The Cognitive Dimension of Social Movements’ Europeanization Processes.

The Case of the Protests Against “Fortress Europe”

Abstract

This paper examines the europeanization of social movements through frame analysis. Focusing on the case of the French and German pro-asylum movements, it shows how they build new collective identities and increasingly recognize the role of EU institutions and policies. This analysis shows first of all that social movements organizations coming from different national contexts europeanize their frames to the same extent and through similar paths. It shows then that, within each country, social movements organizations with different characteristics frame European institutions and policies differently. These differences are explained by their distinct strategies of protest and alliance at the European level. Organizations acting in Brussels through lobbying techniques tend to follow a process of frame transformation, and organizations protesting at the transnational level tend to follow processes of frame extension and frame bridging. This analysis concentrates on a panel of 23 organizations representative of the pro-asylum movements in France and Germany.

Keywords: Europeanization, social movements, frame analysis, asylum policies
Introduction

In October 2008, social movements’ organizations (SMOs) from several European countries launched a call to protest against the European Union’s Council of Ministers meeting in Paris to discuss the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum:

“Concerned by the essentially security-orientated nature of the treatment of migration flows, by the treatment accorded to migrants, and by the economic choices adopted which maintain the African continent on the margins of development, we have decided to organize a European mobilization in order to make the voices of French, European and African civil society heard. (…).”

As illustrated by this example, SMOs coming from different national contexts europeanize their discourse: they construct a European collective identity, they recognize the role of the European Union in the definition of immigration policies, and their claims target EU institutions. This leads to the formulation of critiques expressed through the general idea of ‘Fortress Europe’. The aim of this paper is to investigate the europeanization of social movements frames, that is the construction of discourses presenting collective identities, interpretations and claims which have a European dimension. Since the middle of the 1980’s and Snow et al. (1986) seminal article, social movements’ discursive activities have been observed in details through frame-analysis. By studying framing-processes and the construction of collective action master-frames, this perspective intends to analyse how social movements’ organizations and activists use ideas and beliefs to mobilize (Benford and Snow, 2000; Snow, 2004). Collective action frames are “action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement.
organization” (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614). They provide an “interpretation of reality” which allows the justification of a collective action by presenting “who we are”, by presenting a social phenomenon as a problematic situation, by imputing responsibility for this situation, and by presenting the means to solve the problem (Snow et. al., 1986; see also Gamson, 1992; Snow and Benford, 2000; Cefaï and Trom, 2001).

From this perspective, the europeanization of frames refers to a specific ‘interpretation of reality’. It can be defined as the process through which cross-national solidarities among activists, European policy-making and institutions, and, more generally, the European dimension of public policies and debates become salient in the discourses of social movements. In other words, the europeanization of frames relates with the construction of common references and perceptions across national boundaries.

Through which dynamics do social movements europeanize their frames? Do they tend to produce specific types of frames around European public policy issues? How do they arrive to common perceptions, despite the fact that they come from different contexts? These are the main questions that will be addressed in this analysis, through the example of the French and German associations mobilizing for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

The frame-analysis approach has proved to be fruitful for investigation on the cognitive dimensions of activism and on the resonance of social movements’ discourses in the public sphere (for a review, see Snow, 2004). However, few studies have used it to analyse the europeanization or transnationalization of social movements (for exceptions, see della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Giugni, Bander and Eggert, 2007; Geddes and Guiraudon, 2004). The progressive definition of European (or transnational) cognitive frames of collective action is however a significant phenomenon if we consider the more general trend towards the europeanization of public spheres (Díez Medrano, 2007; Koopmans and Statham, 2010; de Vreese and
Schmitt, 2007). Moreover, this phenomenon is puzzling if we consider the literature on framing processes, and in particular the attempts to link the analysis of frames with that of the political, institutional, historical, and cultural context in which social movements are active. Indeed, the literature shows that SMOs’ framing-processes are influenced by the way public authorities define an issue in the public sphere (Ferree et al., 2002; Koopmans et al., 2005; Steinberg, 1999), and by specific sets of events determining public debates around this issue (Armstrong, 2002; Rothman and Oliver, 2002). These studies have shown significant variations in the way social movements mobilizing around a specific issue frame their protest in different countries. From this perspective, one would expect that SMOs coming from different countries produce different types of discourses on European policies. This is especially true for the French and German cases, which are characterized by different ways of defining the asylum issue in the public sphere (see below). As a matter of fact, several studies which have analysed the pro-migrants groups active in Brussels (in particular in the 1990s) have underlined the existence of national cleavages and the difficulties to construct common frames (Danese, 1994; Giugni and Passy, 2002; Guiraudon, 2001).

