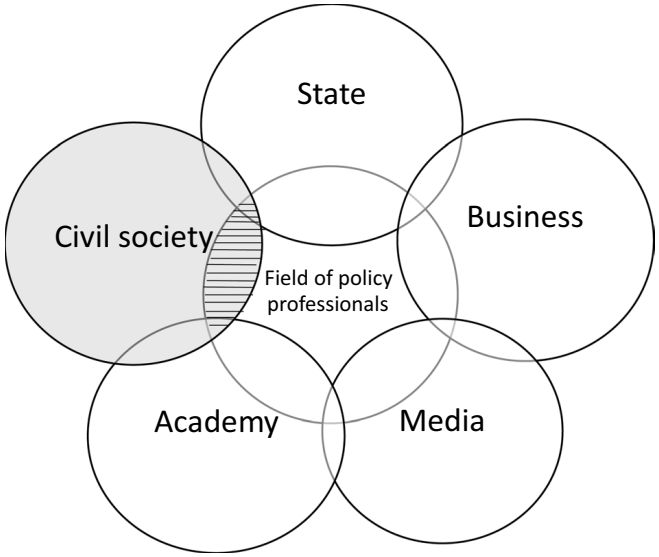

Fig. 1 The field in focus, intersecting other policy professional fields

In the intersection of fields, illustrated above, the logics of academia, civil society, politics, business and the media are important to varying degrees. This article connects the various role orientations of individual policy professionals to these logics. As developed in the section on findings, policy professionals draw on these logics differently, depending on their role orientation. Role orientation is here understood as a consequence of motivation, previous work, education and experience. The specific role orientation triggers the policy professionals to choose specific strategies that they are used to, like or are familiar with. The logic found in the varying institutional fields, which policy professionals are tied to, is understood as the underlying link between role orientations and strategies. When practices and ideas travel with these individuals, popular strategies assimilate and become implemented in new organizations, affecting civil society strategies at large (Strömbäck and Kiousis 2014; Falasca and Grandien 2017).

Methodology and case selection

This article builds on ethnographic data and 38 interviews with policy professionals working at 22 individual CSOs in Sweden, Latvia and the Netherlands. Starting with the Swedish sample, I contacted interviewees from an older study of policy professionals (Garsten et al. 2015), then added interviewees from medium to large advocacy-based CSOs such as unions and environmental organizations, and CSOs working with SRHR[2] gender-based issues in Latvia, the Netherlands and Sweden.[3]

[2] Sexual and reproductive health and rights.

[3] Due to questions of confidentiality, both organizations and individuals have been guaranteed anonymity.

The selection of interviewees was made with informants who work specifically with policy and who are well experienced in the field. I mainly searched for policy advisers, PR professionals, political secretaries and communications officers. Finding these informants was first accomplished by researching organizations' websites and by going through their LinkedIn social media profiles. Gaining access was hard in the case of Latvia and the Netherlands, whereas, with one exception, all informants asked in Sweden accepted the request. The case selection was therefore further complemented using a 'soft' snowballing technique, where the informants were asked to recommend influential policy professionals at their workplace or in their field. Not all types of policy professionals were interviewed across all organizations. However, judging by the organizations' web pages, all organizations in the selection can be characterized by high organizational capacity, meaning that they are skilled in generating policy expertise and a high level of access to decision-makers (see Albareda 2020).

The interviews from Sweden were conducted in Swedish, while those undertaken at CSOs in Latvia and the Netherlands were completed in English. For all interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire (Dexter 2006) was used. The national case selection was initially made to contrast the situation found in Sweden, a situation characterized by an ongoing change from a popular mass movement tradition, to a more pluralist and network-based political and civil society landscape (von Essen 2019; Svallfors 2020: 7). The intention of using comparative data from Latvia and the Netherlands was to comprehend the special features and what is distinct and what is universal within these processes of professionalization in Swedish civil society. The case selection was therefore strategically made, using two small European countries with distinct civil societies cultures, not to elaborate causal statement on the development in each country but to 'favor properly contextualized generalizations' (Katzenstein, 2003).

Compared to the Netherlands and Sweden, the field of CSOs in Latvia is characterized by a lower degree of active members and a generally weaker civil society (Howard 2003; Uhlin 2010). Latvian civil society is largely made up of small NGOs, but many organizations tend to have some staff, which indicates a quite professionalized civil society, run by strong leaders yet with little possibility to mobilize people (Huber 2011; Uhlin 2010: 844; Lindén 2008). The field of policy professionals is, however, significantly smaller; many NGOs struggle with funding, with the consequence of having professionals hired on a project basis, rather than in permanent policy teams. In the Netherlands, civil society has, compared to Latvia and to Sweden, well-developed relationships with governmental institutions, and civil society is expected to lobby and advocate for social change (Government of the Netherlands 2014; Wessel et al. 2020). The Netherlands is a country with a high density in the population of CSOs, citizen groups engaged in lobbying that have become important players in setting the agenda and portraying problems (Timmermans 2015). However, the analysis of the empirical data soon revealed that irrespective of these variations in the three contexts, the groups of policy professionals studied displayed quite similar characteristics regarding, for instance, professional backgrounds, identities and roles. In fact, the differences between the groups of policy professionals turned out to be of greater analytical importance than those pertaining to national differences. The material is therefore used as one, indicating variations within the

group of policy professionals, and not for a comparative purpose based on national contrasts.

In addition to interviews, 80 hours of observation were completed in Sweden, shadowing (Czarniawska 2007) multiple policy professionals at work in three selected member-based advocacy organizations. The selection was made strategically with interviewees with whom I had good contact and who were to participate in larger advocacy events important for the fieldwork. The ethnographic data were gathered for 1 year, comprising a journal, meeting notes and field notes, which produced rich descriptions on expressed commitment and self-identification at work. These data are not displayed in the empirical chapter, but rather have informed the analysis and categorization. Both interviews and shadowing gave opportunities to study how these professionals affect the organizations' overall strategy, their focus on inside or outside lobbying, and their relationship to peers, members and elected representatives. The shadowing allowed me to observe these connections, not only to ask about them, which was important to overcome any possible attitudinal fallacy (Jerolmack and Khan 2014).

All interviews and field notes were transcribed and coded, using a technique of provisional coding, which later was adopted as core codes and categories (Layder 1998). The analytical process has been inspired by an abductive approach, going back and forth between theory and material throughout the research process (Meyer and Lunnay 2013).

The empirical analysis led to the identification of four conceptual role orientations based on the interviewees' self-identification, education, previous careers, background and motivation: policy scholar, policy lobbyist, policy communicator and policy activist. Following earlier research, insider and outsider strategies were connected to these role orientations: Lobbying and insider strategies were operationalized as contacting politicians and state officials. Scholarly roles included providing expert information, for example, by answering government commission premises and participating in panels, reference groups and so forth. Voice and advocacy strategies were conceptualized as media or social media strategies. Lastly, policy activists mobilized members through, for example, the use of protest, demonstrations and petitions (Beyers 2004; Johansson et al. 2019) (Table 1).

These role orientations should be seen as ideal types (Weber 1994) and not as essential categories. Some policy professionals map very well onto only one of these orientations, but some would find two or more orientations useful, depending on their position and particular task at the organization, for example, working with both knowledge production and direct lobbying. These ideal types were constructed in the intersection of data, theory and earlier research, designed to differentiate patterns in a wide and diverse group of professionals.

Findings

The next section describes the interviewees based on their role orientations and motivations for working in civil society, moving on to show how these particular role orientations impact organizational strategies.

Table 1 Coding scheme role orientation, motivation, self-identification, commitment and strategy

Operationalization	Policy scholars	Policy lobbyists	Policy communicators	Policy activists
Typical titles at organizations	Investigator Policy officer Policy advisor	Advocacy officer Policy advisor Policy officer	Communicator Press officer PR manager	Investigator Policy officer Advocacy officer
Education	Economics, political science, sociology, humanities, law; often PhDs	Political science, social sciences, law	Communication, political science, media	Social sciences, all categories
Previous careers/Boundary crossing	Academia, other CSOs	Public authorities, government offices, other CSOs	Public authorities, government offices, business sector	Other CSOs, academia
Description	Neutral and knowledgeable, closely linked to the academy and to the issue of expertise	Skilled in strategy work and direct lobbying with politicians and other policymakers	Good at communicating politics, skilled in making knowledge accessible; framing and agenda setting	Skilled in mobilizing people and feelings; resembles elected representatives
Motivation	Finds energy in writing and production of knowledge	Finds energy in relation to politics, governmental agencies and political parties	Finds energy in the more commercial or mediatized PR and media sector	Finds energy in ideological debates and protests and among members
Self-identity	Identifies with the policy issue and with being an expert	Identifies with influence and the political game	Identifies with the media and communication field	Identifies with civil society and social movements
Commitment	Prefers an anonymous position that guarantees having influence over policy	In the political game and the concrete messy political everyday life	In the communication game and the everyday media life	Being part of ‘the movement’

Policy scholars

The first role orientation is termed 'policy scholar.' The interviewees displaying this orientation work with in-depth knowledge production and use insider strategy on diverse policy issues at the organizations where they are employed. These policy professionals identify with knowledge production and academia, and often have the title of investigator, policy officer or expert. They prefer to write and think rather than do the 'dirty work' of contact, communication and meetings.

> For me, the most fun is to write, but as soon as you work somewhere you need to attend all these meetings, all the time. There are so many other things that need to be handled. (J-9 at Swedish political party)

A key characteristic amongst policy scholars, thus, is the preference of not being at the forefront of the organization. Rather, they are engaged in writing, formulation and policy change, and prefer to work in the shadows of other professionals. Within this category of professionals, and these individuals, they see themselves as part of a layer in civil society working with academic knowledge production.

One of the fundamental questions asked in the interview was how they identify themselves professionally:

> I was at a conference last week that dealt with my policy issues. There were people who worked as experts in the ministries, experts from the insurance fund, researchers, and some different people from organizations. Then I felt at home! (J-5 at Swedish trade union)
>
> I'm working with international and European law. And working with this is either you're an academic, a lector at the university or at the government. But you are like a theory-based person. (J-23 at Latvian trade union)

These kinds of statements demonstrate how policy scholars enjoy having expert knowledge and being sought out because of this expertise. Most policy scholars also strongly identify with what is referred to as 'their policy issue,' being an expert in that subfield. Some of the experts identify more as researchers in their field, like economists or political scientists. Many policy scholars have a higher education degree, and their connection to academia is strong. Academia is also an important counterpart that they identify with, turn to and want to be acknowledged by.

Policy scholars resemble Wilensky's (1956) 'facts and figures man,' who has specialized training in statistics, social sciences and economy. They are less into human resources and more into framing subjects through figures, 'skilled in the production of quick and simple answers to complex questions' (Wilensky 1956: 42). The loyalty of this group is first of all to the specific policy field in which they are active, for example, to gender equality or climate change. They are not particularly attached to persons or organizations, as long as they can work in this particular policy field.

These particular policy professionals are at their best when they write new proposals, reports or legislative amendments. As policy scholars, this group of CSO professionals is not so much involved in direct lobbying or media strategies; they derive their energy from writing and working with knowledge development where

they do not need to deal with the social challenges of direct lobbying. Hence, insider strategy and the production of expert information are preferred strategies, enjoying a more anonymous position within organizations that still guarantees their influence over policy.

Policy lobbyists

The second role orientation is that of the 'policy lobbyist,' constituting a group that enjoys working with policy change and influence, regardless of the organization, as long as the subject matter is interesting, and they have a prominent role in it. Policy lobbyists are good at strategies that involve direct access to policymakers, in direct lobbying with politicians and other policymakers. They might write reports now and then, but they are more into having contacts, monitoring policy fields and debates, and contributing to and writing up strategies for the organizations. Compared with other role orientations, the policy lobbyist identifies more with 'lobbying,' getting the work done:

> Interviewer: What would you say you identify with as a professional category, if someone asks?
> Lobbyist.
> Interviewer: Lobbyist?
> Yes, it has traditionally been a nasty word – that's why I say it like this: on my business card it says political expert, so that is what I am. But I also work with influence. So, to state it clearly, I'm a lobbyist. (JCS-19 at Swedish SRHR organization)

Policy professionals displaying this role orientation identify with influence, change and direct lobbying. If policy scholars are concentrated on writing reports, policy lobbyists make sure the message reaches the right people, directly.

Policy lobbyists have typically worked in many political spheres, such as political parties, governmental offices or other authorities. Among this group both senior and junior colleagues seemed to have prominent and influential positions within their organizations. They find their motivation in working with direct policy change, rather than working in a specific policy area. When asked what feels most fulfilling about their work, the standard answer is to get someone to do what you want them to do:

> Okay. I love getting results. So, when I've been lobbying for something, and it works, that's when I'm like, yes, I did well.
> Interviewer: Can you give an example?
> Let me think. Oh. It can be something really easy, such as when I'm trying to get a politician to ask parliamentary questions about something, and the politician does this. That makes me really happy. Yeah. Or I ask them to bring something up during a debate and they do it. The best thing is obviously when a politician brings something up during a debate, and then policy actually gets changed, and later on, the practice gets changed. (JCS-42 at Dutch SRHR organization)

Characteristic of policy lobbyists is that they know how the system works and want to be part of an organization because it is influential. Merely being part of civil society is not enough.

