Call for contributions to *Voluntas* special issue:
Civil Society Organizations: the Site of Legitimizing the Common Good

Special issue Editors:

Liv Egholm (Copenhagen Business School)

Liesbet Heyse (University of Groningen)

Damien Mourey (IAE Paris, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are experiencing significant public and academic attention, especially as suppliers of social cohesion, promoters of active citizenship and safeguards of the common and greater good in society through their special characteristics and values. Following, CSOs have been championing their contribution as the rescuer/savior not just of the traditional welfare state but also of national cohesion as such.

However, CSOs do not by definition create social cohesion and contribute to the common good. Recently researchers have shown that many voluntary-based associations, cooperatives, mutual funds, philanthropic organizations, transnational advocacy groups and, more recently, social entrepreneurs, have purposes closely related to their particular interest and are not necessarily directed towards a common good (Alexander, 2006; Frantz & Fuchs, 2014). Even though their legitimizations and justifications often are articulated as a collective engagement towards the making of a "better society" and a willingness to contribute to the "Greater Good" linked to positive characteristics of Civil Society, one cannot just study these organizations and associations as good per se (Dekker, 2014).

The concept of legitimacy within CSOs has been discussed and defined as; a lawful, admissible, and justified organization (Edwards, 2000) or more recently, Alexander´s division between the civil and uncivil sphere (2006) and Lichterman & Eliasoph´s (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014) identifications of civic action. As such, the legitimization of CSOs´ actions and existence is intertwined with stakeholder accountability, contemporary "regimes" of justification (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) and the range of available institutional and organizational forms. Accordingly, CSOs must be studied for how and which specific understandings of the common good and society they promote - and thus which consequences that entails - also in line of which groups are found worthy of being included within the "Common Good" and which are not (Chambers & Kopstein, 2001; Reuter, Wijkström, & Meyer, 2014)

In this special issue we therefore seek to shed light on

1. *How do these processes of legitimation take place? What are the consequences of these changes? And what type of politics/inclusion/exclusion do they conceal?*

2. How do CSOs manage and institutionalize their explicit role of doing good?

3. How do CSOs manage accountability claims to strengthen their legitimacy in Civil Society?

These questions can obviously be addressed from different angles - both empirically and theoretically - and we encourage strongly this pluralism of views for this special issue. First, CSOs refer to an array of *different organizational forms* - ranging from voluntary-based associations to cooperatives and social entrepreneurs - and the questioning of their legitimacy to act for the "common good" or to benefit from specific regulatory measures and/or specific funding possibilities take on different forms across this spectrum and across countries.

Second, CSOs have also to deal with *an array of stakeholders* that have expressed different and sometimes divergent claims in recent times. Donors, funders, beneficiaries, volunteers, workers, regulators have different interests in and representations of the performance and the identity of a CSO. Being accountable to all of them - which is one strategy among others to (re)legitimize a CSO's being and doings - might just be an impossible task - but also a source of new opportunities - as there is no clear-cut hierarchy among them and no obvious common ground. However, we still need to better understand how and to what extent these different accountabilities are articulated, prioritized, put in practice as well as which consequences/effects they have.

Third, CSOs may resort to more *proactive strategies to (re)-legitimize their doings* and actions such as (re)framing their narrative, meeting accountability requests, abide by - either as a sham or in substance - models of governance or organizational practices perceived as legitimate by the Society at large, and/or manipulate myths, ceremonies and symbols as a way to construct a cognitive legitimacy.

In this sub-theme, we hope to publish articles that will 1) illustrate empirically how CSOs proactively and sometimes artfully attempt at managing legitimization processes, and 2) challenge existing knowledge by adding to insights about legitimacy as an on-going and precarious process by means of contributions.

Procedure
Please take note of the following guidelines:

- The deadline for submitting full manuscripts is November 30th (2017)

- Please do not send the manuscript to us by e-mail, but submit through our system (http://www.editorialmanager.com/volu/default.aspx). There will be a flag for this special issue on organization, don't forget to mark the submission as part of the SI

- Please make sure to follow all guidelines for authors, as outlined at: http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/journal/11266

- Every article should have sufficient methodological and theoretical baggage. Purely

descriptive texts can unfortunately not be accepted, however interesting the case.

- We appreciate showing and supporting the continuity of debates in our field. Therefore please try to relate your work to studies on similar topics/countries, such as published in Voluntas and other journals in the field. Also, you should explicit the relevance of your work beyond your specific region or particular case.

References

Alexander, J. C. (2006). *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006). *On justification: Economies of worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chambers, S., & Kopstein, J. (2001). Bad Civil Society. *Political Theory, 29*(6), 837-865.

Dekker, P. (2014). Tocqueville Did Not Write About Soccer Clubs: Participation in Voluntary Associations and Political Involvement. In M. Freise & T. Hallmann (Eds.), *Modernizing Democracy: Associations and Associating in the 21st Century* (pp. 45-58). Heidelberg: Springer.

Edwards, M. (2000). *NGO Rights and Responsibilities: A New Deal for Global Governance*. London: The Foreign Policy Center.

Frantz, C., & Fuchs, D. (2014). The Impact of Civil Society on Sustainable Development. In M. Freise & T. Hallmann (Eds.), *Modernizing Democracy. Associations and Associating in the 21st Century* (pp. 83-96). Heidelberg: Springer.

Lichterman, P., & Eliasoph, N. (2014). Civic Action. *American Journal of Sociology, 120*(3), 798-863.

Reuter, M., Wijkström, F., & Meyer, M. (2014). Who Calls the Shots? The Real Normative Power of Civil Society. In M. Freise & T. Hallmann (Eds.), *Modernizing Democracy: Associations and Associating in the 21st Century* (pp. 71-82). New York, NY: Springer New York.