

Transnational activism for global crises: resources matter!

Transnational Solidarity Organisations in comparative perspective

Abstract

In recent years, the global financial crisis and the ensuing austerity measures in European countries have resulted in dire cuts to public services, massive job losses and diminished incomes. At the same time, and parallel to the economic crisis, a refugee crisis has arisen. In this context, ordinary citizens and new or re-energised networks of cooperation among civil society actors (e.g., NGOs, churches, trade unions, cooperatives, grassroots initiatives) foster (transnational) solidarity's practices. These practices grow in importance as they try to address people's needs, often unmet by national governments given their lack of financial resources. This article investigates whether and to what extent civic initiatives and organisations are involved in transnational solidarity activities. Moreover, it seeks to identify those factors that seem to promote or inhibit the scope of transnational activities. The article critically analyses the initiatives and practices of Transnational Solidarity Organisations (TSOs) in eight European countries on the basis of data on transnationally-oriented civic groups and organisations committed to organising solidarity activities in three fields of work (disabilities, unemployment and assistance to refugees). The analysis aims to contribute, through fresh empirical data, to the scholarly discussion in the field of transnational solidarity mobilisation and organisations by pointing out that most solidarity organisations remain active primarily at the local and/or national level/s, and that only a minority of solidarity organisations are engaged in cross-national activities. Transnational activities are associated with formalisation and professionalisation. Moreover, maintaining a web of transnational partners, being able to communicate with such partners and conventional action repertoires seem to be conducive to transnational activism. Organisational values linked to cosmopolitanism are also important, but their impact on transnational solidarity actions is mediated and conditioned by the TSOs' level of formalisation.

Key Words: Solidarity organisations, Civil society, Transnational Solidarity, Europe, organisational capabilities, transnational values

1. Introduction

Within a very short period of time, the global economic crisis and the austerity measures, which were implemented by several European governments, were combined with the so-called refugee crisis. In such a similar and difficult context, solidarity is under pressure. According to the developments in the political opportunity structure theory, social movements and political opportunities interact and affect each other. On the one hand, political opportunities and threats can shape or affect the form of the movements. On the other hand, opportunities are updated through the interaction with social movements (Fillieule, 2006) in both national and international contexts. Hence,

the international economic and refugee crisis opened a window of opportunity for activism beyond national borders, as shown by studies on European anti-austerity protests and solidarity actions in favour of refugees (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Fominaya, 2017; Fominaya and Cox, 2013; Della Porta, 2018). In this study, we focus on solidarity at meso (organisational) level —through the analysis of civil society based initiatives— which provides us with an understanding of solidarity as a collective, organised form of helping others.

Indeed, austerity and cuts led not only to anti-austerity protests, but also to resilience and social ingenuity, deployed through a range of new or already established civil society organisations, which can hold formal or informal status (such as citizens groups, NGOs, the Orthodox and Catholic Church, Municipal Authorities, etc.) (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018). In other words, the weakness of governments and the market to meet these increasing needs, has mobilised formal and informal groups and networks to help those most affected by the crisis (Author, 2018a)

While most studies pay attention to the national and subnational level of protests and solidarity activities, the scientific knowledge on transnational protests and solidarity actions is still limited. For instance, Ataç et al. (2016) have studied transnational protests because of the refugee crisis, and Author, (2018b) has investigated the transnational features of civil society organisations in Greece and Germany. Previous research has focused on the role played by European integration in encouraging the emergence of a European Civil Society (Smismans, 2006; Kutay, 2014), and on the functional role of European civil society within the European system of governance (Smismans, 2006). They have analysed the pluralism of European civil society with regard to modes of action, representational strategies, issue fields and national provenience (Balme and Chabanet, 2008; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009). Furthermore, they have investigated the ways in which these organisations react to accommodative pressures of the EU and insert themselves into the standard operating procedures (Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat, 2013).

Hence, the importance of studying civil society organisations that operate (directly or indirectly) at the international level, or have at least some transnational linkages: International phenomena, such as the economic and migration crises, must be addressed at the international level to be effectively solved. Relying on these considerations, this study offers fresh empirical data from a cross-national study conducted within the XXXXX project¹ and focusing on the Transnational Solidarity Organisations (TSOs) which provide solidarity towards three vulnerable groups that have been considerable affected by the crises, namely migrants/refugees, the disabled/health vulnerable people and unemployed/precarious workers. We consider a variety of activities as acts of transnational solidarity. Indeed, scholars have stressed how civil-society engagement can take the

form of both advocacy and service provision, complementing the welfare state to meet the needs of those most vulnerable (Baglioni and Giugni, 2014).

The core aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of resources for transnational collective action, and the need to bring back resource mobilisation theory, at the heart of organisational analysis. In descriptive terms, we wish to explore the extent to which citizens' groups and organisations in the above-mentioned fields have expanded the scope of their activities beyond national borders. In explanatory terms, we wish to compare transnationally active and inactive organisations in order to identify the organisational characteristics that seem to be associated with transnational solidarity activism. For this purpose, we will test a series of hypotheses that stress the relevance of TSO transnational activism, and resources such as TSO organisational structures (degree of formalisation, organisations' insertion into transnational networks), their action repertoire and their ideational motivations (organisational value frames).