> Now I know that I want to work with political influence and policymaking. Earlier, I was more into working with campaign and advocacy. Now, I'm pretty sure I don't want to do that. [Laughter] When 'they' make an impact, they have a communications person who runs campaigns on various issues. We meet politicians, produce things. We work a lot less – it sounds a bit shady when you say it – but, less visibly.
> (JCS -28 at Swedish temperance organization)

Policy lobbyists are like the 'contact men,' experts who also manipulate thoughts and feelings of decision-makers, as termed by Wilensky (1956: 61). Compared to scholars, and communicators, these policy professionals use access strategies and have face-to-face contact with important political players. Importantly, policy lobbyists work more closely with their principals, for instance, by accompanying them to meetings with officials, than do other policy professionals. Policy lobbyists are also strongly motivated by working with strategies to access both outside decision-makers and upper echelons of the CSO where they work. They want to be close to power, working closely with management and the board. Indeed, we may say that they lobby both externally and internally.

Policy communicators

The third type of role orientation is termed 'policy communicator.' As the designation indicates, policy professionals displaying this orientation are good at communicating politics and getting the message out to the public, either in written drafts, through media or by framing other actors' statements or ideas. Policy communicators are hired as 'communicators'—as 'PR' and 'media' experts—or as advocacy and policy officers, and their strategies are connected to making knowledge accessible, handling media contacts, framing and agenda setting. They are at their best when they communicate and organize other people's ideas. Policy communicators are also skilled in writing up strategies, often based on knowledge from policy scholars, and just as the policy scholar, they hardly ever act as the face of the organization when meeting other representatives outside the CSO. On the possibility of working as a politician, a policy communicator describes her identity like this:

> I think I'm a typical 'behind the scenes person'.... If I have an idea and I then hear someone talk about it as their idea, I often feel like, 'Shit, that's good!' rather than 'Now you took my idea.'(JCS-27 at Swedish trade union organization)

Instead of being in the spotlight, policy communicators plan and organize what other actors or initiators should say or write, and how to say it to achieve success.

Both policy communicators and policy lobbyists display a specific salient attraction to power and influence. These policy professionals could work anywhere (within the span of their values), as long as they are in the thick of policy change. What motivates policy communicators and lobbyists the most is typically expressions of policy success: fomenting headlines, planting debate articles or successfully reaching out with campaigns on a particular policy topic. Policy communicators find their satisfaction in the 'political game' and the concrete, messy political everyday life. A policy communicator who previously had worked closely with a minister in government stresses the importance of actual influence:

> I want to work in such an environment where something actually happens! I'm engaging myself in something, not just because I want to sit and count hits on any press release; I want it to lead somewhere. I think it's worthless if I do not get into it and feel that what I do has an effect. (JCS-18 at Swedish environmental organization)

This policy communicator was employed at this particular organization because, according to him, things actually happen there. He had previously worked at the governmental office. Being part of the civil society sphere was never an end in itself. Now working at this CSO, he recognizes the potential of civil society and the central position and influence he has while working here. Policy communicators are, as they have been trained to be, skilled in framing expert information, and they use strategies connected to both inside and outside strategy, planning both media campaigns and communication with policymakers. Moreover, policy communicators, rather than lobbyists, have a particular mediating function, adding to the organization's reputation as 'respectable' and 'responsible' by encouraging the CSOs principal to 'play it safe' in relation to the public (Wilensky 1956: 78). However, both policy communicators and policy lobbyists are skilled in polishing the ideology of organizational leadership. Communicators and lobbyists have connections in the policy field at large and handle relations between the leaders and the world outside the CSO (Wilensky 1956: 61).

Policy activist

The fourth role orientation, 'the policy activist,' is more connected to civil society and social movements, and is often closely linked to politicians and elected representatives. The professionals expressing this orientation identify as members of a civil society or as social movement activists, and it is from this belonging that they derive their strategies. The sense of being part of something larger, which all policy professionals desire, is dominating for this group who are skilled in ideology and mobilizing members:

> I work in a people's movement, an interest organization. Not only because I have a knowledge base and I have academic education…. It is also assumed that I share, as it is called when we are employed, the values of this social movement. In some sense, it is the reason why my employer hired me, that

> we believe in some form of common idea. That's why I'm different from the civil servants. So, in that sense, I'm not a technocrat in the way they are, but I work on a mission based on an ideological mission, one could say. (J-6 at Swedish trade union organization)

In this statement, the policy activist emphasizes the value found within this organization. He was employed because of a connection to the movement, and this gives him an ideological mission. He identifies with the mission not only as a civil servant. It is an ideological commitment, desired both by the employers and by the professional.

When asking about career choice, some policy activists say they have turned down employment offers from other organizations, which according to them would have been a better career choice with a higher salary, because they wanted to 'be a part of the chain that changes society.' Being part of social change is for policy activists more significant than having a career. In this, the role orientation of policy activists resembles that of the policy lobbyist, although the former most typically rejects the lobbyist identity. Policy activists may do similar work, but they assert that, in contrast to lobbyists, they do it for their members, 'for the people.'

Policy activists' motivations are commonly connected to moments of pride, doing some good for the larger community. When asked about career paths and incentives to work in CSOs, emotions are explicitly important.

> I want to feel very much. I want to push.... I do this because I want to influence and change society. That's my motivation. So, just being some kind of service person who just will execute orders, that is not attractive. (J-11 at Swedish environmental organization)

The policy activist's idea of her/his influence is derived from having a background in the social movement, which is manifested in this response. The policy activists find motivation in and favor strategies connected to ideological debates, protests and mobilizing 'the movement.' Moreover, their motivation is associated with moral values. It includes a feeling of right and wrong, in this case, a sense of righteousness: they feel like good people. This feeling generates altruism; it is a feeling of solidarity, of wanting to defend the group or the cause they work for.

As outlined above, within the CSOs studied here we find four types of role orientations for the policy professionals. Irrespective of the three national contexts within which these policy professionals are active, they express the idea that *we are not civil servants; we work with influencing society*. However, policy professionals within CSOs exercise this influence from different angles and with strategies, as described in the next section.

Strategies among policy professionals in civil society

What does hiring employees with a particular role orientation mean for an organization's overall functioning and advocacy strategies? The four types of role orientations outlined above use and favor different strategies, summarized in the following (Table 2):

Table 2 Role orientation and strategy

	Policy scholars	Policy lobbyists	Policy communicators	Policy activists
Strategy	Insider strategies, expert information	Insider strategies, expert information, access	Insider strategies, framing, voice,outside strategy	Mobilizing members, voice, expert information

When placed in a central position within the organization, both senior and junior policy professionals have a vast influence in internal decision-making structures and procedures, with a high ability to influence decisions. The various role orientations of individual policy professionals are connected to these strategies, which in turn are embedded in logics and relationships with actors outside civil society. Figure 2 illustrates these logics connected to corresponding fields outside of the organization:

These are the types of fields to which policy professionals primarily turn, and whose logics they follow or are influenced by. For policy lobbyists, the contact and aspirations of policy work go in the direction of decision-makers within the state/government. It is this group that policy lobbyists aim to influence and to understand, and to which the policy lobbyists turn and compare themselves. They bring knowledge and logics from the political sphere to civil society. Policy communicators target the media, relate to journalists and are driven and influenced by media logics which they implement in civil society. For policy scholars, the academy is an obvious interlocutor to compare themselves to when working with policy documents, knowledge production or general policy influence. In strategic policy discussions, they rather anchor policy content in research, compared to lobbyists and communicators who are keener on using framing tactics. Policy activists relate to activist strategies found in the 'movement' and anchor the organization in a civil society tradition.

Policy professionals relate to and travel between these various arenas, which is of consequence for their practices and strategies, and in turn for the organizations they work for (Trapp and Laursen 2017). This opens up possibilities for further professionalization, but also for conflicts among groups driven by discrepant role orientation. When engaging in strategic conversations, they will typically draw on separate logics, which entails the use of diverse strategies. To create an illustrative example including the four ideal types, it is possible to imagine a strategic meeting where the policy scholar would want to investigate the issue and write a report, the policy lobbyist would want to book a series of meetings with politicians and the policy communicator would propose a campaign, while the policy activist would propose gathering the members and making a protest.

One example of how tension between these professionals could create conflicts is caught in the statement below, where a policy scholar describes a sensation of being overruled by the management and communication unit in strategic decisions:

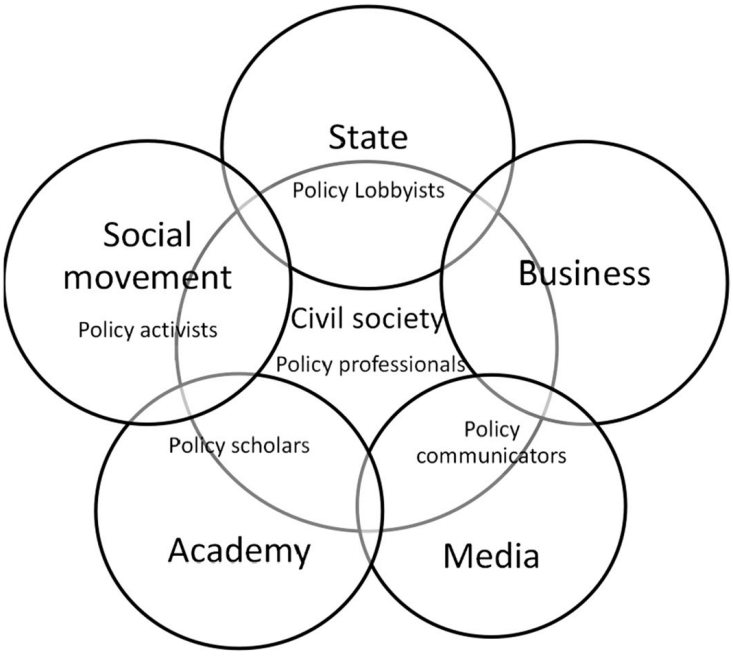

Fig. 2 Policy professionals' role orientation in civil society related to intersecting fields (Both policy lobbyists and communicators relate to and work more with the business logics than the others, but civil society policy professionals do not display any stronger relationship to the business sector. Therefore, this field is left empty in this figure)

> It was really decided upon by the communication unit together with our secretary and the head of office. I found out when we were sitting in a meeting with the advertising agency who were helping us with this campaign. Of course, they had not thought about the difficulties that exist in this policy issue and, above all, what technical difficulties really.... (J-15 at Swedish Pensioners' Organization)

The policy scholar, responsible for the policy area of the campaign, was not heard when the campaigns were decided upon, creating a feeling of being overridden. This tension, in policy strategies and in how to get the message out, was recurrent in most interviews, as these actors are driven by different logics and have different motivations.

When moving between organizations and crossing boundaries, policy professionals bring their self-identification, strategy and motivation to these CSOs working with advocacy and policy agendas. Hence, identifying these role orientations is relevant for understanding the dynamics of professionalization in civil society. If one or the other group dominates, there may be consequences for the organization's strategies and policy interests, since these individuals become bearers of discrepant institutional logics, promoting certain strategies over others. As a boundary-spanning category of professionals, they become bearers of institutional logics: communicators bring media strategies and so on (Lindgren

and Wåhlin 2001), and these concepts and ideas become translated and implemented (Grandien 2016), of consequence for the organization's strategies and for their legitimacy.

Conclusions

In this article, findings on policy professionals' role orientations suggest four different groups who all have strong but varying driving forces for influencing policy content: policy scholars, policy lobbyists, policy communicators and policy activists. The article hereby contributes to nuancing the research on policy professionals in general and the understanding of professionalization of civil society in particular, showing how striving for influential positions, creating knowledge, influencing policy or promoting actual societal change is a generic feature of these types of professionals working in CSOs. The material does not allow for solid generalizations; nevertheless, most organizations employ a communicator, but not all have employed a person with an activist background. Following the conflicts, visible in the material, an increase of communicators' and lobbyists' influence can be detected.

The specialization and role distribution among the four groups driven by diverse role orientations described in this article may produce more efficiency for CSO policy teams; it may, however, also create problems. In relation to earlier research on professionalization and the tension created when interest organizations develop business-like strategies (Sanders and McClellan 2014; Kreutzer and Jäger 2011), this article emphasizes the tension between strategic decisions connected to role orientations that may have consequences for the democratic development, and for the CSO's potential contribution to civic engagement. The functional differentiation (Albareda 2020) and professionalization of civil society, understood as employing more experts (Salamon 1999), could perhaps enhance the organizations' advocacy performance, and it does not necessarily have to decrease members' involvement and internal democracy (Heylen et al. 2020). This article, however, points specifically toward the importance of the types of policy professionals taking office within CSOs.

The loyalty, trust and commitment to the cause found among policy activists functions as an anchor to the movement. Policy scholars' expertise is needed to provide the knowledge upon which these advocacy organizations work, and both policy lobbyists and policy communicators are needed to ensure that the organization is influencing both the public and policymakers. Nevertheless, the different role orientations develop and cultivate different interests and strategies, which runs the risk of hampering internal coherence of the organization. Too strong a separation between the role orientations could implicate problems in moving toward a common goal. This is the shape of policy professionalization of civil society. Professionalization up close is not merely about hiring someone to do the job of members, but whom the organization chooses to hire: a communicator, a lobbyist, an expert or an activist?