The analysis presented in this article shows that distinct (and sometimes competing) frames on EU asylum policies are used by the pro-asylum SMOs traditionally active in France and Germany. Some will define a technical and de-politicized Human rights frame and others a more politicized and contentious injustice frame. It shows however that this is not the result of national differences: these two frames are used by SMOs from France and from Germany. How can we explain the emergence of these different cross-national frames? I answer this question through an analysis which relates the europeanization of frames (the cognitive aspect of social movements) with the modes of action at the EU level (their strategies of protest and alliance). I show that, depending on their strategies of protest and alliance at the EU level, SMOs act in different spaces of mobilisation and construct different types of relations with EU institutions. This leads them to europeanize their frames through different processes, and so to produce different types of frames.
The first mode of action is the externalization of protest through the construction of European advocacy coalitions active around EU institutions in Brussels. This mode leads SMOs to follow a process of frame-transformation and to construct a Human rights frame at the EU level. The second mode of action is the transnationalization of protest through the construction of social movements active across national public spheres. It leads SMOs to follow processes of frame-extension and frame-bridging and to construct an injustice frame at the EU level. More generally, this analysis addresses the idea of a European public sphere. The construction of contentious politics at the European level is the sign of the emergence of a European public sphere (Koopmans and Statham, 2010; Risse, 2003). The way social movements frame the European Union will thus lead to explain some of the dynamics of construction of this cross-national public sphere, and to develop the idea of a fragmented European public sphere.

My analysis focuses on SMOs representative of the pro-asylum movement in France and Germany. As I will develop, French and German contexts are very different for what regards the definition of the asylum issue and the representation of the European Union in the public sphere. In both countries, some pro-asylum SMOs act at the EU level through a mode of externalization, and others through transnationalization. I will thus develop my argument through a double comparison: a comparison of the frames of French and German SMOs in general, and a comparison of the frames of the French and German SMOs which have followed distinct modes of action at the EU level. I will examine and relate three dimensions: the europeanization of their frames; the processes through which they do so; and the types of frames emerging from these processes. In the following sections, I will present the methods and theoretical approach on which I have relied. I will then present the SMOs composing the French and German pro-asylum comparatively. In the last section, I will present the results of my empirical analysis on the europeanization of their frames.
Methods

The 23 SMOs selected for this study are the most active organizations composing the French and German pro-asylum movements since the beginning of the 1990s. This goes from humanitarian NGOs (France Terre D’Asile, Caritas), to Human rights groups (Amnesty International, Pro Asyl) and more politicized grass-roots groups (Gisti, Caravan for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees, Coordination Nationale des Sans-Papiers). These groups act at the EU level through the construction of, or integration into, European umbrella organizations or networks. These structures were also studied. These are institutionalized networks active exclusively around European institutions in Brussels (European Council for Refugees and Exiles, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe) and less professionalized networks active at the transnational level (Migreurop, No Border). I observed the europeanization of their frames through the systematic analysis of the documents (communiqués, calls, petitions, internal literature such as annual reports, and web-page presentations), which they published between 1999 and 2007, and which relate to immigration and asylum policies. This data was found in the web-pages of the associations and in their archives. This analysis was complemented by a set of 29 semi-structured interviews conducted in 2006 and 2007 in Paris, Berlin and Brussels.