The structure of the article is as follows: First, the state of the art literature is provided regarding the issue of transnational collective action. Main research questions and hypotheses are presented, too. Then, the following section presents the method and the dataset that have been used for the analyses. The fourth section presents the findings of two different analyses: first, a descriptive analysis compares transnationally active and inactive organisations with regard to several features; then, an explanatory analysis shows the factors which seem to affect the probability of an organisation's involvement in transnational activities (including urgent needs services and protest activities). In the final section, a summary of the findings and the related discussion are provided in order to deepen our knowledge about organisation-based transnational solidarity.

2. Theoretical framework, research questions and hypotheses

As new forms of politics and collective action have been diffused through globalisation, crossing borders and digital revolution, civil society organisations cannot be the exception if they want to function at an international level. Previous works mostly address the issue of transnational action scope of civil society organisations by looking at their relation with EU institutions (Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008; Kohler-Koch et al., 2010). Scholars are using the concept of vertical Europeanisation in order to describe the field of cooperation between EU agencies and civic organisations (Kohler-Koch et al., 2010; Sanchez Salgado, 2017), or the concept of horizontal Europeanisation in order to describe the direct activities and networks that organisations establish beyond the national borders of their home countries (Della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Tarrow, 2011). Other researchers have focused on the transnational scope of the solidarity movement (Giugni and Passy, 2001) mostly via the

transnational NGOs, or by the opportunities for transnational activism offered by supranational agencies such as the UN or the EU.

However, some scholars have moved beyond the traditional political process theory and are focusing on mechanisms in the wake of McAdam's (et al., 2001) contentious politics approach. They focused on the processes of contention by identifying three main types of mechanisms: *dispositional mechanisms*, such as the perception and attribution of threat or opportunity; *environmental mechanisms*, such as resource consumption or population growth; *relational mechanisms*, such as intermediation of a coalition/network among actors with no previous contact by a third actor who has contact with both. The first attempts to use the concept of mechanisms to understand transnational activism was by Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) on Global Justice Movement, identifying four types of dynamics: a) *diffusion*, which is the spread of tactics, values and repertoires of a movement from one country to another; b) *internalisation*, the diffusion at national level of conflicts that have their origin at the transnational level; c) *externalisation*, namely the challenge of activists to supranational actors to put pressure on national power holders; d) *transnational collective action*, namely the coordinated international campaigns of activist networks against international or national actors. Similarly, in his latest elaboration on mechanisms and transnational activism, Tarrow (2011) identifies five key dynamics: *Domestication* (the use of protest tactics at the national level to urge governments to protect people's interests from transnational threats), *Global framing* (the framing of national issues using worldwide frames), *Transnational diffusion* (the spread of similar repertoires and claims across borders), *Externalisation* (national actors targeting transnational actors), *Transnational coalition formation* (the formation of transnational coalitions to support cooperation across borders) (Tarrow, 2011: 235). Despite the importance of mechanisms to explain how dynamics develop and affect the shape of collective action beyond the national borders, for the purposes of this paper, we move back a step by focusing on actors, namely organisations and groups of activists. Based on Tarrow's (2005; 2011) claim that international or global contention is carried out by groups and activists², operating within and outside their societies and countries through the use of domestic and international resources and opportunities to achieve their goals, we want to investigate which organisational resources allow a TSO to conduct solidarity activities abroad. Hence, in this paper, we mainly rely on Resources Mobilisation Theory (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) to identify the organisational and ideational resources that allow, or constrain, the ability of a TSO to organise solidarity activities beyond the national borders of a country.

Moreover, in the current study, we assume that European economic and refugee crises are international crises that opened a window of opportunity, not only for domestic activism, but also for transnational action in Europe. For instance, the economic crisis of 2008 was the reason for the rise

of European anti-austerity protests (Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014; Fominaya, 2017; Fominaya and Cox, 2013). Likewise, the refugee crisis mobilised NGOs and social movements across Europe to engage in solidarity activism in favour of refugees not only in their homelands, but also beyond, such as those held on the Greek islands or walking the Balkan route (Della Porta, 2018). Of course, opportunities and threats have developed differently in each country and their perception by collective actors is not immediate. Indeed, in the wake of McAdam (2010), we believe that organisations play a key role in making political opportunities and threats visible through a process of collective attribution (or framing). Hence, collective action took place differently in each country depending on the differing political opportunities and the ability of indigenous organisations to make the opening of opportunities visible to their adherents (McAdam, 2010). However, in this paper we do not focus on opportunities or mechanisms, but on actors, namely on organisations and groups that carry out solidarity activities. According to classic collective action literature, actors are very important for the mobilisation processes as they organise and conduct collective action episodes, act as advocacy groups through public claims making and, finally, frame collective action and offer opportunities for participation (Tarrow, 2011). In this regard, organisational resources are fundamental for social actors, enabling them to take advantage of the opening in the political opportunity structure: ‘It is the organisational vehicles available to the group at the time the opportunity presents itself that condition its ability to exploit the new opening’ (McAdam, 2010: IX). Thus, we aim to investigate transnational activities (such as protest, service provision and court litigation) to ascertain whether the commitment of citizens’ groups and organisations to transnational solidarity is conditioned by organisational features, involvement in transnational networks, action repertoires and organisational values. It follows that our main research questions are: *What are the similarities and differences between transnationally-active and inactive organisations in terms of organisational structures, allegiances and involvement in international networks, action repertoires and organisational values? What organisational features might increase or decrease the probability of organisations being active at the transnational level?*

In order to answer these questions, we build upon the literature on transnational collective action and social movements. We hypothesise that aims, organisational capabilities and embeddedness in networks might be interrelated with the propensity of TSOs to engage in (transnational) solidarity activities. In this regard, some theorisations of the trans-nationalisation of social movements are reviewed here in order to situate our study within existing approaches, as well as to suggest hypotheses to be tested. Two of the main theories concerning Transnational Social Movements are the aforementioned Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) (Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1977) and to a lesser extent the New Social Movements (NSMs) Theory (Melucci, 1996).