The specific types of commitment, motivation and background the policy professionals bring to the organization matter to understanding the development of CSOs, and more specifically the nexus of organizational strategy and internal democracy processes. The recruitment and the identity of employed experts are connected to the organization's strategy and policy interests by the preferred strategies and logics that the individual policy professional is invested in. And depending on the balance of these professionals' role orientations, civil societies' ability to partake in public policy deliberations stands at risk in tandem with matters of legitimacy.

The selection of cases, with a high level of organizational capacity, creates limitations for the generalizability of these findings. In smaller, less resourceful organizations the relevance of these role orientations is limited. Further research suggests studying to what extent an organization is functionally differentiated, which role orientations are more prominent within the organization and how this affects advocacy work. Also of value to study is the variation between small and large organizations and between different fields within which organizations are active.

Declarations

Conflict of interests The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Paper III

Policy professionals in civil society organizations: The myth of active members and organizational hypocrisy

Joanna Mellquist & Adrienne Sörbom

Abstract
Drawing on 24 interviews with policy professionals in 10 Swedish member-based civil society organizations (CSOs), and observations from policy teams in three of these organizations, this article investigates CSOs from the vantage point of their policy teams. In the interest of understanding how potential tensions between members and policy professionals are dealt with, the paper provides a theoretically based answer to the question of how organizations employing policy professionals relate to the members in whose name these professionals are working. The article builds on and contributes to literature on professionalization of civil society by conceptualizing both the types of conflicts pertaining to the work of policy professionals in CSOs and the ways of handling these conflicts. The core argument is that, ordinarily, professionalized CSOs working to influence public policy will respond to institutional demands for strong and direct influence of member interests by creating myths, decoupling, avoidance, maintaining face, and hypocrisy. Conceptually, the paper contributes by connecting the two literatures, of civil society professionalization and new institutional theory, to the burgeoning literature on policy professionals.

Keywords: Civil society, Member, Policy professionals, Myth, Decoupling, Organizational hypocrisy, Professionalization.

Introduction

Members and active membership have traditionally been a foundation for civil society organizations (CSOs), upon which they have built their legitimacy. At the same time, potential tensions between professionals and members constitute an issue for CSOs, dating back to the emergence of social movements and political parties (cf. Michels 1962; Weber 1994). The conflict is described in detail in Wilensky's classical study on intellectuals in labor unions (1956). More recent academic debates on professionalization in membership organizations also highlight possible tensions between members and staff and between organizations and their environment (e.g., Dodge 2010: Berkhout 2013). We see three main reasons for revisiting the conflict: the continuous loss of membership in many longstanding CSOs, the increased

complexity of politics, and a decline of corporatism in many Western countries, entailing shifting, and potentially decreasing, spaces in which CSOs may influence policy-making. Together these tendencies promote the employment of teams of policy professionals (Svallfors 2020) that specialize in advocacy and policy engagement. In turn, this professionalization may intensify tensions and conflicts within civil society, which motivates new scholarly attention into the longstanding matter of tension between staff and members in CSOs.

This article investigates CSOs from the vantage point of their policy teams, in the interest of understanding how potential tensions between members and policy professionals are dealt with on a daily basis, thus answering the question of how organizations employing policy professionals relate to the members in whose name these professionals are working. Policy professionals are employed to work specifically with policy and, in contrast to other staff, with advocacy and the crafting of policy directions of CSOs. They are decisive actors in the daily running of their employing organizations. Although the set-up of CSOs' governance may be complex, the idea that members decide and employees carry out the undertakings of the organization, is common and crucial for upholding democratic legitimacy as it has traditionally been understood. Therefore, their relation to members becomes a key factor in understanding the workings of democratic governance within contemporary civil society. Of specific significance is opening the black box of how well-established CSOs, through this group of professionals, handle the nexus of staff, members, the board, and annual meetings.

The article builds on and contributes to literature on professionalization of civil society by conceptualizing both the types of conflicts pertaining to the work of policy professionals in CSOs and the ways of handling these conflicts. Foremost, this contribution is built on new institutional theory, and the concepts of myth, decoupling, and organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson 1986; Meyer and Rowan 1977). The perspective is often used for studying professionalization (e.g., Meyer & Bromley 2013; Lilja 2014; Polat 2020), including within studies of civil society (e.g., Hwang & Powell 2009; Hvenmark 2013; Åberg 2015; Marberg, Korzilius, & Kranenburg 2019; Mason, Margerum & Ault 2021). The perspective renders an understanding of how organizations commonly respond to contradictory external and/or internal pressures (Schmitter & Streeck 1999; Berkhout 2013). Our core argument is that, ordinarily, professionalized CSOs working to influence public policy will respond to institutional demands for strong and direct influence of member interests by decoupling, avoidance, maintaining face (in the Goffman sense), and hypocrisy. Conceptually, the paper contributes by connecting the two literatures, of civil society professionalization and new institutional theory, to the burgeoning literature on policy professionals (Garsten, Rotstein, & Svallfors 2015; Svallfors 2020) – those employed to influence policy at think tanks, CSOs, governmental offices, parliaments, and PR firms (Heclo 1978; Walker 1981; Svallfors 2016; Selling & Svallfors 2019; Svallfors 2020; Tyllström 2021). In so doing, the paper aims at describing, conceptualizing, and explaining CSOs'

reactions to the potentially conflicting institutional pressures of member activism and professionalization.

In the paper we study a specific part of civil society in Sweden that has walked the path of increasing professionalization: large member-based organizations with many employees and a pronounced policy team. Empirically, the study includes, on the one hand, both meta-organizations (which have other organizations as members) and organizations with individual members, and on the other hand, organizations that serve their members, and those that pursue advocacy issues, for instance both trade unions and large advocacy organizations. The complex relationship to members that the paper traces appears in all organizations, irrespective of form and policy interests. They all express the need for having active members and keeping them close, while also having issues taking this into account in the day-to-day work of the policy units.

Two explanatory notes are due at this point. First, the article examines the notion of the members within the policy units, not the members' actual opinions about the relationship. We specifically focus on "members" as something policy professionals must actively relate to in their organizations. Second, we study member-based organizations using a common form of representative democracy as their governance system (Hvenmark & Einarsson 2021). In such a system, the annual meeting and the board (as elected by members) are meant to set general guidelines, while employed professionals are to operationalize these guidelines. The board (or other elected officials) do not take an active role in day-to-day activities, but the employed officials do. In this capacity, policy professionals distinguish themselves from other employees by two criteria: 'they are employed, on a partisan basis, in order to ultimately affect policy' (Svallfors 2020:3). Doing policy work on a partisan basis, entails working in accordance with one's ideological and political understandings, in contrast to other more neutral personnel. (see Svallfors 2020:35–55). Although this system is pronounced as an ideal, and electing representatives and having employees does not necessarily have to be a problem, practice (our empirical evidence) shows that with policy professionals it becomes complicated.

Choosing to base our analysis upon a sample from Sweden was based upon the concern of finding rich empirical examples of how the role policy professionals play in contemporary CSO (cf. Eisenhardt 1989). We suggest that CSOs in Sweden make up exemplary cases of the institutional demands and conflicts that professionalization may entail. This is because Swedish civil society has, during the last hundred years, been internationally noted for having an unusually strong emphasis on active membership and being oriented towards advocacy and interest representation rather than welfare service provision (Åberg, Einarsson, & Reuter 2019: 638). Drawing on 24 interviews with policy professionals in 10 Swedish member-based CSOs, together with observations from policy teams in three of these organizations, this article asks what working with policy in member-based organizations entails in terms of relating to, and handling, the nexus of staff, members, the board, and annual meetings? More specifically, we answer two sets of questions:

- How do policy professionals employed by CSOs to conduct policy-related activities relate to members?
- How can we conceptualize both the inconsistencies that policy professionals see arise in relation to members in CSOs, and attempts at handling them?

The paper proceeds with an overview of the literature on professionalization of civil society, and the conceptual understanding provided by new institutional theory regarding organizational handling of internal and external conflicts. We then present the empirical base for our argument and the subsequent analysis. The paper ends with a normative discussion of how relations between policy professionals and members of CSOs are dealt with.

Professionalization and membership in civil society

In scholarly discussions of the potential perils of bureaucratization of civil society, the nexus of member influence, oligarchization and professionalization has been frequently debated (e.g., Staggenborg 1988; Skocpol 2004; Hwang & Powel 2009; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner 2016; Diefenbach 2019; Hvenmark & Einarsson 2021). Following Weber's (1994) and Michels' (1962) understandings, it is noted that organizations, despite appearing as democratic on the outside, could often be oligarchic on the inside (Leach 2005). The process of professionalization occurs in organizations with specialized divisions of labor, where employed staff and management control communication and access to information, and where only few members actively participate (Binderkrantz 2009; Diefenbach 2019; Albareda 2020). Earlier research on the demand of efficacy and professionalization of CSOs in Scandinavia has also submitted that organizations tend to deal with these demands by leaning towards expertise outside the organizations, such as at think tanks, external consultants, and PR firms (Öberg & Svensson, 2012; Åberg, Einarsson, & Reuter 2019). Another way of dealing with conflicting demands within CSOs is the use of decoupling practices (Arvidson & Lyon 2013; Åberg 2013, 2015; Heras-Saizarbitoria 2014; Brandtner 2021), resulting in weaker alignment between talk and practice in the organizations.

However, recent evidence suggests that the reliance on paid staff affects member involvement negatively but could affect member influence positively (Bolleyer & Correa 2020:13–15; Heylen, Willems & Beyers 2020). In this line of research, it is shown that professionalization may lead to a decrease in active memberships but not necessarily to decrease in the role and influence of members. If relationships to members are treated right, professionalization could even facilitate the active involvement of members (Heylen, Willems & Beyers 2020). Staff-driven organizations serving the public, rather than members, are also noted to be more politicized and to engage more members than volunteer-based and member-serving organizations (Bolleyer 2021). These results highlight the need for nuanced research on paid staff

and on the ways in which they are potentially shaping organizational life within civil society (see also Sanders and McClellan 2014; Bolleyer & Correa 2020; Karlsen & Sagli 2017:1332). Additionally, previous research has not been able to show specifically how policy professionals influence civil society. Their contributions to the field are of specific importance as their presence forms essential to the professionalization of civil society, with potentially extensive consequences in matters pertaining to participation, representation and transparency.

Garsten, Rothstein, and Svallfors (2015) introduced the term policy professionals in the Swedish context by addressing the increasing professionalization of the Swedish political system at large, including, for instance, think tanks, government offices, and political parties. Policy professionals are, however, found in all types of organizations where policy is created. In CSOs policy professionals are recruited (and not elected) because of their skills in policy work. In their everyday practices these professionals handle potential tensions between the demand of professionalization on the one hand, and on the other, the need to include and relate to members. This group, hence, is now an actor of consequence within civil society (Mellquist 2022), as well as more broadly in the political field (Svallfors 2020).

As suggested by way of introduction, Swedish civil society is characterized by a popular mass movement tradition (folkörelsetradition), where affiliation to CSOs through membership has played , and still plays, an important role (Vogel, Amnå, Munch et al. 2003; Hvenmark, 2008; Einarsson 2012; von Essen 2019). Within the Swedish population approximately 75 percent has some form of membership affiliation with a CSO (SCB 2020). During the last decades, however, we have seen decreasing numbers of memberships (Selle, Strømsnes, Svedberg et al. 2018:53), and increasing professionalization and centralization, in Sweden and Scandinavia at large (Henriksen, Strømsnes, & Svedberg 2018:21). In combination with a de-corporatization of politics, these changes have forced civil society organizations to find new ways of influencing policymakers (Christiansen, Nørgaard, Rommetvedt et al. 2010; Öberg, Svensson, Christiansen et al. 2011; Öberg & Svensson 2012; Åberg, Einarsson & Reuter 2019; Svallfors, 2020). The strength of these processes taking shape in tandem indicates that Sweden is a context in which we can find expressions of how organizations relate to and shape answers to the potential challenges linked to such changes. As stated by Selle and colleagues: "Organizations 'without' members are of course something quite different from democratic organizations 'owned' by their members", as they "may have a more limited role when it comes to linking across geography and status, and for their role in social integration and democratic learning" (Selle, Strømsnes, Svedberg 2018:55).

Institutional theory and the logic and myth of membership

A considerable amount of literature has been published on organizational governance using institutional theory. These studies most typically highlight how organizations

are influenced by environmental factors such as available resources, opportunity structures, rules and other external pressures etc (see for example Hall 1986; Schmitter & Streeck 1999; Klemsdal & Wittusen 2021). Schmitter & Streeck (1999) has famously outlined two conflicting logics that organizations needs to deal with to ensure their organizational survival;

> (Organizations) must, on the one hand, structure themselves and act so as to offer sufficient incentives to their members to extract from them adequate resources to ensure their survival, if not growth. On the other hand, they must be organized in such a way as to offer sufficient incentives to enable them to gain access to and exercise adequate influence over public authorities (or conflicting class associations) and, hence to extract from this exchange adequate resources (recognition, toleration, concessions, subsides, etc.) enabling them to survive and to prosper. These two "logics" of exchange we label "the logic of membership" and the "logic of influence (Schmitter & Streeck, 1999:19)

The description of different logics, important for interest organizations in their interactions with members, political institutions and news media has been picked up by Berkhout (2013), who describes how the logic of support, logic of influence and the logic of reputation all become decisive for the organization's work (2013:233). Each logic entails specific constraints, in the form of external pressure, demands and resources for the organization, which all needs to be taken into consideration for understanding how and why an organization acts as it does. For this article the hassle that may arise between the logic of members and the logic of influence is studied by analyzing how policy professionals in Swedish CSOs describe their relations to the members employing them.