First, to operationalize the europeanization of frames, I refer to the three basic framing tasks distinguished by Snow and Benford (1988): diagnostic framing (presenting a situation as problematic and implying the attribution of a responsibility); prognostic framing (proposing a solution to the problematic situation); motivational (giving people a reason and an incentive to mobilize, and seeking to “transform actors identities in a way which favors action”; della Porta and Diani, 2006: 79). My frame analysis aimed at identifying the europeanization of these three framing tasks in the publications of the selected groups and in
the interviews. Several indicators were identified and observed through an open-coding method. For example, the reference to a global “problematic situation” in the EU, or to related situations and/or events in other European countries is a good indicator for the europeanization of the diagnostic frame. The expression of a need to construct a collective action across countries, or the expression of a need to modify the European legislation and/or the modes of negotiation in the European polity are indicators for the europeanization of the prognostic frame. Finally, one relevant indicator for the europeanization of the motivational frame is for example the regular reference to the SMOs with which linkages across states’ boundaries are constructed. 286 documents containing europeanized diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames were analysed through this method. This analysis was complemented by the interviews. In particular, the Europeanization of the diagnostic frame was observed through questions on the differences and similarities between national and European immigration and asylum policies and on the role of European institutions. The Europeanization of the prognostic frame was observed through questions on the targets of their protests and on the opportunities to mobilize at the EU level. Finally, the Europeanization of the motivational frame was observed through questions on their sense of belonging to a European social movement and to the significance given to cross-national solidarities.

I also examined through which framing processes these groups have europeanized their discourse. For that, I carried out a systematic comparison of the frames that they traditionally use at the national level with those being used when they refer to the European level. I used the typology developed by Snow et. al. (1986) and distinguished four main frame alignment processes leading to europeanization: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation. Again, different indicators were identified and observed in associative documents. Thus, a good indicator for a process of frame bridging is that new frames are added to those traditionally used in their traditional discourses. A good indicator for a process of frame amplification is that associations move from a discourse in which various frames are used to a
discourse that focuses on one particular frame. A good indicator for a process of frame extension is that the same frames are used for national and European developments. Finally, a good indicator for a process of frame transformation is that associations rely on different frames in their discourse related to European developments than in those related to national developments. These processes were also observed in the interviews, through questions related to the differences and similarities in the types of arguments these SMOs use to present national and European immigration and asylum policies, and through questions on their strategies of presentation of EU politics more generally.

Social movements’ framing processes and the European Union

My theoretical approach stems from a constructivist turn in European studies in the last decade (Díez Medrano, 2003, 2007; Radaelli, 2000): the role of ideas and the symbolic construction of Europe are increasingly recognized as being fundamental. From this perspective, “the steps and effects of the process of integration are not directly determined by the exogenous interests of the main actors, but are instead strongly influenced by their ‘imagined Europe’” (della Porta and Caiani, 2009: 18). Frame-analysis, therefore, proves to be a fruitful instrument to capture social movements’ definitions and perceptions of the European Union (and, more generally, the public opinion’s attitudes on the EU: Díez Medrano, 2003).

Collective action frames are constructed in interaction; they are “the outcome of negotiating shared meaning” (Gamson, 1992: 111). This interactive dynamic can be captured through the concept of “frame-alignment” (frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, or frame transformation): the “strategic
efforts (made) by social movement organizations to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource provider” (Benford and Snow, 2000: 624). Social movements’ collective actions at the EU level are constructed in interaction as well: a single SMO rarely acts on its own, but rather through the building of transnational coalitions and networks (Balme and Chabanet, 2002; Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Ruzza, 2004). While frame analysis has mainly focused on the interaction processes taking place within a SMO, few studies have analysed framing-processes taking place within a coalition or a network of SMOs (for exceptions see Evans, 1997; Gerhard and Rucht, 1992; Marullo, Pagnucco and Smith, 1996). Even less studies have examined the framing processes taking place within coalitions across borders (for exceptions, see Geddes and Guiraudon, 2004; della Porta and Caiani, 2009). As a constructivist approach on the European Union suggests, this analysis is however fundamental as it is within these coalitions that social movements organizations construct and define their (contentious) perceptions of Europe.