Moreover, we try to link our hypotheses about organisational features with the dynamics of transnational protest introduced by Tarrow (2011).

RMT examines structural factors, including a group's available resources and the position of group members in socio-political networks, to analyse the character and success of social movements (Jenkins, 1983): centralised and formally structured social movements mobilise resources and achieve goals of change more effectively than decentralised and informal social movements (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). In light of this approach, we can expect that transnational solidarity is strongly determined by the structure and resources of the organisations we mapped, regardless of their field of activity. Usually, organisational resources are personnel and finances (Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum, 2007; Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). Considering that solidarity and collective action require sharing of resources, coordination of individual activities, provision of incentives and sanctions (Hirsch, 1986), we can expect that organisational resources are a key condition to engaging in campaigns across borders. Indeed, Tarrow (2011) reminds us that maintaining transnational coalitions is difficult, and only those with a degree of institutionalisation and capacity to socialise participants will outlast the issue that brought them together once it is gone. Therefore, our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1) Transnational solidarity actions are strictly related to the degree of formalisation of TSOs, given that structured and professionalised TSOs have more organisational capabilities and skills to engage in transnational activities with respect to informal groups.

Second, the TSOs network embeddedness and relational patterns are also important, in line with the analysis of the organisational dimensions of Schmitter and Streeck's (1999). Networks and coalitions function best when they are dense, with many actors, strong connections among groups and individuals in the network, and reliable flows of information. This trans-nationalisation has been addressed by social movement scholars (Imig and Tarrow, 1999; Eder and Kousis, 2001; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009) interested in the diffusion of local protest events across countries. Findings show that EU-level associations and networks play a role in the coordination of transnational protest activities (Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008). Furthermore, Tarrow (2011) identifies the existence of transnational networks as one of the processes, which can lead to transnational activism,³ similar to the role played by relational mechanisms for contentious politics (MacAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Cooperation and joint activities across countries might also be facilitated by the ability to communicate in different languages. It follows that our second hypothesis is:

H2) TSOs are more likely to engage in transnational solidarity if they are involved in transnational networks by cooperating closely with international partners, belonging to transnational umbrella organisations and communicating in different languages.

Third, we can expect that action-repertoires play an important role, as well. Indeed, previous research has shown that organisations can encounter problems when engaging in transnational activism, because their action repertoires (i.e., the type of preferred activities and their strategic orientation) are shaped by local circumstances (e.g., policy domains, institutional opportunities, constituencies). This applies particularly to EU-related protest actions, more commonly tied to the local level (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Author., 2018b), because they target national institutions, mobilise local constituents and are motivated by local issues. Similarly, protest-oriented repertoires might also be held back by domestic contexts because they resonate less with political styles prevalent both at the EU level (Lahusen, 2004) and within other member states. Furthermore, previous studies have unveiled that strategies affect an organisation's ability to collect resources. McCarthy and Wolfson (1996) have shown that organisations which adopted the strategy of providing services, increased their human resources to a larger extent than those organisations which adopted other strategies, such as protest. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H3) TSOs characterised by a conventional approach to activism are more likely to be transnationally active compared to TSOs with a more contentious style of activism.

Fourth, NSMs theory has been focused on production and signification, on meanings and practices, and on cultural struggles, in short, on the 'why' of activism (Edelman, 1999: 17; Escobar, Dagnino and Alvarez, 2018). In this regard, ideational motivations should be taken into consideration, particularly for those organisations and movements that frame their missions and goals in terms of values of internationalism, cosmopolitanism and transnational solidarity (Hunt and Bendford, 2004; Ataç, Rygiel and Stierl, 2016). Collective identities and shared discourses, building a shared understanding of the problem and a common purpose, are crucial for the emergence of collective actions (Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Polletta and Jaspers, 2001; Smith, 2002). Indeed, cognitive mechanisms are relevant to the comprehension of contentious politics (MacAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Additionally, as previously mentioned, "global framing" is also conceived as one of the processes that transnational activism takes (Tarrow, 2011). In this regard, we can expect that TSOs that frame their actions with values related to cosmopolitanism and to a universalistic notion of solidarity, i.e. solidarity with humankind (Arendt, 1972), will be a necessary correlate of transnational activism. Consequently, we hypothesise that:

H4) TSOs that frame their actions using cross-national or global values of solidarity will be significantly more committed to solidarity activities across countries.

Nevertheless, we assume that organisational and human resources are more decisive than the cultural resources represented by global framing of value aims (Tarrow, 2011), in line with the

importance of resource mobilisation for social movements (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004). Hence, we speculate that ideational resources, such as discursive frames, do not influence international solidarity directly, but through the interplay with organisational capabilities and resources: TSO values linked to internationalism are a necessary but insufficient condition for transnational activism if there is not an organisational structure that can put them into practice. In other words, we postulate that the impact of organisational aims on transnational engagement is moderated by the degree of formalisation. Thus, we will test this specific conditional hypothesis:

H5) The impact of cross-national or global values on transnational engagement is expected to be higher when TSOs show high levels of formalisation, whereas organisational values have no impact on transnational engagement when TSOs are less formalised.