Making use of Meyer and Rowan's (1977) understanding of organizational myths, we analyze the logic of members and membership-driven decision-making within member-based CSOs as a type of organizational myth (e.g., Åberg 2015). Meyer and Rowan show how certain activities or ideas at the institutional level become myth-like, and something that both organizations and individuals need relating to. This would be the case even if there were some mismatch between the myth and what specific organizations actually do. Just as highly generalized myths regarding, for instance, professionals, contracts, and expertise are important for modern organizations in general (Meyer & Rowan 1977:347), and especially for corporations, we understand the history of mass movement organizations and member activism as powerful myths that modern member-based CSOs need relating to (e.g., Åberg 2015; Selle, Strømsnes, Svedberg et al. 2018:44). An example of rules in member based CSOs that they need relating to, which is activating the myth, is the democratic decision-making process pertaining to the congress of the members, annual meetings, the board, and members' meetings. Around these practices the myth potentially collides with another myth, having a different source of validity: that of efficiency. Whereas myths regarding, for instance, expertise and professionalism extract their legitimacy

from the idea of rational efficiency, the myth of member activism derives its legitimacy from the idea of civil society as fostering democracy, depending on connections between the organization and its members, encoded into rules. Hence, whereas the incorporation of the institutionalized myth of activism gives the organization legitimacy (e.g., Meyer & Rowan 1977:349), it may be conflicted by the myth of the rational expert, actualizing the goals of the organization without involvement of members when and if that seems the most efficient way to go about it. Accordingly, the ideals of activism and decision-making connected to member participation are institutional myths that CSOs adopt to avoid illegitimacy. Hence, efficiency in day-to-day work, for instance, around policy and advocacy, potentially conflicts with such institutional parables.

In this instance, the organization is threatened by losing confidence or good faith, internally and/or externally. In the interest of restoring confidence, we suggest that CSOs, just as many other organizations, make use of the practices of "decoupling," "avoidance," "overlooking," and "maintaining face" in order to maintain confidence for the organization (e.g., Heras-Saizarbitoria 2014; Brandtner 2021; García-Sánchez, Hussain, Khan, et al. 2021). These practices, as Meyer and Rowan put it, "ultimately reinforce confidence in the myths that rationalize the organization's existence" (Meyer & Rowan 1977:358).

Meyer and Rowan rely on Goffman for their argument, stressing how individuals or subgroups have their particular repertoires of legitimizing practices, useful for their social group. Goffman specifically describes the capacity of maintaining face as a type of social skill and diplomacy technique (Goffman 1967:13). For policy professionals, we submit, avoidance, decoupling, overlooking as core elements in the practices of maintaining face: keeping "off topics and away from activities that would lead to the expression of information that is inconsistent with the line he is maintaining" (Goffman, 1967:16). As we show in the empirical analysis below, in our cases this type of maintaining face, including avoiding relationships and situations, decoupling or overlooking them is found at both the individual and organizational levels.

Using the micro level techniques of maintaining face, the organization reinforces confidence in the organizational myth of member activism. However, the inconsistencies are not overcome. Rather, these practices further inconsistencies between language and actions. In so doing, the organizations construct what could be understood as organizational hypocrisy (Brunsson 1986), in the sense that organizations say one thing but do another. Hypocrisy has a negative ring and should be understood as a problem for organizations, but it is common in organizations and has the potential of overcoming crises and in that sense can be helpful (Glozer & Morsing 2020). While action acquires legitimacy through agreement between speeches, decision, and action, hypocrisy can acquire legitimacy through its ability to reflect and deflect conflicting norms and interests. Moreover, instead of only one group of stakeholders being satisfied through real action, several groups are simultaneously satisfied through hypocrisy (Brunsson 1986). This is because organizations are surrounded

not only by members or consumers but also by audiences (Brunsson 2007:115). Studying policy professionals' work in member-based organizations, we suggest organizational hypocrisy as a way of understanding how CSOs on a day-to-day basis handle, manage, and subdue organizational inconsistencies.

We use the above-outlined terms, to describe and theoretically explain how the logic of members and membership-driven decision-making within member-based CSOs becomes handled as a type of organizational myth. In so doing, the paper adds theoretically analyzed knowledge around the topic of professionalization of civil society and the issues this may entail in terms of member-driven governance.

Methodological considerations

For our argument we draw on 24 interviews with policy professionals in 10 Swedish member based CSOs. More specifically, we examine organizations that describe themselves as popular social movements (folkrörelser), meaning that the organization's identity is that of a movement with active members pushing the state and established political parties in the direction that the movement, for example, the members, decide. These civil society organizations are heavily dependent on membership, especially associations representing societal groups, such as trade unions or tenant associations working for and drawing their legitimacy from members (Einarsson 2011; Hvenmark & Einarsson 2021). For these CSOs, sometimes defined as "expressive" organizations, membership defines their power through bargaining and practices like strikes and demonstrations (Gordon & Babchuk 1959:25). For "instrumental" organizations, who not necessarily serve their members rather striving for goals beyond them, members are also important, but not so much as a rationale for the organization's existence. Instead, they tend to use members as a resource to stir public opinion (Gordon & Babchuk 1959:25). The organizations and informants studied here belong both to expressive organizations that work for their members' interests, such as trade unions and tenants' associations, and to instrumental member-based advocacy organizations, such as environmental and women organizations. Most policy professionals in this sample work with policy areas connected to matters of the environment, gender equality, and labor markets, and they all work specifically with the production of policy, either as researchers/investigators, policy advisers, and advocacy managers or Press- PR managers and communication officers

The organizations selected are examples of well-established CSOS in Sweden, the sample is intended to provide breadth regarding size, age, and advocacy area, rather than a representative sample of the population. All organizations have a pronounced policy unit, are well established and recognized both as partners in governmental processes and as important policy advocates by the public. In the shadowing part of the study (Czarniawska 2007), we closely followed three organizations; one blue collar trade union, one environmentalist organization and one organization advocating for gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights. At these organiza-

tions we shadowed individual policy professionals and policy teams gathering 80 hours of observations at internal policy workshops, management meetings, meetings with members, public events, and meetings with other CSOs.[1]

For the 24 interviews with individual policy professionals, Dexter's (2006) understanding of elite interviewing has been beneficial because of policy professionals' leading positions within their organizations. To obtain as much knowledge as possible from interviews, multi-interpretable questions have been used to provide more freedom for the interviewee to structure the interview (Dexter 2006) instead of just answering predetermined questions. The selection of organizations to shadow was made based on interviews with informants with whom a particularly good relation had been established, who were willing to accept researchers for participant observations.

The interviews and field notes were transcribed and coded using a technique of provisional coding from which we later built our conceptual typology (Layder 1998). The analytical process has been inspired by an abductive approach, going back and forth between theory and data, discussing findings and conceptualization in relation to theory throughout the research process (Meyer & Lunnay 2013). As a result of this process, three empirically based issues for the policy professionals were found and conceptualized in line with the overall framework of institutional myths. We propose an inventory or typology of mismatches, "gaps", between the logics of membership and the logic of influence (e.g., Berkhout 2013). We term these issues "gaps," because they are examples of chasms and disparities between the ideal of member rule and efficiency of policy work. The following table summarizes our conceptualization and theoretical understanding of these gaps between policy professionals and members concerning knowledge, strategic competence, and ideologies.

Table 1. Conceptualization of inconsistencies in member-based policy work

	Practical handling	**Conceptual understanding**	**Leading to**
1. Gaps in technical knowledge	Diffusion of knowledge	Maintaining face: avoidance, overlooking and decoupling	Organizational hypocrisy
2. Gaps in strategic work	Hacks and smartness		
3. Gaps in ideology	Identity and persuasion		

In the operations of CSOs, these gaps refer to situations that arise when the work of policy professionals' conflicts with what members of the organization expect or do. These gaps, then, are problems and tensions that appear and are handled in practical

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[1] The collection of empirical data and the NVivo processing were undertaken by Author 1. Author 2 participated in the interpretation and conceptual analysis. For ease of reading we write "we" when describing methodological processes.

policy work when policy professionals must deal with issues related to members activism or democratic decision-making. An example is the need to follow decisions of the annual meeting irrespective of not being considered by policy professionals as the best and most efficient strategy to get policymakers' attention and/or change policy. The handling of these issues is designed to conceal, or at least deflect, the not fully complying with norms or rules and/or not living up to the myth of activism, and entails formatting knowledge, hacking democratic procedures (outsmarting the norms), and tweaking the democratic process.

Gaps between ideals and practices in day-to-day policy work

When interviewing and following policy professionals in member-based CSOs, we found talk of members as invariably present. When asked, the policy professionals consistently would answer that members are crucial for the organization. Members were declared to constitute the organization, and as employees of the organization the policy professionals were proud of representing them. This would also be fronted in visual communication on the organizations' webpages, stating the central position of members and how the number of members is key to their policy work: "With almost a quarter of a million members … we have excellent opportunities to make a difference". (Content from trade union's web page)

Just as all webpages are decorated with such statements about the centrality of members, in observations we saw the practice of validating members. The standard phrase whenever a public meeting was opened would be "We have XX thousand members …" or "We are a member organization, organizing XX members; together we are stronger, and would be happy if you would join." Likewise, in interviews our informants described how, when talking to policymakers, it was common to emphasize the numbers of the organization's members:

> This is often the first question you get when meeting with policymakers, from a minister, for example: "How many members do you have now?" Then you give them the number and they say, "Oh my" and write this in their little notebook. It matters. (JCS-11)

Thus, members have a prominent role in the talk produced by these organizations, when talking both to policymakers and more broadly with the public. Members are also used in describing the organization's identity and image, and for gaining legitimacy in contrast to other organizations and business interests. This is how one informant described this distinction:

> Within business they don't work as we do; they are faster. It's bang, bang, bang. This is more of a slow organization, and what makes it slow is that movement democracy takes time and must be allowed to take time. There are pros and cons to that. The disadvantages are that you cannot be as fast in the public debate as

> those who do not have a social root system to consider. The advantage is that once you come up with something, it is quite well rooted, socially. (J-6)

Crucially, according to the ideals and norms that came forth in interviews and observations, policy development in the CSOs where these professionals are employed is to be undertaken by elected representatives or directly by the congress, entailing that policy goals and advocacy are developed in a slow working process where changes are made democratically, step by step. Moreover, it was underscored that it is important to follow, and respect, decisions made by the board or by members through the congress.

These declarations notwithstanding, in interviews and observations, it also became apparent that there are issues for following and implementing these ideals. As described in the earlier methodological section, we distinguished three types of issues between policy professionals and the organization's members, conceptualized as gaps in technical knowledge, strategic political knowledge, and ideology.

Gaps in technical knowledge

Generally, it was evident that the policy professionals interviewed meant that they wield substantial power when it comes to formulation of policy content within the organizations in which they are employed. One reason for this is related to knowledge differences. Compared to most members, policy professionals often have superior knowledge, education, and information about technical details regarding numerous policy issues. The differences in this type of knowledge shape a gap between policy professional expertise, on the one hand, and individual members and board members, on the other. The former are employed to bring knowledge into the organization, regarding both specific content and the most efficient way to influence policy-making, while the latter often do not have the competence to follow the technical difficulties of the issues or do not have time enough to follow the process.

In practice, this means that policy-related activities are shaped by the research department and those communicating this research, rather than by members and their representatives. As remarked by one of the informants, it is the policy unit that does the job:

> Although, as a rule, the board are formally the ones that come up with policy and decide on our annual plans, both in the short and long term. But in practice it is we at the office who do the job. We do the basics. Then the board will approve it, but we have huge influence on choosing priorities and choosing what material we present, so to speak. (JCS-11)

Even if the "general rule" and system are meant to work differently, staff working with policy on a daily basis are the ones who wield actual influence over the area of content; by their daily choices they are setting precedents for later decisions to be taken by the

representative bodies. In this way, the system implied by the myth of a member-driven organization is turned on its head. The professionals set the frames, and the democratic representatives acknowledge these.

Indeed, in our interviews, most individual members, but also board members, were seen as lacking knowledge of the practice of policy production. As expressed by one interviewee, members may turn to the organization, asking the staff to act on a specific matter, but that rarely leads to actual policy activities:

> However, they usually do not come up with that many suggestions, because they are not trained to think like that. And if they do come up with suggestions, it is often the case that they want to write about things that are relevant to the debate at the time or that were relevant a couple or three months ago. (JC-10)

This policy professional was aware of the knowledge advantage of the officials in relation to individual members and to the board or committees. He argued that policy professionals, or "officials," as he termed himself and his colleagues, should deal with this type of problem by giving the board some alternatives, not only suggesting policy directions. He described board members, and members at large, as not trained to think strategically. To still give them the actual power to decide, staff in the policy units should offer some alternatives to choose from. This line of thinking is interesting, because it speaks to experiences of policy professionals having a knowledge advantage, encountering a gap, and wanting to better the situation, in this case by being straightforward and acknowledging the situation.

