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Charta Oecumenica and TFEU article 17 a base for the CEC's advocacy work. CEC and European integration. Supranational state capacity in action?

Introduction

In the EU with now of 27 member states, there is a need for advocacy work done by organizations. This can be done nationally or supranationally. This advocacy work can be seen as modern day form of state capacity. State capacity simply the capacity to be able to act on various situations and work as institution. State capacity is about the functioning of institutions, such as the tax agency or military.¹ One such institution is the church. Churches throughout Europe operate as typical institutions, thus making them a key part of creating a strong social fabric, i.e., creating state capacity; in other words, they help create a functioning society in the EU.² In this article the emphasis on the new concept of supranational state capacity done by ecclesiastical organizations i.e., churches. This supranational state capacity is focussed on the EU actions of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The supranational state capacity is actions in a supranational level i.e., EU from the CEC. The base of the CEC's supranational advocacy work are Charta Oecumenica (CO) and the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) article 17.

Previous studies have emphasised state capacity mostly as an economic phenomenon.³ They have dealt with it primarily by using information on state income and taxing figures and the growth of their influence within a particular state. Research has also been done on political regimes and their

¹ Mark Dincecco, *State.capacity.and.economic.development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Mark Dincecco, & Massimiliano Onorato, *From.warfare.to.wealth;The.military.origins.of.urban.prosperity.in.Europe.*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

² Karl Deutsch, *Political.community?and.the.North.Atlantic.area;International.organization.in.the.light.of.historical.experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 3 & 5–7; Karl Deutsch, "Supranational Organizations in the 1960's," *Journal.of.Common.Market.Studies* 1, no. 3 (1963): 214.

³ Mark Dincecco, *State.capacity.and.economic.development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Mark Dincecco, & Massimiliano Onorato, *From.warfare.to.wealth;The.military.origins.of.urban.prosperity.in.Europe.*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

impact on state capacity.⁴ One recent study focuses on the long legacy of good governance and the positive impact of state capacity in creating a well-functioning civil society.⁵ This can be seen as part of the norm-setting capacity of the Church in relation to the state, i.e., its role as a functioning institution.

The structure of this article is...

Definition of concepts

EU integration can be defined as both an historical and a present-oriented process, in which the interests, values and political motivations of separate groups are integrated at an institutional level.⁶ State capacity development in Europe currently takes place in just such a manner.

Church is defined as in this article as a society with a religious structure (how to best present the ecclesiastical message i.e., the gospel, to followers), an established hierarchy (who rules and under what capacity), rules and norms. For the purposes of this article, how the church applies state capacity in Europe is discussed in relation to its institutional and societal function.

Advocacy simply means speaking with an institutional voice – in this article, the focus is on how the ELCF makes its voice heard (its motives, values and ideas) in the EU institution decision-making process. Advocacy work thus refers to any effort to affect the decision-making process by giving expert knowledge or making suggestions about the specific theme at hand. It can also have to do with offering an opinion on a certain policy that may have an impact on the institution and its

⁴ Kivanc Karaman & Sevet Pamuk, "Different paths to modern state in Europe: the interaction between warfare, economic structure and Political Regime," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 603–626.

⁵ Jamie Pavlik & Andrew Young, "Medieval European traditions in representation and state capacity today," *Economics of Governance* 21 (2020): 133–186.

⁶ Ernst Haas, *The uniting of Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1958), 11–12 & 16; Karl Deutsch, *Political community and the North Atlantic area; International organization in the light of historical experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 5–7; Wolfram Kaiser, "Transnational Networks of Governance: The Informal Politics of Integration," in *The History of the European Union; Origins of a Trans- and Supranational polity*, 706–738, ed. Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht, & Morten Rasmussen (Milton Park: Routledge, 2011), 12–33, 20–27 & 29; Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe; Social purpose, State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1998); Hugh Mcleod, Risto Saarinen, & Aila Lauha, *North European Churches; From the Cold War to Globalization* (Helsinki: Kirkon tutkimuskeskus, 2006).

goals.⁷ The article thus focuses most specifically on the ECLF as an institution and its advocacy work in the EU.

Advocacy work can be defined as follows:

‘Advocacy and lobbying can be understood as the two ends of a continuum of action. Advocacy can be defined as pleading in support of a particular issue or course of action through public meetings, speeches, presentations, various media releases and presentations. Lobbying involves face-to-face meetings and diplomacy aimed at influencing members of political parties or decision-makers through semiformal and informal channels. Advocacy and lobbying are relational activities.’⁸

The present article places an emphasis on advocacy work than on lobbying. Suffice to say, ‘lobbying’ can be defined here as all activities by private actors aiming to influence political decision-makers. For their part, ‘interest groups’ refer to formally organised groups united by specific political objectives that try to influence the policy process in the pursuit of such goals. This distinction helps to separate the activities and the actors from more formal organisations.⁹

Supranationalism simply refers to political, economic or societal actions that take place above the national level. Supranationalism is a tool for getting advocacy work done; it is not in competition with the ELCF’s advocacy work at the national level. A good example of a supranational actor and actions is the advocacy work done by the ELCF in the EU.