Finally, differences between issue fields should also be controlled for, given that policy domain can influence TSO approaches and their level of networking and transnationalism. Indeed, solidarity is domain bound (Warren, 2001).

3. Data and Methods

The paper builds upon Transnational Organisation Analysis (TSOA), an innovative content analysis approach (Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018) deriving from protest events, protest cases and political claims analysis, created for the needs of Horizon 2020 research project XXXX. This new approach aims to study the TSOs in a systematic and thorough way. The unit of analysis is the TSO, which is “*a collective body/unit which organises solidarity events with visible beneficiaries and claims on their economic and social well-being including basic needs, health, and work, as depicted through the TSO website/online sources*” (XXXX Codebook, 2016: 3). There are nine criteria of transnationality (organisers, beneficiaries, actions, frames, spatial level of activity, partners, sponsors, participants and volunteers), and each TSO must follow at least one of them. TSOs can have a formal or informal organisational structure. Finally, it is important to mention that TSOs are not state authorities, even if they can cooperate with state agencies (at any level).

For the purposes of this paper, data on eight countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) were used. First, the research teams, relying on specific criteria, provided a list of hubs, sub-hubs and individual websites. Then, a team of technicians automatically extracted the websites that these hubs and sub-hubs contained according to information such as name, address, zip code, etc.

From the automatically retrieved websites, a random sample of 300 (100 per action field) TSOs have been coded for each country. As for the statistical analysis, the paper follows a two-step

approach. First, a descriptive part provides the profile of the organisations by level of action considering the distribution across issue fields and countries, TSO organisational features, their involvement in international networks looking at membership in national and transnational umbrella organisations, the number of their transnational partners, and the number of languages used on their websites. Moreover, the socio-political profile of the TSOs is also given by presenting their action repertoires and value frames according to level of action.

The second part is an explanatory analysis which tries, via logistical regression models, to investigate which of the above mentioned variables are related with the involvement of TSOs in transnational solidarity activities. In more detail, the aim of our analyses is to investigate which variables might increase or decrease the probability of TSOs being active at the transnational level. In order to validate empirically the theoretical hypotheses we presented in the previous section, we operationalised the relevant factors by means of a number of independent variables that might be relevant in terms of transnational engagement: degree of formalisation, involvement in transnational networks, organisational values, action repertoires and contextual control variables (issue fields and countries). Transnational activism is our (binary) dependent variable: We considered civic groups to be ‘transnationally active’ when they reported being active in at least one foreign country (European or non-European) as their main area of operation, and/or they affirmed working on behalf of beneficiaries residing in foreign countries.

As regards the independent variables, our codebook listed a number of organisational features that are relevant in order to measure how much the TSOs of our sample are formalised and professionalised, checking whether they had: a board, a president or leader, a secretary/administrative assistant, a treasurer or someone responsible for finance, trustees, paid staff, a written constitution, spokesperson/media-PR, a general assembly, or committees for specific issues. We ran a factor analysis in order to identify the main dimensions, and detected one major statically significant dimension. Factor loadings were particularly high (between 0.44 and 0.75) for a number of items (president, secretary, treasurer, committees, trustees, paid staff, spokesperson) that are tightly related to formalisation/professionalisation. The reliability scale was very high (alpha test 0.77). Hence, relying on the seven above-mentioned items, we built an additive index labelled ‘Formalisation’.

Moreover, the level of involvement in international networks has been measured through three variables: the number of transnational partners (ranging from ‘none’ to ‘more than 50’), TSO involvement in transnational umbrella organisations, and the presence of multi-language websites. For our purposes, we dichotomised both the variable related to transnational partners and the variable measuring the number of languages on the media outlet, in order to identify those groups/organisations using at least two languages.

Regarding the action repertoires, our codebook specified a number of both conventional and contentious actions. The former includes awareness raising activities, lobbying, direct actions/campaigns/non-protest solidarity activities, court litigation and actions oriented to policy reforms in different domains (family/children, poverty, health, disabilities, migration, labour). The reliability scale for such items was quite good (alpha test 0.54). Therefore, we built an additive index of “Conventional Actions”. As regards the protest-oriented repertoires, our dataset includes collective-protest actions, actions oriented to change government, actions oriented to change system/establishment. Given that the reliability scale was high (alpha test 0.64), we built an additive index of “Contentious Actions”.

In addition, transnational identities and values were determined based on a variable describing the values to which these organisations are committed. In particular, we operationalised the concept “cosmopolitan/transnational value frames” through the variable, which measures whether the value frames mentioned by TSOs on their websites make any cross-national/transnational/global reference. More precisely, value frames are used to code the framing of solidarity actions undertaken overall by an organisation, i.e. the values on which these actions draw in order to take their fundamental meaning.⁴ We included not only values that are cosmopolitan *per se* (“global justice”, “internationalism”, “multiculturalism”, “human rights”), but also other values that are framed in cosmopolitan terms (namely ‘solidarity and altruism’, “dignity”, “equality”, “self-determination/self-independence”, “inclusiveness”, “peace”, ‘fairness/ ethics’/social justice”, “labour empowerment/equal opportunities”, etc.). This is also in line with Tarrow (2011), who conceived global framing as the framing of domestic issues in broader, global terms.