To handle missing technical knowledge and educational gaps, policy professionals attempt to diffuse knowledge in various formats, to inform members about why the organization is taking specific stands. In our interviews and observations, we could see how, besides attending member meetings and lecturing, many policy professionals, would attempt to increase member knowledge around technical policy issues by communicating through, for instance, research blogs, short video lectures, or articles in organizational organs. In this respect, especially those policy professionals working with communication would become important players for bridging gaps between the organization's "experts" and its members. In this capacity, policy professionals with communication skills in practice become responsible for the organization's face work (Goffman 1967), attempting to keep members close. In practice, this type of face work becomes a crucial task. As described by a policy professional at a trade union, "Any distance from members is very costly and risky" (JCS-27).

Strategic gaps

In day-to-day events at the headquarters, ideals of democratic member-based decision-making intersect with the practices of contemporary policy professionals' work schedules and the fast-changing everyday political landscape. In this context, these employees draw upon their specific knowledge on political strategy, being sleek

and smart, but not necessarily aligning with the members' wishes. This is where a strategic gap arises, stemming from experiences of a professional reality where the production of politics is more complex than commonly recognized by members. What members want does not always align with what is strategic. Answering a question on consequences of doing political advocacy for a member organization, one informant gave the following example of having to work with a "politically dead" question:

> There is this annual general meeting resolution that says we should work to reduce nuclear power. However, the cross-party energy agreement has agreed that nuclear power will be phased out and that there will be 100 percent renewable energy. At this point, I do not believe that it's possible to work with this question. But the meeting decision says that we must work with it. We need to do something communicative, and publicly, to draw attention to nuclear power. For me, it's a dead question, but the meeting has decided, and I must follow. It just felt ... ahh …! (JCS-18)

In the above quote, the resolution that the congress asked the organization to work toward is, in the eyes of the policy professional, already dead. Following the decisions of the congress would only mean losing time, credibility, and influence. It would be unstrategic to follow up on the decision, as they are expected to. This policy professional was frustrated but had to act according to the decision taken. The quote is an indication that ideas from members, and the logic of members, are not only a myth but constraints that shape policy work and organizational life. The issue was still downplayed as a minor activity, which however caused frustration within the policy team.

In this gap of strategic knowledge, even individual members can be a source of frustration, if they intervene and become visible in unwanted situations:

> It can be quite difficult to involve members, even members who in many ways are very knowledgeable. It also happens that "happy amateurs" show up. Then it will be easier to paint us [negatively] as "a certain type of organization" compared to if you come well dressed, know your stuff, and develop a reasonable discussion. (JCS-28)

Members are presented by the policy professionals as resources, rendering legitimacy; however, they should not show up to policy discussions with actors outside the organization. That is the job of the policy professionals, who are well dressed, know their stuff, and develop strategically reasonable discussions. With visually active members the organization risks being "painted as a less professional organization," which the professional fears as a strategic mistake, putting the reputation of the organization at risk. Members are instead to be used cunningly, foremost as a number, or when the CSO needs "people in the streets." In these instances, they are seen as a resource. In others, they are avoided, as they risk tainting the organization.

The organizations studied here dealt with this type of gap, arising through differences in strategic knowledge and know-how, by using what we term organizational "hacks and smartness." This describes a situation when policy professionals circumvent the democratic process to affect policy issues the way they see best. Conceptually, we understand these activities in terms of decoupling the organization at the level of members from its policy unit, with the interest of maintaining legitimacy when conflicts arise between institutional norms and policy efficacy.

In practice, this would entail the policy unit avoiding, or attempting to compromise with members on, their demands. The above-mentioned case, with the annual general meeting decision to reduce nuclear power, was treated by the policy unit as an issue to avoid. In the interest of influencing policymaking, the intention was to not upset members but to preserve the organization's standing among other decision-makers by not going public on the matter.

Another example of hacking the democratic system regards a group of members at an environmental organization that opposed high-speed railways, because of potential losses of valuable biotopes. For the policy unit, however, this argument hampered strategic communication around climate-friendly and sustainable traveling. The head office and the policy unit needed to bargain with the group of members to establish solutions based on compromises – compromises so weak that they became useless in effective policy work but still functioned as to avoid the matter.

A third example of hacking the process using avoidance comes from an organization that we followed in which a group of active members pushed the agenda on reduction of working hours. The policy professionals handled the demand by suggesting to the congress that the matter be investigated, while knowing from the start what the results would show. This way, the report presented at the next congress showed members that the policy unit had taken the matter seriously. Indeed, at the congress, a few members were specifically asked to comment on the report. As anticipated, they agreed with the conclusion that it was not possible to pursue the matter at that time. The question was thus handled by the head office and policy unit in a discreet way, keeping the myths of members as active and decisive over the policy process, while avoiding having to change or adopt any new policy demands.

A contrary example of hacking the system describes a situation where the policy team drew on a group of progressive members to prompt a congress decision on equal parental leave, which the policy team was backing, although it knew that the majority of members would reject it. The strategy worked, and the policy unit together with the progressive group of members managed to convince the congress delegates. Yet, the policy unit did not want to make this known externally after the congress, as stated in an interview, "because we know that the members, they don't like it." Instead, for this matter the unit decided that it "must work internally and form an opinion for it" (JCS-32). This is a type of avoidance (Meyer & Rowan 1977:358) practiced when organizations could risk losing legitimacy by communicating how they actually work with a policy issue. It is important to maintain the image of a popular movement

where members push the policy agenda, as this policy professional described it, "Otherwise it would appear as if we were working against our members" (JCS-32).

Ideological gaps

The ideological gap appears when policy professionals and members do not share the same perspective or ideology regarding a certain policy. In general, policy professionals choose to work in organizations that align well with their own values (Selling & Svallfors, 2019). Still, there persistently exist some policy issues where members' and the policy professionals' opinions diverge. This more often occurs in organizations where professionals and members have different educational backgrounds.

Policy professionals were, in our interviews and observations, often aware of such gaps between themselves and members, because of the former having other perspectives on value-laden matters, due to differences in background. As the following policy professional described it, this fashions constant frustration:

> After all, professionals are recruited from other places. They may not even be members of the organization. That is how the distance increases. Yes, we are becoming more and more professional. We're somehow full of ourselves [laughs], or … I don't know. The more you must relate to the whole office with all its parts, the less you somehow have time to listen to the popular movement, perhaps.... There is a constant dissatisfaction among the members, that the distance increases and that there is a contempt for the headquarters. (JCS-11)

To handle the ideological gap, policy professionals use social skills and their identity to assert their legitimacy. This is, for instance, done by stressing one's own background within the broader movement. For policy professionals in blue-collar trade unions, that would be their roots in the working-class community; for others, a broader civil society/movement background. Some policy professionals described how they work with language, clothing, and identity to be accepted by members. "I need to struggle not to be too snobbish," as one informant put it. Others used the wording "talking to members in their own language." For those policy professionals who do have a background within the movement, it is easier to claim legitimacy among members, thus not running the same risk of appearing to pursue different values and ideologies.

Related to the gap caused by ideological differences, we found examples of members expressing more progressive ideas, demanding more radical policy solutions than the policy department accepted, but also of policy professionals dealing with ideologically complex matters, such as racism and homophobia among members. A typical example brought up by policy professionals at blue-collar trade unions were ideological inconsistencies between them and members who vote for right-wing populist parties:

> There is a certain tendency among us, for example, when we think they are not thinking correctly. The Sweden Democrats [right-wing populist political party] is a typical part of that. How can so many vote... They are against so very much of what a union stands for. (JCS-24)

Policy professionals at blue-collar trade unions, who often have obtained considerably more formal education, appear to struggle with ideological differences connected to cultural issues, more than ideological left and right matters. The matter is, however, also implied in many of the other organizations.

The most common strategy found in this complex question is avoidance as a way for preventing losing confidence as a member driven organization. For instance, at the individual level many of the informants avoid working with issues that do not align with their own preferences. At the organizational level, when policy units know that members are not fond of a policy issue, they tend not to campaign, speak, or organize around that issue. In other cases, policy units attempt to educate members, or work around the democratic procedure. This latter form of handling entails using techniques of persuasion and sometimes manipulation. As one informant described it, referring to decisions taken by the congress, the policy unit may have to augment the arguments of members, at the same time as this may require adding a new layer of understanding:

> Decisions are also made that you don't agree with. Sometimes you may want to help the delegates to argue in a better way than they do [laughs]. I can summarize the decisions better when we sit down afterwards, internally. Then I can say [to the unit]: "What they probably really meant was this...." But I cannot use arguments that the delegates wouldn't use. (J-9)

If policy professionals in general specialize in social skills (Svallfors 2020:22–26), policy professionals working with text and communications are real experts in what Goffman would describe as "phrasing with careful ambiguity," "employing courtesy," and "tactful overlooking" (Goffman 1967:17–18). Whereas investigators within policy units use more of the tactics of decoupling and avoiding, together they all work with restoring the organizations legitimacy both towards the public and towards members. Just as described by Wilensky, painting the picture of the internal communication specialists at trade unions, policy professionals adjust language and educate the members, and in this way "help tend the elaborate democratic machinery that gives the interested member a sense of participation and keeps the union leader from hating himself when the imperatives of actions and efficiency require departure from the democratic norm" (Wilensky 1956:83). In the same vein, policy professionals do the "dirty work," departing from the myth of member activism at the same time as they lend the democratic superiority to the organization's elected officials.

Discussion: organizational hypocrisy and active members as a myth

Returning to the concerns raised already by Weber and Michels on bureaucracy and the "iron law," stating that member-driven democracy and large effective organization are incompatible, we find no easy solution. It seems problematic to reconcile the movement aspect and policy advocacy efficiency within the same organization. For organizations' ability to influence public policy, specialized policy teams may be required, with the consequence of the concentration of much power in the hands of a few policy professionals. As we have shown here, policy professionals have access and control over information and facilities that are not available to board members or the rank and file. By design of the organization, the logic of membership and the logic of influence establish these gaps, and rank-and-file members become less informed than the organization's officials.

Internally, these gaps in knowledge, strategy, and ideology are handled by avoiding and decoupling from member influence when it is not beneficial, as ways of keeping with the myth of members, through the production of talk, brand, and images, explaining to the movement itself that its legitimacy comes from member-organized activities. Externally, they are dealt with by constantly referring to the number of members affiliated with the organization. This type of vocabulary is isomorphic to these organizations and is used to provide legitimate accounts (e.g., Meyer & Rowan 1977:349). In such instances, the organization relates to and builds on the myth about the significant role of the members. But as our results indicate, the professionals oftentimes handle the conflict with respect to members; it is truly an active myth. Therefore, we understand these gaps as productive instances. In these situations, needs and opportunities to act, manage, and overcome inconsistencies arise. The policy professionals are part of the problem, but they also take part in constructing solutions, when attempting to overcome the gaps. Hence, while being partly problematic, a gap also opens a window of opportunity to creatively manage the relationship with members. However, the solutions attempted oftentimes take the form of organizational hypocrisy; the organizations say one thing to members, but in their policy practices do another. The discrepancy creates a kind of satisfaction, because policy professionals can be effective, and members are honored as part of a democratic organization. As Brunsson puts it, "Hypocrisy is a response to a world in which values, ideas, or people are in conflict – a way in which individuals and organizations handle such conflicts in practice" (Brunsson 2007:113). In the same vein, using organizational hypocrisy in relation to the myth of the members' centrality helps the organizations to bridge these gaps. But the strategy may also become a liability. In the long term, tensions may increase, and the discrepancies become more difficult to cover for, which could put the organization's potential for policy influence and legitimacy at risk.

Conclusions

Returning to the question on how CSOs that employ policy professionals relate to their members, and what types of conflicts may arise in this process, we distinguish three types of conflicts, related to three types of differences between members and policy professionals: relative knowledge advantage, members' and board members' lack of strategic political knowledge, and inconsistencies in ideology between members and staff. The conflict between the logic of membership and the logic of influence, underlying these gaps, not only create tensions for the professionals but, as expressed by the professionals in this study, also dissatisfaction among members, along with contempt for the headquarters. We suggest that the organizational answer to the conflicting institutional pressures of member activism and professionalization is found to be organizational hypocrisy.

Building on debates around professionalization and the transformation of CSOs from member-driven associations to staff-driven organizations (e.g., Bosso 2003; Skocpol 2004; Hwang & Powell 2009; Saurugger 2012; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner 2016; Albareda 2020; Heylen, Willems & Beyers 2020), this article contributes to the discussion by analyzing the rise of policy professionals and how they handle institutional pressure relating to gaps between the logic of influence and the logic of members. The gaps are dealt with through organizational hypocrisy. While primarily nuancing the debate on staff-driven CSOs, the article also raises questions of how these organizations gain and maintain legitimacy and internal democracy related to members, board members, and the chairperson. On the one hand, we see the board and the chair as part of the elected member organization to which the policy professionals must relate and whose decision they must follow. On the other hand, the role of the chair and the board often becomes one of explaining to individual members why the organization must align with the perspective of policy professionals. That is to say, when policy professionals become the actual decision-makers, the role of elected representatives becomes to legitimize these decisions.