Scholars working on the activities of social movements at the European or global level have shown that SMOs use different strategies of protest and of alliance at the EU level (Balme and Chabanet, 2002; della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Tarrow, 2010). In particular, three modes of action can be distinguished:

*Domestication* (della Porta and Caiani, 2009; Imig and Tarrow, 2002): social movements impute some responsibility to the European Union for a problematic situation, but they continue to mobilize at the national level. They target national institutions and pressurize them to negotiate better arrangements at the European level.

*Externalization* (Balme and Chabanet, 2002): social movements traditionally active at the national level target European institutions to escape national obstacles and to put pressure on their own government
indirectly. This last strategy is close to the “boomerang effect” presented by Keck and Sikkink (1998). European institutions act as a “coral-reef” for social movements organizations (Tarrow, 2010).

Transnationalisation (Balme and Chabanet, 2002; Tarrow, 2010): networks of European activists mobilize around EU policies and target at the same time European and national institutions. In contrast with the previous mode, this process leads social movements traditionally active at the national level to construct networks and collective actions addressing various polities (European or national) simultaneously (rather than through a multilevel framework).

From the perspective of this typology, my argument is that different modes of action at the EU level lead to distinct framing processes, and so to the production of different perceptions of the European Union. In other words, I show that specific strategies of protest and of construction of transnational networks lead SMOs to develop specific types of frames. This argument suggests thus the more general idea that social movements construct and adjust their frames in the course of their European protest campaigns, depending in particular on the types of relations (cooperative or contentious) that they construct with European institutions. From a sociological perspective on the European Union, it suggests more generally that Europe is an ‘everyday practice’ (Favell and Guiraudon, 2011: 570): it is through their cross-national protesting and networking practices that activists define their relations with European institutions and construct common perceptions of Europe.

The French and German pro-asylum movements: the “solidarity movement family” in two contrasted contexts

The asylum issue has traditionally displayed a different signification in the French and German public
spheres. This has had consequences on the ability of the pro-asylum movements to mobilize, as well as on their framing processes.

Since the creation of German refugee policies immediately after the Second World War, the asylum issue has been strongly linked, in public debates, to a moral and ethical condemnation of the Third Reich (Herbert, 2001; Lavenex, 1999). The generous asylum policy constructed after 1945 (and in place until 1993) has been presented as a reaction against the policies that had led millions of people to flee Germany from 1933 to 1945. This perception of the asylum issue contrasts with the German exclusive definition of citizenship (expressed through the principle of jus-sanguini that prevailed until the end of the 1990s: Brubaker, 1992; Koopmans et. al. 2005) and by a self-representation of Germany as a “no-immigration” country (Bade, 2000; Kastoryano, 1996). The view of the asylum issue in Germany is thus in a constant tension between the principles set out in the immediate after-War and the exclusive definition of citizenship. Consequently, the asylum right has been traditionally perceived as an exceptional right in German society, in the sense that it is an exception to the general representation of Germany as a “no-immigration” country (Lavenex, 1999).

In France, on the other hand, asylum has been historically defined through a representation of the French example as a sort of universal model; an “international engagement”. Behind the promotion of the right to asylum, there was the self-perception of the “pays des droits de l'Homme” of the “terre d'asile” (Lavenex, 1999; Noiriel, 1998). This has led to a more global (or cosmopolitan) perception of the asylum issue than in Germany (Lavenex, 1999). This is reinforced by the fact that both countries have different notions of citizenship. Nationality law and citizenship in France are based on the notion of “jus soli” and are therefore traditionally more inclusive (Brubaker, 1992). Finally, France, as a former colonial country, has a longer history of immigration than Germany and asylum has thus tended to be linked in the public debates with the
more general question of immigration (Weil, 1995). Moreover, the growth of an anti-immigrant party since the beginning of the 1980s has contributed to the politicization and salience of immigration and asylum policies in the public sphere, and so to the fact that different social groups have got involved in the debates related to this issue. In brief, the asylum issue is historically a more general issue in the French public sphere than in Germany, where it is considered as an exceptional right (and thus as a more isolated issue).