Finally, our analysis aims to ascertain whether transnational solidarity actions are distributed evenly across the three issue fields (disability, migration, unemployment) and countries. For this purpose, we also included dummy variables in our analysis specifying the field of action (with migration as reference category) and country (with Switzerland as reference category).

4. Findings

TSOs in eight European countries: Differences and similarities

In this section, we will provide some key elements of the TSOs under study on the basis of the comparison between transnationally active and non-active TSOs. The first feature to be considered is the scope of activities per issue field (see Figure 1). In general, almost one third of TSOs organises solidarity activities abroad. Moving into a cross-field comparison, the TSOs that are

engaged in pro refugee/migrant actions are those most active abroad (42.2%). Disability and unemployment TSOs show almost the same level of transnational activism (approximately one fourth of transnationally active organisations in both fields).

Figure 1: TSOs' transnational activities by issue field (percentage values)

*****Figure 1 Here*****

Source: XXXX

Note: Chi-Square test results: 61.100, p=.000

Looking at country differences, Figure 2 shows the share of TSOs engaged in transnational activities by country. Overall, findings reveal that there is a significant number of TSOs that offer solidarity beyond national borders. In more detail, just over half of the Danish and French TSOs have activities and/or beneficiaries outside Denmark and France. Immediately after, we find a group of countries (including Italy, Poland, Germany and Switzerland) in which approximately one third of TSOs is active abroad. Finally, in Greece and the UK, TSOs are mostly focused on their national context as only 19% of the Greek and 12% of the UK TSOs have activities or beneficiaries in other countries.

Figure 2: TSO transnational activities by country (percentages values)

*****Figure 2 here*****

Source: XXXX

Note: Chi-Square test results: 204.473, p=.000

Table 1 shows the organisational structure of TSOs by level of action or beneficiaries. In general, most TSOs (approximately 65%) have a president and/or board. A little over half of TSOs has a board, while nearly half of the TSOs has secretarial support. Comparing the organisational structure of the two TSO groups, in general it seems that transnationally active TSOs are more formal and well-structured than the TSOs active only at the domestic level, as they show higher frequencies for almost every organisational feature. In more detail, president, board and /or secretary are the three most common organisational features in both TSO groups, but such features are more widespread among TSOs having transnational activities. A similar pattern is detected for the remaining

organisational features. Finally, horizontal decision making procedures through open neighbourhood assemblies are adopted only by a small minority of TSOs, irrespective of the activities/beneficiaries scope.

Table 1: Organisational structure of TSOs by level of action and/or level of beneficiaries (percentage values)

<i>Organisational features</i>	<i>Transnationally non-active (n=1.641) (%)</i>	<i>Transnationally active (n=767) (%)</i>	<i>Chi Square test</i>	<i>Total (n=2.408)</i>
Board	54.2	60.6	8.839, p=.003	56.2
President/Leader/Chair	62.6	67.3	4.871, p=.027	64.1
Secretary	39.2	49.9	24.708, p=.000	42.6
Treasurer	35.6	45.6	22.210, p=.000	38.8
Trustees	14.9	12.9	1.746, p=.186	14.3
Paid staff	36.0	35.6	.030, p=.864	35.8
Written constitution	36.6	40.5	3.528, p=.060	37.8
Spokesperson/Media-PR	13.8	27.9	69.871, p=.000	18.3
General assembly/general body	35.7	42.5	10.252, p=.001	37.9
Neighbourhood/Open assembly	2.7	1.3	4.846, p=.028	2.3
Committees or work group	28.9	35.6	10.993, p=.001	31.0

Source: XXXX

Note: Dummy variables, multiple answers allowed

TSO membership in umbrella organisations (especially transnational umbrella) is another element that can affect their transnational engagement. Table 2 depicts whether the TSOs are part of an umbrella organisation or not, and whether this umbrella is active at the transnational level or not. Both data show that TSOs, active beyond the national scope, more frequently tend to be members of an ‘umbrella’ or a “transnational umbrella” (52.3% and 30.8%, respectively).

Table 2: Membership in umbrella organisation by TSO level of action (percentage values)

<i>Umbrella features</i>	<i>Transnationally non-active (n=1.641) (%)</i>	<i>Transnationally active (n=767) (%)</i>	<i>Chi Square test</i>	<i>Total (n=2.408)</i>
Membership in umbrella organisation	44.8	52.3	11.773, p=.001	47.2
Membership in Transnational umbrella organisation	20.4	30.8	30.982, p=.000	23.7

Another organisational aspect that we want to investigate is the relationship between the number of transnational partners and TSO solidarity activism across borders (see Figure 3). Overall, TSOs having only domestic activities tend to report few or no transnational partners, while transnationally active TSOs report higher numbers of transnational partners. In more detail, approximately one third of TSOs with a domestic level of activity reports no transnational partners, while almost 60% of them report up to ten transnational partners. Only 4% of these TSOs report more than ten transnational organisations as partners. On the other hand, only 16% of the TSOs that are active abroad do not report transnational partners. Conversely, 67% of them report up to ten transnational partners, 11% report between 11 and 30 transnational partners, and a little over 5% report 30+ transnational partners.