This article does not answer the question of whether professionalization may lead to a decrease in active memberships or influence of members (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020:13–15; Diefenbach 2019; Heylen, Willems & Beyers 2020). Rather, we can see that policy professionals through their investment in the myth of active membership reinforce an image of the central role of members in CSOs. As demonstrated in the analysis, members are not only a myth they also create actual constraints which foster policy professionals to handle their presence by organizational hypocrisy. The tensions between professionals and members are, thus, not solved but handled. The rise of policy professionals' influence in CSOs could, however, be understood as a part of and a reaction to the general process of professionalization of politics. Because lobbying and policy influencing have become a central part of Western democracy (e.g., Eyal 2019; Wood 2019), civil society needs to employ a core of professionals who can function as a counterforce against corporate and conservative lobbying.

Either way – good or bad – these actors are part of a policy professionalization of civil society. From a member's perspective, it could be preferable to have these policy professionals working in-house, partly controlled by the institutional rules and the myth of member centrality, rather than contracting policy professionals from consultancy firms, who might be more disconnected from the ideals of membership. Yet, this professionalization and the use of organizational hypocrisy risk furthering a civil society sphere where experts produce the goals for the organizations, rather than representing the group that they are meant to speak and work for. In turn, this may risk CSOs standing as actors for social integration and democratic learning (Selle, Strømsnes, Svedberg 2018).

The current study was based on the Swedish case, which creates certain limitations on the findings and the ability to generalize to other voluntary sectors. Still, the studied case, with its social-democratic voluntary sector where members have a strong position among CSOs, has allowed us to develop this model for how policy professionals deal with the myth of active membership. Had we chosen a country where membership is less developed, we would not have gained the possibility to shed light on this issue. The practices we point to can undoubtedly be found in other contexts but may appear in slightly different combinations. Further research would benefit from more in-depth analysis of intra-organizational relationships between different types of organizations and national cross comparisons.

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Paper IV

Do communicators take over? Mediatization and conflicts in civil society organizations

Joanna Mellquist

Abstract
The article investigates internal strategies and struggles in CSOs' policy advocacy work from the vantage point of policy professionals by using the concepts of field, symbolic capital, and logics. A main claim is that mediatization acts as a strategic-tension mechanism within CSOs, putting communicators at the center of policy units, which in turn is consequential for the strategies chosen for the organization's policy work. In this way, mediatization as a process celebrates certain professionals and strategies as particularly relevant, creating frustration among employees not specializing in communication. The paper identifies a trend for organizations to put more resources and influence into communication and less into actual policy analysis. This article combines research on organizational logics, policy professionals, and mediatization by drawing on 38 interviews with, and ethnographic work among, policy professionals in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands.

Keywords: civil society, policy professionals, mediatization, logics, field

Introduction

Shifts in civil society connected to professionalization and mediatization have prompted debate on strategies in civil society organizations (CSOs) about how strategies change when organizations become professionalized and organizations' staff take over their direction (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Grafström 2021; Grafström et al. 2015; Heylen et al. 2020; Hwang and Powell 2009; Maier et al. 2016; Salamon 1999; Sanders 2012; Sanders and McClellan 2014; Skocpol 2003; Stride and Lee 2007). The increasing mediatization of politics has created a situation in which interest groups have had to put more effort into their work to influence the public discourse (Grafström 2021; Grafström et al. 2015). This process has seen more organizations adapting to media logic to meet their goals (Esser and Strömbäck 2014; Ihlen et al. 2021; Shanahan et al. 2011). Studies have suggested that interest groups access media and policymakers through various media efforts, and that their success is related to employing staff for this work (e.g., Binderkrantz 2005; Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Grafström et al. 2015; Staggenborg 1988; Vesa and Binderkrantz 2021). Regarding this kind of policy work, much research has focused on CSOs' choice of strategy (e.g., Beyers 2004; Binderkrantz 2005; Trapp and Laursen 2017), but less is known about

the professionals making these strategic decisions. This article builds our knowledge of expert personnel in high-ranking positions (cf. Mechanic 1962) in professionalized CSOs, so-called policy professionals (Svallfors 2020), working on policy-related knowledge production, media, communication, and strategy. The study focuses on organizations that form part of a longstanding social movement advocacy tradition relating to, for instance, environmental, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and labor market issues. More specifically, to analyze the dynamics of mediatization in these CSOs, the article targets policy teams having the specific task of developing the organizations' political skills, policy content, and communication. In this capacity, the group is of specific significance for the organizations' political advocacy efforts (Garsten et al. 2015; Selling and Svallfors 2019) and is thus of pressing interest. Though changes in organizational power dynamics pertaining to hired personnel have been debated since the classic article of David Mechanic (1962), research on policy professionals', particularly communicators', role in CSOs is still scarce.

From earlier research we know that policy teams comprise a range of competencies based on various educational paths, types of capital, and motivations for entering the labor market of policy professionals (Mellquist 2022a; Selling and Svallfors 2019; Svallfors 2020). We also know that organizations relate to and are affected by external processes (e.g., Arvidson et al. 2018; Berkhout 2013; Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; Hwang and Powell 2009; Sanders and McClellan 2014; Schmitter and Streeck 1999). This article focuses on the composite group of policy professionals, and how it is affected by and relates to processes of mediatization by which these professionals adapt to media logics to meet their goals. A main claim is that mediatization puts communicators at the center of policy units, in turn influencing the strategic choices of the CSO and frustrating those professionals not specializing in communication. Bourdieu's concepts of the field and symbolic capital, together with the concept of organizational logics (Berkhout 2013; Schmitter and Streeck 1999), are used to describe and explain the struggles within policy units, and the ensuing consequences for power relations within the group.

To this end, the article draws on and combines research on policy professionals, civil society, organizational logics, and mediatization by analyzing strategies among policy units in CSOs. The analysis is based on 38 interviews with, and ethnographic work following, policy professionals in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands. The focus is on large professionalized CSOs and not on the broad civil society sphere. The article examines how the increasing mediatization of politics affects CSOs' policy work, raising two specific questions:

- How does increased mediatization affect strategic decision making within CSOs?
- How does increased mediatization affect conflicts in CSOs' strategic work?

The paper is divided into four parts. First, earlier research on CSOs' advocacy strategies is discussed. The second part addresses the theoretical conceptualization of the paper, focusing on field theory, organizational logics, and mediatization. The third section describes the methodology used in this study, and the fourth section presents the findings.

Earlier research on CSOs' advocacy strategies

Several studies have analyzed how social movements and CSOs work to change public discourse and policy outcomes, demonstrating how CSOs attempt to shape long-term policy agendas (e.g., Carpenter 2021; Woodly 2015). As shown, an important part of this work is carried out by policy teams working on policy research and communication within CSOs, leading to the conclusion that most political interest groups use both access and voice strategies, which are hard to separate (e.g., Beyers 2004; Binderkrantz 2005; Trapp and Laursen 2017). Access strategies have been understood as dependent on reliable expert information, defined as content generated by professionals using scientific and technical methods (Lundin and Öberg 2014; Weible 2008:615). However, voice strategies, connected to raising public awareness, could involve expert knowledge, information politics such as press conferences, and more disruptive tactics such as protest politics (Beyers 2004). Framing strategies can also be part of both voice and access strategies when expert information is loaded with value—in arguments or when potential support or opposition has been taken into consideration (Beyers 2004:215).

The choice of policy strategies is often explained in relation to institutional context and on whose behalf political mobilization takes place, in relation to "the institution on which they are putting pressure" (Beyers 2004:2035) or to particular policy goals (Beyers 2004; Binderkrantz and Krøyer 2012). Furthermore, a CSO's choice of strategy is a result not only of internal organizational factors, such as type of organization, resources, and capacity, but also of the particular policy field, political opportunity structures and culture (Albareda 2020; Arvidson et al. 2018), and the local political environment (Lundin and Öberg 2014).

The idea of "strategic political communication" has come to play an important role in policy professional work, referring to an organization's management of information and communication to realize policy goals (Falasca and Grandien 2017; Strömbäck and Kiousis 2014). The concept emerged in relation to practices within political parties but has since traveled (Czarniawska and Joerges 2011) to other organizational spheres such as CSOs, where it has gained legitimacy (Brady et al. 2015). Strategic communication and media work are today used by most types of interest groups to get "their" issues on the public agenda (e.g., Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Dür and Mateo 2013; Jacobs and Glass 2002). Media work should be seen as a key part of long-term, well-planned lobbying strategies rather than as a supplement to them (Mykkänen and Ikonen 2019). In this regard, when combined with other

strategies, media work has three important functions: to motivate policymakers to address the chosen policy issue, to manage the ongoing lobbying process, and to strengthen relationships with policymakers (Trapp and Laursen 2017). In practice, media strategies are many and diverse, involving, for example, monitoring, pitching, persuasion, press briefings, access, and transmission of expert information (Mykkänen and Ikonen 2019:45). To summarize, earlier research indicates that CSOs see a need to develop strategies such as strategic communication and various other specialized strategies, and that the use of such strategies is connected to institutional contexts, size of staff, financial resources, and organizational identity and culture.

Field theory, organizational logics, and mediatization

There is a growing body of literature regarding civil society that draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the field (e.g., Barman 2016; Galli 2016; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Johansson et al. 2021; Uhlin and Arvidson 2022; Wagner 2013). In this line of research, attention has commonly been on what are termed the "leaders" and "elites" of civil society (Johansson and Uhlin 2020), without specifically examining policy professionals, i.e., those employed by CSOs for strategic work. To the extent that they have been recognized at all, they have been seen as just one type of elite agent among others. Here, policy professionals are understood as professionals inhabiting a particular field, working with policy advocacy in civil society, a field with specific rules, expectations, and resources (Svallfors 2020:4; see also Heclo 1978). The term "policy professional" could be seen as an umbrella term, and in closely related research fields these actors could be conceptualized as public affairs practitioners (Falasca and Helgesson 2021; Tyllström 2013), policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 1984), spin doctors (Quinn 2012), hacks and wonks (Medvetz 2012), or policy brokers (Knaggård 2015). In this article, I scrutinize a specific part of the struggles inside this varied group of employees, with reference to strategic tensions found in CSOs between policy professionals working as "policy experts" and as "communication experts" (cf. Moens 2021; Mellquist 2022b).

Bourdieu defines "the field" as a system of relationships and positions in which players within the field struggle over power and influence (Barman 2016; Bourdieu 1996). For this article, I use the field concept to analytically describe the subfield of policy professionals in civil society, where they compete for consequential positions. Although policy professionals, when asked, would rather identify with the empirical policy matters they are working on, rather than positioning themselves in a generic field of expertise, this study uses the field perspective because policy professionals share very similar goals and methods of working with policy advocacy (Mellquist 2022a; Svallfors 2020). As part of this subfield, these professionals will move and fight for positions, attempting to uphold the image of being of consequence within the subfield. What happens internally within the organizations that the professionals move between, such as greater value being placed on media and communication, will

therefore be reflected in the subfield. What the field approach specifically facilitates is the analysis of what forms of capital contenders within the field regard as important in order to do this work well.

In the analysis of the power struggle within a field, Bourdieu drew attention to social, cultural, and symbolic forms of capital. Cultural capital refers to academic knowledge, expertise, and technical skills important to the field (Bourdieu 1985). Social capital refers to relationships and to members of "a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:95). Symbolic capital is the capital a person is recognized for in the field (Bourdieu 1996), providing players with recognition, status, power, legitimacy, and influence. The forms of capital that will be the most valued in a field differ, depending on the context. Therefore, the political, civil society, and cultural fields will all have different types of symbolic capital that are important in them (Wagner 2013).

In this paper, I draw primarily on the concept of symbolic capital to understand the assets and characteristics that mediatization implies for the field of policy advocacy. The production of civic, social, and organizational capital in civil society has been widely discussed (Putnam 1995; Swain 2003; Skocpol 2003; Mellquist 2022a). In short, the field has been characterized by the dominance of, and struggle over, social and symbolic capital related to civil society and organizational skills. However, because of the increasing importance of the media logics that mediatization fundamentally entails, I argue that this type of capital is challenged by a stronger emphasis on communication and strategic skills.

The argument is based on the concepts of Schmitter and Streeck (1999), who described how the "logic of influence" and "logic of membership" could sometimes conflict within an organization. Later, Berkhout (2013) added the logic of reputation, specifically addressing media influence on organizational behavior. While the first logic refers to the organization's relationships and constraints regarding its external environment, affecting its access to lobbying venues and policymakers, the second logic refers to the organization's constituent members (Bunea 2019) and entails constraints in relation to upholding democratic principles and representing members in formal decision making. With the third "logic of reputation," focus is on how organizations structure themselves to attain a media presence. CSOs need media validation both for their political issues and "to continuously reaffirm their validity as relevant actors" (Berkhout 2013:241). A growing literature on mediatization and its role in policy advocacy processes describes how increasing mediatization forces political players to adapt to media logic (Cook 2005; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; Strömbäck and Esser 2009).