Methodology and data

Case study, archives (digital, articles & books, interviews).

⁷ Andres Rodríguez-Pose & Julie Courty, “Regional lobbying and structural funds: do regional representation offices in Brussels deliver?” *Regional and Federal Studies* 28, no. 2 (2018): 199–229, DOI: 10.1080/13597566.2018.1441828

⁸ Eija Helander, *European churches and the European parliament elections; The case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland*, Informa UK Limited, [287760136.pdf \(core.ac.uk\)](#), 2017, 4, DOI:10.1080/14616696.2017.1334945.

⁹ Cornelia Woll, “Lobbying in the European Union: From Sui Generis to a Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 3 (2006): 456–470, hal-01021182; Liliana Mihut, “Lobbying: A Political Communication Tool for Churches and Religious Organizations,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 10?no;29 (2011): 64–86; Martin Steven, “Religious lobbies in the European Union: From dominant church to faith-based organisation?” in *Religion?politics.and.law.in.the.European.Union*, ed. Lucian Leustean & John T.S. Madeley (Routledge, 2013), 176–186; Celeste Braun-Poppelaars & Marcel Hanegraaff, “Conceptualizing religious advocacy: Religious interest groups and the process of public policy making,” in *Religious.actors.in.the.public.sphere*, ed. Jeff Haynes & Anja Hennig (Routledge, 2013), 132–148.

In this article, the methodological approach is qualitative.¹⁰ At the ontological level, the article falls between the material and social world.¹¹ This simply means that the world is itself present, i.e., materially, but that it is also evident by virtue of actors and ideas, i.e., socially created.¹²

The qualitative method makes it possible to gain access to individual information from a pool of data.¹³ The article specifically uses a case study to analyse the ELCF's EU-committee advocacy work in the EU.¹⁴ The ELCF's EU-committee has minutes and reports, that I am going to utilize to show the impact of this committee's work for the ELCF's EU advocacy work. These are in written documents form and I will also use short questionnaires to get the experts voice heard and get to core of the importance of this committee. Assessing the ELCF's EU-committee state capacity-making efforts through the lens of its advocacy work will shed light on the Lutheran Church's role in the EU and on how the advocacy activities of churches in general can be viewed in relation to modern-day state capacity between the years 1984/1995-2023. This is a perfect case for looking at the ELCF's advocacy work based on TFEU article 17. Further, the case study approach provides a methodological possibility to generalise based on a small group of venues.¹⁵ This can be achieved by carefully selecting the specific cases relevant to this article, namely the advocacy work done by the ELCF in the EU and its relation article 17.

First, the publications are the general base for the advocacy work of the CEC. CEC is doing in its advocacy work within the EU. Second, they reveal how the decisions are reached and the nature of the internal discussions taking place and compromises being made to facilitate a coherent public decision that shows the ELCF's unified opinion and message to society and other actors in the EU. The use of digital sources (ELCF's statements on the EU) and the ELCF's action plan regarding the EU (from the year 2012) are sufficient for the purpose and aims of this research article. The also,

¹⁰ Joseph Jupille, "Knowing Europe: metatheory and methodology in European union studies," in *Advances in European Union Studies*, ed. Michelle Cini & Angela Bourne (Milton Park: Routledge, 2006), 209–215.

¹¹ Ibid., 209–212; Peter Haas & Ernst Haas Ernst, "Pragmatic constructivism and the study of international institutions," *Millennium.- Journal of International Studies* 31 (2002): 573–601.

¹² Ibid., 209–216.

¹³ Pertti Alasuutari, *Laadullinen tutkimus* (Tampere: vastapaino, 2001), 39.

¹⁴ Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th edition, ed. Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), 301–316, also available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2278194>; Robert Stake, *The art of case study research* (London: Sage, 1995), 4–12; Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and methods*, 4th edition (London: Sage, 2009), 16–21.

¹⁵ Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," 301–316.

though, makes use of theoretical articles and books on European integration, advocacy and state capacity.

Theory

State capacity, (also and especially its supranational variant) NF (spill-over, supranationalism) & LI (national interest).