Figure 3: Number of Transnational partners by TSO action or beneficiary level

*****Figure 3 here*****

Source: XXXXX

Note: Chi-Square test results: 137.392, p=.000

Furthermore, we want to test if the capability of a TSO to conduct activities beyond the national borders is affected by the number of languages that are used on their websites. Overall, data show (not presented here) that the vast majority of TSOs (75%) display the information about themselves only in their native language. As for the differences between the two TSO groups⁵, almost 40% of the transnationally active TSOs promote their organisation in more than one language. Contrary to that, 81.2% of the domestically active TSOs promote their organisation only in their native language.

Regarding the routes that TSOs follow in order to achieve their aims (see Table 3), the vast majority of them (70%) relies on direct actions and awareness raising activities, regardless of the level of action/beneficiaries scope. Moving on to similarities and differences between the two examined groups, the other two most followed routes are lobbying and policy reforms, mentioned by both TSO groups, especially by transnationally active TSOs. As for the more contentious strategies, neither group of TSOs shows relevant differences, and are negligible for statistically significant impact.

Table 3: Routes that TSOs follow to achieve their aims by level of actions and beneficiaries

(percentage values)				
<i>Organisational routes to achieve their Aims</i>	<i>Transnationally non-active (n=1.641) (%)</i>	<i>Transnationally active (n=767) (%)</i>	<i>Chi Square test</i>	<i>Total (n=2.408)</i>
Collective protest action	14.1	13.3	.266, p=.606	13.8
Awareness raising	75.3	79.1	3.378, p=.036	75.6
Lobbying	36.6	41.2	4.767, p=.029	38.0
Direct Actions	78.3	86.8	24.710, p=.000	81.0
Policy reform	28.8	37.8	18.408, p=.000	31.6
Legal route	6.1	9.4	8.548, p=.003	7.1
Change government	2.8	2.1	1.072, p=.311	2.6
Change system/ establishment	7.1	7.2	.001, p=.971	7.1

Source: XXXX

Note: Dummy variables, multiple answers allowed

The final feature that we want to test is the reference to transnational and universal values. We assume that TSOs promoting cross-national or transnational values, such as internationalism, global justice, humanitarianism, etc., are more transnationally active than the TSOs, which do not refer to cosmopolitanism. Indeed, data show⁶ (not presented here) that in the first group, 79.3% of TSOs promote transnational values on their website, whereas in the non-transnationally active group, 49.1% of TSOs mention these kinds of values.

Regression results

So far, we have provided the overall picture of European TSOs in our sample, looking at the individual measures of association between TSO characteristics and scope of action. As stated in previous sections, in order to check the robustness of these (descriptive) findings, and ascertain which variables are more likely to affect our dependent variable (transnational activities), we pooled data and built two logit regression models (Model 1 and Model 2) with dummies for countries and issue fields. Table 4 presents results for both models, which include odds ratios (with standard errors), as well as goodness-of-fit statistics (AIC and BIC coefficients, pseudo-R-squared values of Nagelkerke). In logistic regression, the odds ratio compares the odds of the outcome event (providing solidarity) one unit apart on the predictor.

Model 1 includes the independent variables we have presented so far: organisational capabilities and skills (degree of formalisation, presence of transnational partners, involvement in transnational umbrella organisations, foreign languages of media outlet), action repertoires (conventional and contentious approaches), ideational factors (transnational values), control variables

(issue fields and countries). Model 2 includes the same explanatory factors, adding the interaction between transnational values and the degree of formalisation

The explanatory power of both models is quite good, representing around 17% of the variance. Results of Model 1 show that H1 has been validated: TSO formalisation is an important trigger of transnational solidarity activism. Indeed, this variable is very significant (with p at 0.1%) and a one unit increase in the level of formalisation increases 2.2 times the odds of performing solidarity actions at transnational level. This is in line with the strand of research on social movements that stresses the importance of organisational capabilities and resources for collective action (Jenkins, 1983; Hirsch, 1986; Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum, 2007).

As regards involvement in international networks, it is noteworthy that engagement in transnational solidarity actions is fostered by having transnational partners, but not necessarily by being members of transnational umbrella organisations. The latter variable, therefore, loses its explanatory power compared to previous descriptive results. Conversely, a multi-linguistic approach helps solidarity work at the transnational level. In particular, the variables “transnational partners” and “foreign languages of media outlet” are both very significant (with p at 0.1%). Furthermore, these variables show high odds ratios: Having transitional partners and knowing different languages increase 2.2 times the odds of engaging in solidarity actions. Thus our H2 has been overall confirmed, strengthening the argument that TSO network embeddedness and relational patterns are important with respect to transnational engagement in solidarity actions, in line with previous findings (Ruzza and Bozzini, 2008), but with the significant exception represented by membership in transnational umbrella organisations. This might be explained by the fact that for many organisations, such membership is purely formal, without entailing a real commitment to solidarity work at transnational level. Conversely, having transnational partners and being able to communicate with them are factors which actually enable transnational solidarity activism.

Finally, action repertoires and strategic orientations are associated with transnational activism in line with H3: Action repertoires are a conditioning factor only when TSOs follow conventional routes to achieve their aims, whereas there is no significant association between TSOs following a contentious approach and the transnational scope of solidarity actions. In fact, TSOs operating in various countries more overtly stress on their websites the need to press for policy reforms as a route to reach their organisational aims. Their reformist political mission might explain their readiness to expand their scope of activities towards other countries, because transnational activism is a widely used strategy among social movement organisations and social NGOs to increase political pressure on governments (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Lahusen, 2004; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009). Protest mobilisation, conversely, seems to be common among solidarity groups operating within the country,

confirming results of previous research on EU-related protests which are more tied to the local/national level (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009), because they target national institutions, mobilise local constituents, and are motivated by local issues.