In this article, "mediatization" serves as a key concept in the analysis of the field, being regarded as a "sensitizing concept" in the study of the media's transformation and integration of society (Couldry and Hepp 2013; Esser and Strömbäck 2014; Hug and Leschke 2021). I follow Couldry and Hepp (2013), who understand mediatization

"as a way of capturing the wider consequences of media's embedding in everyday life" (p. 195). What is interesting about mediatization, in the case of CSOs, is not necessarily the "increasing media power" but rather how a media logic has entered civil society as an important discourse. Mediatization is, then, understood as the processes by which organizations not only adapt to this particular logic but also internalize standards for routines, methods, media values, newsworthiness, and news presentation (Grafström 2021; Grafström et al. 2015:228). Hence, a media logic comes to influence organizations' internal decisions and actions (Grafström et al. 2015; Strömbäck 2008). As politics has become increasingly mediatized, CSOs, like other organizations, have seen it as necessary to expand their media efforts to gain media presence (Esser and Matthes 2013; Mykkänen and Ikonen 2019). The mediatization of politics has in some ways given interest groups more and new opportunities to influence politics and raise public awareness through lobbying and campaign strategies (Esser and Matthes 2013). A further effect of an increasing mediatization on organizations is that, to stay influential, they must devote more time and resources to the task of news management (Esser and Matthes 2013:186).

For professionals working with policy, the mediatization of politics entails fast reactions and skills in framing and packaging political content in order to gain media attention and compete in the "policy market." In this environment, CSOs face different media environments and venues, ranging from social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, to TV news, podcasts, etc. These platforms demand various media responses and skills from the organization and its professionals. This paper does not analyze relations to particular media forms and platforms, but rather directs attention to the role that strategic media and communication plays within policy units, and how this role has implications for the organization in general. Furthermore, the increasing mediatization has been said to affect civil society strategies in terms of the importance of controlling both media attention and the stories created in the media to maintain legitimacy (Grafström et al. 2015). In this article, mediatization is accordingly understood as a mechanism that creates new demands, such as controlling and creating media content, operating and being present in multiple media platforms, working more with strategic communication, and branding the organization. Using Strömbäck and Esser's (2009) understanding of media interventionism as "professionally motivated behavior by journalists to increase their influence, authority and prestige—and, ultimately, their control over the news content" (p. 217), the present analysis empirically links this process and behavior to that of policy professionals working with communication, attempting to influence public policy through media and communication.

The empirical analysis of this paper is centered on policy professionals' understanding of how to gain influence over internal and public policymaking. The analysis further examines how mediatization establishes a basis for certain strategic choices rather than others, considering how this affects the value of symbolic capital and sharpens tensions in the field. The focus on logics serves to highlight how CSOs'

strategic work is developed in relation to and partly constrained by these logics, how strategic work affects conflicts connected to these logics, and what policy professionals are central to these strategic choices.

Methodology

The article is based on 38 interviews with policy professionals working at 22 organizations in civil society in Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands. Additionally, shadowing was undertaken at three of these organizations (in Sweden), following multiple employees in their day-to-day work.

The main story is that of professionalized CSOs in Sweden. The empirical examples, including policy professionals from CSOs in Latvia and the Netherlands, were chosen strategically to help us understand the situation in Sweden rather than compare civil society cultures (e.g., Katzenstein 2003; Svallfors 2020). Swedish civil society is characterized by strong CSOs bearing the legacy of a popular mass movement tradition (Svallfors 2020:7; von Essen 2019). Swedish CSOs, especially trade unions, have a long tradition of employing policy professionals and researchers in their organizations (Hellberg 1997; Svallfors 2020). Compared with Sweden, the field of policy professionals in Latvia is significantly smaller, and most Latvian CSOs struggle with funding, meaning that they hire professionals on a project basis (Interview with representatives of Civic Alliance Latvia, 2018), rather than in permanent policy teams. Latvian civil society is largely made up of small CSOs characterized by fewer active members; these organizations are run by strong leaders and are seen as rather professionalized (Howard 2003; Huber 2011; Lindén 2008; Uhlin 2010:844). In contrast to the Latvian situation, many Dutch CSOs have well-developed policy teams, often with policy professional staff primarily dedicated to policy work. The relationship between governmental institutions and civil society is well developed, and as in Sweden, Dutch CSOs are expected by policymakers to lobby and advocate for social change (Government of the Netherlands 2014; van Wessel et al. 2020). An important difference in the Dutch, versus the Swedish, case is that trade unions' neutral research centers are co-owned with employer federations and, as such, are geared toward more neutral research, advice, and statistics, rather than the politicized policy professionalism found in Sweden (Svallfors 2020:9).

The interviews were conducted with policy professionals working at advocacy-based CSOs addressing environmental, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and trade union policy issues. In the interviews, the policy professionals were all asked about their special skills, and in what capacities they saw themselves as valuable to their organizations; they were also asked to give examples of how they had been involved in and changed a policy issue. Furthermore, they were asked about "allies" and "enemies" in policy work. Interestingly, conflicts within organizations and between policy professionals surfaced as a theme, mentioned by the policy professionals themselves. In the initial interviews, this theme would be raised in reaction to

earlier research on policy professionals (outside CSOs) that some of the professionals had read, in which the rise of this group was described as entailing legitimacy issues (see Garsten et al. 2015). The interviewees wanted to counter this image, stating that, as experts in CSOs, they did not represent illegitimacy issues—although they would add that communicators do. There were no indications in the interviews that these contestations were caused by other internal relations; rather, the increasing value placed on media and communication was spoken of as the main change within the organizations.

The empirical analysis centers on two conceptual roles based on the interviewees, as well as specific work tasks, education, previous careers, background, and motivations, as described in the table below.

Table 1. Conceptual roles of policy professionals in CSOs.

Conceptual roles of policy professionals	**Typical titles at organizations**	**Education**	**Skills**
Policy experts	Investigator Policy officer Policy adviser	Economics, political science, sociology, and law; often PhD holders	Expert knowledge of the policy issue in which they specialize Generic writing skills and knowledge of statistical methods
Communication experts	Communicator Press officer PR manager	Communication, political science, and media	Communicating politics, media management, strategic communication, framing, and agenda setting

These roles are described as "policy experts" and "communication experts" and should be understood as ideal types, whose work in practice sometimes overlaps. Generally, policy experts have higher education, often in the social sciences, than do policy communicators, who are often educated in media and communication coupled with political science. The policy expert works more on research and creating expert information, for example, responding to government commissions and participating in panels and reference groups, whereas the communication expert works more on the CSO's strategic communication, its voice and advocacy strategies, managing media and social media. The organizational structures varied between organizations. Still, most organizations differentiated between internal and external communication, with the latter specifically being strategic communication targeting policy advocacy. A typical but anonymized organizational chart of one of the studied CSOs shows communicators' central position within the organization.

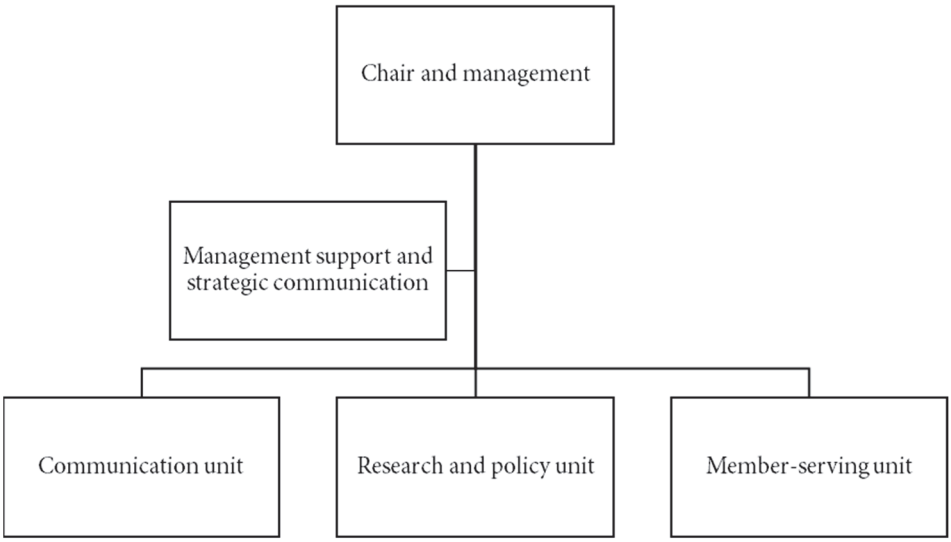

Figure 1. Anonymized organizational chart of policy departments.

In this organization, the management-support unit ensures the organization's central media and opinion-building work, encompassing a speech writer, assistant to the chair, and operational management support. The management support unit focuses on the press, policy advocacy, and external communication. The work related to communication with members occurs in the communication unit, which works side by side with the research and policy unit, a structure often copied from political party organizations (Esser and Matthes 2013:189).

Besides interviewing, the shadowing (Czarniawska 2007) part of the study entailed 80 hours of observation in Sweden. The aim was to examine policy professionals' relationships with one another and with elected representatives in their organizations, so that we would not rely solely on their own statements about these matters (e.g., Jerolmack and Khan 2014). During the shadowing, I focused on how the policy professionals participated in meetings, policy workshops, and seminars with other actors, and how their strategies were displayed and received. In the following analysis, I draw on both types of data.

All interviews and field notes were transcribed and coded in NVivo. For both the interview and observation transcripts, this process showed that conflicts among policy professionals over "how-to strategies" in relation to policy work were quite common. These were conflicts between policy professionals over how to approach policymakers, create campaigns, decide on policy topics and strategies, and, ultimately, how to gain influence. One especially salient aspect of these tensions was identified: in-depth knowledge versus framing. In the analysis, this analysis is connected to the increasing importance of communication as well as the process of the mediatization of the sector.

The enhanced position of communicators

Shadowing groups of policy professionals at work provided insight into CSOs' strategic work and the central position of communicators. When observing a policy workshop at a large environmental CSO, the central, but contested, position of communicators surprised me. At this workshop, two policy experts from the research department, one expert from the communication department, and the press manager were to determine the organization's strategy for exerting political influence regarding a specific matter in a two-hour meeting.

In this meeting, the press manager who had called this meeting was eager to start the workshop, proposing to first review the CSO's overarching goals, and then follow the workshop structure. This manager was soon interrupted when one of the policy experts asked, "Now we have decided to have a campaign, but is there any report we can release at the same time? I mean, it would be good if we released something more substantial at the same time." The press manager answered by saying, "I understand your question. You wonder if there is a report and more work to bring to the theme? But after all, we have had a communications campaign for a whole month on this theme. Indicating that that should be enough for this policy issue." Ending the discussion, the press manager turned towards the whiteboard and started working on the goals, saying "What can a political goal be? Let's brainstorm!" The press manager immediately started expressing her own ideas.

After two intense working hours, the policy professional from the communication department was summarizing the activity plan when one of the policy experts voiced a concern. She was dissatisfied with the fact that the campaign would be held in June, saying "it would be better if the campaign were in April, when everyone starts to leave their homes again" because of approaching spring. Here, the press manager intervened, stating that the media and campaign schedule was too crowded at that time, declaring more decisively: "Eva, I think you should be happy! You got a full month's campaign for your policy issue. So you should probably be happy with that." Then she continued in a friendlier tone: "A memo, a paper about the theme would still be good to have." The expert seemed to accept this answer and asked how the paper should be formulated: "Can I make it like a fact sheet?" To this the press manager declared, "I think it rather should include what we have talked about now—why it's important, how it works, and what we suggest. We could make a policy paper, two pages maximum! Then Hanna [i.e., the communicator] and I can help rearrange it, so it is understandable for politicians."

The unfolding of the workshop was startling. By the end of the meeting the two policy experts' call to write a report was neglected, and the press manager got her proposal through. The press manager started by introducing her proposal as a question, but as the workshop proceeded, she held on to her suggestion, which was eventually accepted. The policy experts surrendered to the press manager and the communicator, who were the ones driving the workshop forward. This workshop

showed how policy officers with in-depth knowledge of specific policy issues can have a hard time asserting the importance of their capital in strategic discussions. In these instances, capital related to strategy and media trumps other types of expertise.

From fieldwork such as this, it can be noted that PR managers, communicators, and press officers have important roles in determining the policy directions of organizations. In the case described above, it is notable how the logic of reputation constrains the CSO through the workings of communication personnel. Based on both experience and recognition, the press manager came to be recognized for holding symbolic capital, which trumped the policy experts' capital in the form of education and technical expertise. Seen in the light of competition within the field of policy professionals, we can understand why the former might outweigh the latter form of capital: being someone who knows the policy game is to be a strong player in terms of capital recognized by others in the field.

This central position of the communicator was confirmed in many of the interviews. One interviewee described his central position in policy work as follows:

> I see the media as a tool for achieving business goals and political goals, not as an end in itself. Therefore, I as PR and press manager should permeate the entire organization. In that capacity, I supervise a group of people—political analysts, project managers, press communicators. (JCS-18, Swedish environmental CSO)

This press manager described how media management should permeate the organization's entire policy work. In this capacity, he used his capital, connected to the media, which enhanced his position and entailed supervising a large group of other policy professionals. Likewise, in the policy workshop described above, the press manager and communicator not only had central positions in deciding on and formulating policy advocacy strategies, but also had the last word on how to frame the organization's standpoint, demonstrated, for instance, by their communication capital giving them the final say in how the fact sheet should be formulated.