In their cross-national comparative study on the anti-nuclear movement in Western Europe, Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995) proved that the “political construction of an issue” influenced the possibility for social movements to find support for their cause. The frame-analysis carried out in these two countries confirms this idea. It shows that, due to the different signification of the asylum issue in the public sphere, the French pro-asylum movement is traditionally less isolated in society than the German one: the cause of the asylum seekers and refugees resonates more, and the movement has thus less difficulties to construct stable networks of supports. Consequently, processes of frame-bridging are more frequent in the French case than in the German case. Thus, because of its networks of supports within the trade-union fields, the education field or the political field, the French pro-asylum movement often bridges the asylum issue with issues related to working conditions, housing conditions, racism, etc. These dynamics are more exceptional in the German case.

Beyond these differences, the French and German pro-asylum movements have also common points as they both belong to the “solidarity movement family” (Giugni and Passy, 2001). The analysis shows indeed the existence of three groups of SMOs in both countries: those producing a humanitarian framing, a principle oriented framing, and a subversive framing. The first group follows a logic of individualization in their discourse while the two others have both a logic of politicization.
The first category includes the most institutionalized organizations which have a repertoire of cooperation with public authorities. These are the religious associations and those providing services to refugees and asylum-seekers. They rely on two main frames: the humanitarian frame (presenting the protection of refugees as a moral duty) and that of international solidarity. Both of them are similar as they contain the central idea of a “call for help” of individuals facing a situation of emergency. Thus, this type of frame is not based on the idea of the defence (or promotion) of general political principles and values. It is less oriented towards the general definition of immigration and asylum policies than towards their concrete implementation. It is essentially focused on the immediate situation of individuals seeking asylum rather than on state’s policy. This idea of a “call for help” is thus oriented towards political neutrality.

The second group of SMOs is mainly composed of the Human rights associations. In comparison with the first group, they are less institutionalized and have a pluralist repertoire of collective action. These SMOs rely on (and often bridge together) three main frames: the frame of anti-racism and anti-discriminations, that of the defence of fundamental rights, and that of the fight against repression and/or persecution. In contrast with the frames of the first group of SMOs, they are more principled-oriented than action-oriented. Their internal logic is to present a “call for reason” addressed to the authorities. The underlying idea is that French or German public authorities have gone beyond the limits fixed by the principles of democracy and individual freedoms and by their international engagements (the Geneva Convention or the European Convention on Human rights in particular). The associations using these types of frames demand public authorities to “be reasonable” and to respect democratic values and individual liberties.

Finally, the last group comprises the SMOs having a militant basis. They are the less institutionalized SMOs and often rely on contentious repertoires as well as on civil disobedience. They rely on three main frames:
the frame of the fight against precariousness and social inequalities, of the broader opening of the borders, and of the promotion of new fundamental rights. These frames are oriented towards the “call for new political orientations”. For example, one of their claims is that all the undocumented migrants should be regularized to guarantee them a secure legal and socio-economic statute. They demand a clear break with current asylum and immigration policies. They constitute therefore a strong criticism of the authorities and are close to the “injustice frame” examined by Gamson (1992). In comparison with the second one, this last category of frames is more radical and action-oriented. Its use implies the demand of radical political changes whereas the use of the call for reason implies the limitation of policies considered as unjust. Moreover, it is action-oriented as the definition of a prognostic is central. Differently, the call for reason is more reactive: it insists more on the definition of a diagnostic. These two categories of frames have however strong similarities and can be clearly distinguished from the first category: they are both political and principled-oriented. These similarities are illustrated by the fact that most of the associations relying on the second category of frames follow a process of frame-bridging that leads them to use also the third category of frames (the reverse is also true).

In the following part, I will show how these characteristics have influenced their modes of action at the European level and, consequently their framing of EU policies and institutions.