Additionally, ideational factors are also relevant, confirming H4: The commitment to transnational values has a strong, positive impact on transnational solidarity (p with 0.1%). This means that the commitment to universal human rights, multiculturalism, global justice or internationalism, for instance, is a strong motivating factor to carry out solidarity actions across borders.

Finally, it is interesting to note that there are relevant cross-field differences, with TSOs in the disability and above all in the unemployment fields less likely to be involved in transnational solidarity compared to TSOs in the migration field. Similarly, some cross-country differences are relevant, too: Compared to the reference category (Switzerland), TSOs in other countries, especially in France, Poland, Denmark and Germany, are more likely to be involved in transnational solidarity actions (significance at 0.1%).

Table 4: Transnational solidarity and its covariates (logit regression)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odds ratio	S.E.	Odds ratio	S.E.
<i>Organisational capabilities and skills</i>				
Formalisation	2.159***	(0.459)	4.393***	(1.721)
Transnational partners	2.212***	(0.349)	2.236***	(0.354)
Members of transnational umbrella	1.157	(0.176)	1.183	(0.179)
Foreign languages of media outlet	2.206***	(0.268)	2.208***	(0.268)
<i>Action repertoires</i>				
Contentious approach	1.459	(0.506)	1.415	(0.486)
Conventional approach	5.791***	(2.807)	5.436***	(2.634)
<i>Ideational factors</i>				
Transnational values	2.526***	(0.364)	3.910***	(0.989)
<i>Interaction</i>				
Transnational values x formalisation			0.364*	(0.160)
<i>Controls (field and country)</i>				
Migration Field (reference category)	.	.		

Disability Field	0.665*	(0.111)	0.682*	(0.115)
Unemployment Field	0.522***	(0.0794)	0.543***	(0.0831)
France	4.801***	(1.369)	4.759***	(1.356)
Germany	3.170***	(0.770)	3.138***	(0.760)
Greece	1.889*	(0.537)	1.886*	(0.538)
Italy	2.207**	(0.558)	2.267**	(0.568)
Poland	4.419***	(1.122)	4.659***	(1.188)
Denmark	4.103***	(1.034)	4.091***	(1.017)
UK	1.658*	(0.417)	1.742*	(0.435)
Switzerland (reference category)
Constant	0.0265***	(0.00713)	0.0187***	(0.00597)
<i>N</i>	2037		2037	
pseudo <i>R</i> ²	0.171		0.173	
<i>AIC</i>	2120.4		2116.4	
<i>BIC</i>	2215.9		2217.6	

Significant levels: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Model 2 includes interactions between transnational values and level of formalisation, in order to test H5. Significance and strength of effects of the other variables do not change, confirming results of Model 1. However, the final value of the effect for values can only be assessed by summing interaction terms with both main effects for the level of formalisation and for transnational values, see marginal plot (see Figure 4). Hence, the model is considered nonlinear. Dots (diamonds) represent the conditional effect of cosmopolitan values on transnational engagement for different levels of formalisation. To the left of the zero line, the dots represent negative marginal effects, whereas on the right there are positive marginal effects. Dots close to the zero line represent low marginal effects in terms of both strength and statistical significance.

Figure 4: *Marginal effects of cosmopolitan values by degree of formalisation on transnational engagement.*

*****Figure 4 here*****

Note: The chart graphically represents the Logit Model 2 reported in Table 4. Diamonds represent the conditional effect of cosmopolitan values on transnational engagement for different levels of formalisation. Horizontal bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

The results indeed confirm that the impact of transnational values on cross-border activism is moderated by level of formalisation (H5): For the lowest level of formalisation, cosmopolitan values are not statistically significant, whereas their impact on transnational engagement becomes significant and increases as the level of formalisation increases. Hence, our results show that organisational values are important, but only when TSOs have the organisational capabilities to be engaged in transnational actions.

5. Conclusion

In recent years, the various crises that have hugely impacted European countries have resulted in more solidarity actions carried out by citizens' initiatives and groups, including transnational organisations. But how strongly are civil society organisations active across borders? Which factors are likely to inhibit or promote transnational activism? Throughout this study, we have aimed to answer these questions, first providing an overall comparative picture of differences and similarities between transnationally active and non-active TSOs in terms of their organisational features, their involvement in international networks, their action repertoires and their value frames. Secondly, we have presented the results of a multivariate statistical analysis to detect the correlates of transnational solidarity actions.

The descriptive analysis in general shows that issue-field matters since TSOs providing solidarity in favour of refugees/migrants conduct more international activities than TSOs from other fields. Moreover, transnational solidarity activities depend on the country where TSOs are based. Indeed, in countries such as France and Denmark, almost half of TSOs conduct solidarity activities beyond national borders, signalling that the domestic arena in these countries provided the political opportunities for transnational activism. Conversely, British TSOs are less likely to be engaged in transnational activities (just over 10%). With respect to the organisational structure, both TSO groups (transnationally active and domestically active groups) have a formal structure, but TSOs that are engaged in transnational solidarity activities are definitely more formalised as they report higher frequencies for almost every organisational feature. Likewise, TSOs that conduct transnational activities are part of umbrella organisations and especially international umbrellas. The same applies to the number of transnational partners: TSOs having a transnational scope of activities report more transnational partners than those active at national or subnational level.