In teams working on communication and management support, we find vast numbers of communicators, press secretaries, and brand builders, all working at the core of the organizations, with close relationships to the chairs and CEOs. One interviewee, a top-level manager working closely with the elected president of a trade union, described her function as head of one of these units:

> I was a brand strategist, and then I was asked if I wanted to be involved in building this staff function … We are a support unit for the operational management, but with a focus on press and policy advocacy. (JCS-27, Swedish trade union)

At this organization, and many others, the policy professionals working closest to management were those with the most capital related to media and communication. For instance, every morning, the support unit would prepare a news summary for the chair, management, and policy unit, heavily influencing the agenda for the day or

days to come. In their daily activities, the communicators were those working closest to, and exerting the most influence over, management, the chair, and, by extension, the policy development of the CSO. In this case, the head of this support function was a brand strategist working to enhance outside knowledge of the organization's policy advocacy profile. As is also clear from the interviews, the increasing focus on the media means that organizations have organized their work to meet what are described as new demands for "media presence," which includes both media monitoring and creating content for multiple media and social platforms. At the workplace, this entails policy experts having to work on communication, creating blog content, recording podcasts, writing articles, and so on.

Some informants silently resisted this development by ignoring demands for media presence, arguing that they had to safeguard their schedules to ensure time for complex analysis:

> They asked us to blog and be active on Twitter and everything like that, but I never did. I always felt that the important thing was to have a solid foundation for your policy suggestions. (J-14, Swedish trade union).

However, most policy professionals stressed the importance of working with the media and communication in policy work. One interviewee described her most important assets as follows:

> Being creative, being able to spot opportunity, when you can link your issue to an issue that's already attracting attention. A lot of it is also building relationships.
> Interviewer: What are your most important resources, then?
> The media! (JCS-42, Dutch CSO)

This policy professional working at a Dutch CSO, who was hired primarily to work on direct lobbying, described the media as one of her most important resources. A professional at an environmental organization described a power shift between the different units of the organization:

> I think that … five years ago it was the research department that was the organization, and the communication department was a kind of service unit. At that time, if something needed to be written on the web, a press release would be sent out and so on. Now much more is driven by communication [professionals]. Communication has become much more important. (JCS-20, Swedish environmental CSO)

This policy professional stressed that the increasing importance of communication has changed the entire dynamic at the CSO. In statements such as the above, policy professionals described a change in the importance of strategic communication as particularly significant. Generally, no references were made to other internal conflicts or changes; rather, what was described was how the CSO communication department

is no longer understood as a service unit, but as one of the organizational power centers where policy is formulated. Arguably, the increasing importance of communication described here mirrors a similar structural change within European party organizations (Esser and Matthes 2013:189), where communication is no longer viewed as a mere "add-on" to policymaking but has become the center of policy work at the organization. In the case of Latvia, with smaller CSOs, both staff and leaders had to develop this kind of communication skill, whereas in the Dutch and Swedish cases, most CSOs had specific units working to advance the organizations' media efforts.

Conflicts over framing versus in-depth knowledge production

In line with earlier research (e.g., Berkhout 2013; Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Dür and Mateo 2013; Jacobs and Glass 2002), media work emerged as a strategy highly valuable to all policy professionals interviewed for this project, to get "their" issues on the policy agenda. Still, it is possible to trace conflicts regarding the mediatization of politics because it has changed the roles of professionals working on policy, placing communicators at the center of policy teams and CSOs in general. In some interviews, this power shift caused resentment:

> Communication has been given too much space in general, not just in politics. They may have had a little too much influence over what issues should be pursued and how they should be pursued. (J-15, Swedish CSO)

A common feature of the three countries studied here is that the larger the organization, the larger the policy unit, and thus the more pronounced the division of labor (e.g., Albareda 2020). In the Latvian case, policy professionals often had work tasks beyond simply working with policy. In the Swedish and Dutch cases, larger CSOs had more resources to fund external consultancies for their advocacy work (e.g., Åberg et al. 2019; Öberg and Svensson 2012). The professionalization of civil society, understood as employing more experts (Salamon 1999), in these contexts obviously affects the division of labor and the degree of tension between professionals, with a clear tension within the political and policy-professional CSO field regarding in-depth knowledge production versus framed, communicable messages. This conflict was expressed in all three national contexts, and although it had intensified due to mediatization, the tension seemed to have longstanding precedents. One Dutch policy professional commented as follows:

> Sometimes we see text on the website that … from what we can see is not correct. It's not in compliance with legislation, it's not in compliance with policy. It's made up by these people from the communication department themselves, without checking. In one way or another, the relationship between the policy department and the communication department has always been problematic. (JCS-41, Dutch trade union)

In this quotation, the tension between policy professionals is salient, highlighting how strategic tensions could feed into power struggles between professionals in the field. This conflict occurred between those working with expert knowledge and those working on communication. In these cases, policy professionals working on knowledge production reported that the influence of communicators, and hence the importance of their symbolic capital, had increased at the organization. The conflict this situation generated concerned strategic positions regarding the best way to gain policy influence and how the organization should be managed.

The change in the power balance between the roles of communicators and researchers was regarded as both an external matter, concerning how to influence public policy, and an internal matter, concerning who should exert the most influence on the organization's policy work. In Bourdieu's understanding, this struggle can be translated to a struggle over what type of capital should be most recognized and valued in the field. An informant at an environmental organization working on communication described how the struggle between communication and in-depth knowledge is inevitable when trying to popularize a message:

> There is a struggle over what main theme we should communicate and how it should be communicated and formulated, and how much we can simplify things. I think that this struggle is present in all organizations where you have a desire to popularize things so that they are possible to understand and to excite commitment, versus "This is what it's called" or "We have to say all these things." But the communication department has become much more important than before. (JCS-20, Swedish environmental CSO)

As indicated in the quotation, the tensions were not primarily connected to the use of access or voice but rather to the fact that communication and media efforts seemed to permeate the organization's entire policy work. This change in focus distorted the power balance between professionals within the organizations, causing resentment among investigators and policy experts, whose roles had become less prominent in the organization because of the increasing premium put on communication.

In particular, the experts on policy issues feared that that their competence would not be heard when strategic decisions were being made, and they had trouble, in relation to communication experts, in invoking their capital in the interest of gaining influence over strategic policy decisions. Thus, when media logic creeps in as a decisive factor in policy work, tensions appear in the field among its contenders, and the policy professionals without capital connected to media and communication lose their position in the field.

In the interviews, an often-articulated argument was that this tension is part of a struggle between commercialism and intellectual work. The argument was made by policy experts who described this as a negative trend based on examples of how intervening in a policy issue had devolved into brand-building. Here, those working in knowledge production complained of strategies such as being present in social

media debates, writing debate articles, direct lobbying, and brand-building at the expense of doing their own knowledge production at the organization. This group of professionals described a situation in which well-researched social analysis had been exchanged for what they described as "gut feeling." A policy professional dedicated to research at a trade union described communicators' increasing influence as follows:

> You start by asking if there are any good headings or one-liners, instead of doing an analysis and looking at what the social problem is. It has become an inverse relationship, starting with the slogan, the one-liner, the heading, and then the analysis becomes the consequence of it. (J-6, Swedish trade union)

Professionals oriented towards policy expertise identified this conflict in statements such as the above, perceiving both the organization's and their own personal positions as threatened. Some of the informants thought that their role as investigators or experts was being pushed back by communicators, brand-builders, and lobbyists, who were not that interested in in-depth knowledge and were strategically turning the organization towards what could be easily communicated. The above quotation also highlights a struggle over what type of capital should be recognized as the most important in the field. Forms of symbolic capital related to having knowledge, longstanding experience of civil society and its organizations, and academic capital were here subordinated to capital related to experience of communication. Hence, in the subfield of policy professionals in civil society, a conflict has emerged over what should be recognized as symbolic capital in the field. The informant speaking in the above quotation argued that complex social analysis was being downplayed and that policy issues that were easy to communicate had become the important issues in policy work. In this way, media logics could cause depoliticization by focusing on catchy phrases and "marginalizing substantial issue discussion since it is considered a turnoff in [the] race for ratings" (Esser 2013:172).

Mediatization as a mechanism for tension in the field

The professional strategies found in policy teams are constituted by both insider and outsider strategies entailing both framing tactics and the production of in-depth knowledge (Beyers 2004; Trapp and Laursen 2017). The question of expert knowledge versus framed messages was, among the informants, never a question of having or not having communication as an important tool in policy work, but rather a question of the balance between these strategies. In the empirical fieldwork, it was evident how the policy strategies were intertwined, in that access, media strategies, and expert knowledge were used simultaneously, and in that policy professionals working with access strategies and in direct contact with policymakers needed media and communication strategies to communicate their work. In these examples, capital connected to strategic media and communication skills becomes celebrated and recognized as important in order to gain influence over policy. This indicates that policy profes-

sionals' understandings of how to gain influence over internal and public policy-making are influenced by mediatization processes, by which strategic communication draws on but often trumps policy analysis. In turn, this establishes a basis for certain strategic choices over others, also causing conflicts between the players in the field. Thus, the struggle over whose type of capital is the strongest has the potential to affect the balance between the policy professionals and the symbolic capital in the field.

The struggle between policy professionals reveals a situation in which organizations put more resources into communication and less into policy analysis, at least partly letting communication strategies and media logics govern them. This may not only lessen CSOs' knowledge production, but also risks creating a situation in which the logics of reputation and influence outweigh the logic of membership and the role of members. Just as Mechanic (1962:350) noted, in relation to the power of low-ranking personnel, the influence that policy professionals wield is not primarily a result of their unique characteristics, but rather of their position and location within their organizations. While Mechanic (1962) found that the professionals he studied were able to exercise power due to "access to persons, information, and instrumentalities" (p. 356), this study finds that communicators exercise their influence both because they have capital related to media and strategy and because they have access to their organizations' strategic decision-making units and management.

Conclusions

This study has elaborated on the matters of cooperation and tensions among professionals doing strategic advocacy work in CSOs. Specifically, by analyzing tensions in policy work, this article makes three contributions. First, it traces the somewhat empowered position of communicators in policy teams to the ongoing process of mediatization. Second, it describes how mediatization in relation to policy work in CSOs promotes internal conflicts in strategic policy work, contrasting the production of in-depth knowledge to that of framing. Third, exposing these tensions as conflicts within the field of policy professionals has allowed for an analysis revealing how professionals with capital related to strategic media work have a better capacity to set agendas for their employing organizations' policy work. The study thus demonstrates that the process of mediatization entails the elevation of communicators and their skills and strategies in organizations' policy work when the media logic becomes an accepted "rule of the game" (Esser 2013:161). Communicators' central position within policy teams, at the expense of policy analysis expertise, affects the power balance between the policy professionals active in the field, possibly also altering what is recognized as symbolic capital in the field. With ample control over CSO communication as well as policy production, these particular policy professionals become the story tellers and news makers of civil society (cf. Strömbäck and Esser 2009).

The conflicts between the policy professionals described here could, on one hand, be understood as productive for the organizations, advancing their media strategies

in competition with more technical and academic input from analysts and investigators. One could argue that without the increasing employment of communicators, CSOs may lose strength and consequence in public policymaking and public debate. However, there is also the risk that mediatization may push CSOs to specifically advance their work by means of branding, framing, and strategic communication, while losing strength in knowledge production and communication regarding more complex material. Although CSOs might succeed in gaining media influence, "they may end up losing the war, as standards of newsworthiness begin to become prime criteria to evaluate issues, policies, and politics" (Cook 2005:163). In the long run, these changes may risk alienating both policy professionals and members of CSOs from "the cause," with the policy produced becoming detached from the members whom CSOs are supposed to represent.

The national case selection limits generalizability across civil society contexts. Mediatization has, however, been found to affect strategies chosen in the three contexts studied, although not creating the same kinds of conflicts in smaller CSOs. A suggestion for further research would be to study the division of labor within CSOs, in the interest of analyzing which professional roles are more prominent within the organization, and how this affects advocacy work. Further research would benefit both from research across organizations, both smaller and larger CSOs from a comparative perspective, and from in-depth case research analyzing entire organizations and the historical development of their different policy and communication departments.

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The recruitment of policy professionals in civil society organizations has increased due to professionalization of politics and civil society. By drawing on interviews and observations from civil society organizations in Sweden, Latvia and the Netherlands, this thesis analyzes the role and functioning of policy professionals – that is employed staff who specialize in advocacy and policy engagement – and their contribution to processes of professionalization in civil society.

The work of policy professionals is conceptualized as a struggle to gain influence over internal and public policymaking in the (sub)field of civil society policy interests. Through four empirical studies, new insights are given on the role policy professionals play in civil society, their motives, goals, strategies and the tensions they may cause working inside organizations. One main contribution of the research relates to the professionalization of CSOs, its connection to organizational strategies, and how policy professionalization creates a new political landscape where there is demand for competence in these areas.

Addressing the policy professionalization of civil society, this thesis continues and contributes to the long-standing debate on the embedded conflict between effectively professionalized CSOs and ideologically driven social movement ideals. One clear risk related to policy professionalization concerns how decision-making processes are moved further away from those the organization represents, i.e. its members, and instead fall into the hands of its employees.

Joanna Mellquist is a sociologist at the School of Social Sciences, Södertörn University, and carries out research focusing on the role of unelected experts in civil society. This is her doctoral dissertation.

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