The importance of organisations and their development is at the heart of state capacity theory. By focusing on the CEC's advocacy work, the study highlights how institutional advocacy in the EU contributes to European integration, thus making it part of contemporary state capacity efforts. State capacity is related to the notions of *neofunctionalism* (NF), meaning a spill-over or supranationalism of state capacity, and *liberal intergovernmentalism* (LI), meaning national preferences and grand bargains.¹⁶ Theories on European integration is helping expand the concept of state capacity from being solely national in scope to an understanding of it as both national and supranational in nature. A good example of this shift in thinking in relation to NF and LI is the advocacy work done by the CEC in the EU, which will be explained later in this article in more depth.

In the EU, the churches in the different member states must deal with the European Commission and with European Parliament. Both organisations are active in creating integration momentum for the member states and for European institutions like themselves. The European Commission is the main engine of European integration, together with the European Parliament. At the national level, churches also take active roles in society.¹⁷ They cooperate with various national ministries, parliaments, governments, defence forces or industries.¹⁸ The advocacy work done by the CEC affects both the *supranational dimensions of state capacity*, offering a key example of how churches currently create state capacity.

¹⁶ Ernst Haas, *The uniting of Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1958); Andrew Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe: Social purpose, state power from Messina to Maastricht* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1998).

¹⁷ <https://evl.fi/our-work/church-and-state>, accessed 20.2. 2023.

¹⁸ <https://evl.fi/our-work/church-and-state/military-chaplaincy>; <https://evl.fi/our-work/church-and-state/division-of-responsibility>; <https://evl.fi/our-work/church-and-state/religious-education>; <https://ek.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tyoelaman-jarjestoilta-yhteinen-keskustelualoite-digitalisaation-vaikutuksista-tyopaikoilla/>, accessed 20.2.2023.

Political dimension of state capacity refers to the institutional relationship with national governments, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions.

It is a state capacity dimension in which the focus is on policy and political relations and political/policy capacity. In other words, it has to do with the capacity to make decisions for various institutions and actors in society. Such cooperation creates a win-win situation for both sides, meaning society also benefits from their cooperation. This kind of advocacy work and the new creation of state capacity levels occurs at both the EU level as well as at the national level.¹⁹

Social or societal dimension of state capacity refers to the social dimension of state capacity, to being active in society. This simply means that actors should assist the citizens and organisations active in the social and labour fields, i.e., with social policy or labour market issues. It means giving the NGOs a voice in the decision-making process and assisting citizens facing dire social and economic situations. It is the policy work done to create a better and more just labour market for all participants.²⁰ Such efforts bring the CEC into the discussion since they aim to create a fair and inclusive Europe and have an interest in how to best work towards such an objective.²¹ The idea of a social Europe is well suited to the work being done by the ELCF as well as the CEC, both of which are addressing the issue in relation to EU affairs and at the supranational level.

Economic dimension of state capacity is the capacity to work in economic terms, referring to the market relations and activities involving companies, industries and trade and the need to make a profit. The economic dimension also necessitates being an active social investor. One example is cooperating with industry on labour rights issues.²² The CEC's activities in society thus include working with companies and various economic institutions, with the aim being to tackle the challenges impacting working life, for instance digitalisation.

¹⁹ <https://www.ceceurope.org/what-we-do/dialogue-with-the-eu-institutions/>, accessed 20.2.2023; <https://evl.fi/en/our-work/the-church-and-the-eu/the-churchs-eu-work/our-partners/>, accessed 29.1.2024.

²⁰ <https://www.ceceurope.org/economic-and-ecological-justice/> ; <https://www.ceceurope.org/employment-and-social-issues/>, accessed 20.2.2023; <https://www.ceceurope.org/economic-and-ecological-justice/>; <https://www.ceceurope.org/employment-and-social-issues/>, accessed 20.2.2023.

²¹ <https://evl.fi/en/our-work/the-church-and-the-eu/priority-areas/>, accessed 29.1.2024; https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/whats-new/panorama/2023/01/01-04-2023-how-the-eu-delivers-on-a-social-europe-that-is-fair-inclusive-and-full-of-opportunity_en accessed 1.1. 2024

²² <https://ek.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tyoelaman-jarjestoilta-yhteinen-keskustelualoite-digitalisaation-vaikutuksista-tyopaikoilla/>, accessed 20.2.2023.

These three fields of advocacy work done by churches serve as a striking example of a well-organised and functioning European-based state capacity and how best to apply such capabilities in democratic societies. It shows how the CEC are active in various fields in society, both nationally and supranationally. While the CEC is active supranationally, the ELCF is active both nationally and supranationally. The state capacity work done by churches, or in this case by the CEC, is not just about ecclesiastical capacity; it is about making its voice heard in society, both nationally and supranationally.