Huge differences between transnationally active and non-active TSOs can be spotted as regards the number of languages that TSOs use on their websites: Almost half of the transnationally active TSOs use more than one language, in contrast to those TSOs active on a domestic level, which

in their vast majority use only the native language. This finding probably indicates the strategic choice of TSOs to target different audiences and, thus, to increase their resources or to expand their beneficiaries beyond their native language. With respect to the strategies that the TSOs follow to achieve their goals, in general there are no huge differences between the two groups of TSOs, but conventional actions such as non-protest direct actions, activities oriented towards policy reform and lobbying are more widespread among transnationally active TSOs than among domestically active TSOs. This finding is probably connected with the level of formalisation and the type of transnationally active TSOs, since most of them are NGOs relying more on conventional tactics to pursue their aims (such as political pressure and lobbying), rather than on collective protests. Finally, transnational value frames are clearly linked to TSO cross-borders activism.

These findings are substantially confirmed, with some nuances, by the explanatory analysis, validating the hypotheses we formed to identify those factors that promote transnational activities. In sum, our findings show that a number of factors were relevant in distinguishing between transnationally active and inactive TSOs. Among them, we can name a number of variables that generated statistically significant effects: degree of formalisation/professionalisation (H1); involvement in international networks (H2) as measured by transnational partners and multi-language websites – except for membership in transnational umbrella organisations, which is not significant contrary to our expectations; conventional style of actions (H3); and commitment to transnational values (H4). Additionally, global framing of value aims by organisations is relevant for activism across countries only for formalised TSOs (H5).

According to these results, we can highlight two main conclusions. In the first instance, a series of organisational characteristics is significantly related to transnational activities, and these findings hold true across both countries and issue fields. Indeed, transnationally active TSOs share a similar organisational profile: they tend to be more professionalised and formalised. This means that organisational capabilities and resources are an important *atout* for collective action across borders, a result that is in line with the Resource Mobilisation Theory on transnational social movements and with findings of previous studies (Jenkins, 1983; Hirsch, 1986; Kriesi, Tresch and Jochum, 2007). Additionally, TSOs with transnational partners, and TSOs counting on multi-language skills are more likely to engage in (protest or solidarity) activities across national borders. Therefore, it is the cross-border collaboration and involvement in international networks that clarifies the transnational scope of TSOs. In this regard, transnationally-oriented solidarity organisations show similar patterns to those of political protests and social movements (Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Tarrow, 2011: 255).

Secondly, ideational factors are relevant, too: Transnational activism is more common among organisations that share discursive frames strictly linked to transnational and global values of solidarity. According to our expectations, however, the impact of such values on transnational engagement is moderated by the TSOs' degree of formalisation: A transnational value frame has a significant (and increasing) impact on transnational activism only for higher levels of formalisation. This confirms, once again, the importance of organisational capabilities to be engaged in transnational actions. In this regard, TSOs from European countries with a well-developed organisational field should be better equipped to engage in cross-national activism than those from countries with a less institutionalised and resourced civil society. Finally, results show that issue field matters, given that TSOs in the unemployment domain and in the disability field are less likely to be involved in transnational solidarity actions than TSOs in the migration field, thus confirming that solidarity is domain bound (Warren, 2001).

Since we carried out an organisational analysis, we focused on organisations' capabilities and resources. Hence, we left untouched two major issues worthy of further research. The first is related to mechanisms underlying the full set of dynamics that shape and take place in transnational solidarity activism. Therefore, future research could study the dispositional, environmental and relational mechanisms that lead to transnational activism. Secondly, in our study we argued that country context matters; hence, we strongly believe that a cross-country research is needed on the specific political opportunities and threats that foster or restrict national organisations' engagement in transnational solidarity activism.

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Author citation (2018a)

Author citation (2018b)

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¹ The project “XXXXXX” (XXXX) has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No XXXX.

² Tarrow names this category of activists as *Rooted Cosmopolitans* (2005: 29).

³ Although transnational networks can be useful suppliers of resources to mobilise internationally, involvement in such networks does not mean active engagement at transnational level *per se*. Indeed, an organisation or a group (especially the smaller informal groups) could be part of a transnational network in order to gain resources (material, moral or cultural) which can be used for solidarity activism. However, this activism could only take place at the domestic level or in favour of local communities and not necessarily at the transnational level.

⁴ Value frames may be latent or manifest within the organisation’s websites textual information. Mostly, they can be easily traced on the front/main page of TSO website, or under the sections home/who we are/mission/about. On the basis of the coding procedure, it has been possible to take into account the order (if any) in which TSOs present their values,

by selecting up to three, most prominent and clearly visible values. According to the codebook, these values have to fall into pre-determined categories (global justice, internationalism, multiculturalism, dignity, tolerance, etc.) pertaining to six macro-categories related to civic virtues (humanitarian/philanthropic and rights-based ethics), post-materialist values (empowerment and participation, diversity and sustainability) and materialist ones (economic virtues, community and order). The above-mentioned values have been coded as “transnational” when they make any cross-national/transnational/global references.

⁵ Chi-Square test results: 113.814, p=.000.

⁶ Chi Square test results: 196.328, p=.000.