The different paths of Europeanization of frames among the French and German pro-asylum movements

The empirical analysis of the documents produced by the French and German pro-asylum movements shows that the scope of their frames has evolved over time. Table 1 shows that they have produced an
increasing number of documents which include europeanized diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames between 1999 and 2007:

[Table 1 about here]

These results contrast with studies which have shown (through protest-event analysis based on the examination of press-reports) that there is no significant increase in the europeanization of protest (Uggla and Uba, 2011). They show on the contrary that, the more the process of harmonization of asylum policies has moved forward, the more SMOs have referred to it and have europeanized their discourse. A first set of explanation for this contrast lies in the fact that my analysis focuses on frames rather than protest events: the fact that a SMO produces a discourse on the EU does not automatically mean that it will construct a collective action at that level. Another explanation is that I relied on different sources: most of the documents I accessed (through the consultation of SMOs’ archives) were not reported in the press. Finally, another set of explanation is the fact that I focused on the pro-asylum movement, a movement which is related with a cosmopolitan issue, and thus particularly ready to europeanize (Diani, 2004). These results are however consistent with studies that have shown the beginning of a europeanization of protest in the 1990s (Imig and Tarrow, 2001). They are also consistent with studies demonstrating a europeanization, or transnationalization, of social movements “from the inside” (Agrikoliantsky and Sommier, 2005; della Porta et. al., 2006; della Porta and Caiani, 2009). These studies point to the internal transformations of social movements and show that EU policies and institutions are increasingly a point of reference for social movements across Europe.

My main argument is however not to show that these SMOs have europeanized their frames, but to demonstrate how they have done so. This is what the following parts will develop. Studies analysing the
strategies of protest and alliance of SMOs at the EU level show the existence of two different spaces of mobilization: one which is exclusively around EU institutions in Brussels and which is mostly disconnected from national spaces (Balme and Chabanet, 2008; Beyers, 2004); the other which is transnational and goes across national spaces (della Porta and Caiani, 2009). As I will develop now, a part of the French and German pro-asylum movements has moved towards the first space whereas the other has moved towards the second. This has led them to follow different paths of europeanization of their frames and so to construct different perceptions of the European Union. In this process, the form of the interactions between social movements and European institutions plays a significant role: depending on the spaces of mobilization in which they are involved, SMOs create different types of relations with European institutions. This process determines the way they europeanize their frames as well as the content of these frames.

*The externalization of social movements and the process of frame transformation*

In France and in Germany, a first group of organizations follows a mode of externalization of its action since the end of the 1990s: it aims to change national policies through a mobilization that addresses European institutions directly. This group includes the religious associations and those providing services to asylum seekers. They participate in the centralized European groups which dedicate to lobbying EU institutions (in particular the ECRE, European Council on Refugees and Exiles). In doing so, they get involved into a specific “field” (Favell, 2000) in which non-governmental actors use insider strategies and construct relations of interdependence with EU institutions (Favell, 2000; Geddes, 1998; Guiraudon, 2001). SMOs tend to act as experts and try to influence European decision-making through lobbying techniques and close cooperation with institutional actors. In particular, the European Commission is seen as an ally which can help changing national policies through the definition of European norms. These actors claim
thus for “more Europe” (Geddes, 2000).

For the French and German SMOs entering this field, this mode of action leads them to follow a process of frame-transformation. The relation of cooperation with European institutions leads them to differentiate the national and European levels and to use frames that resonate with EU policy-making. In the course of their interactions within the umbrella-organizations active in Brussels, they have to “adapt to new ways of doing things” (interview 7), and they thus tend to present European asylum policies as being guided by a logic which is different from national asylum policies. Consequently, as they europeanize their frames, these SMOs alter the general sense of their discourse. They move from a discourse based on the general idea of a “call for help” (the humanitarian frame) to a discourse based on that of a “call for reason”, and they focus in particular on the frame of the defence of fundamental rights. Thus, in its 2006 annual report, Forum Réfugiés underlines the degradation of the asylum right in the context of European harmonization and refers to the “international standards”:

“It then concludes by evoking “a deteriorated asylum right at the end of the Tampere process” and “a decline of asylum in Europe”. This specific framing contrasts with the rest of the document, which is related to the situation in France. Indeed, if a part of the developments on France refers to asylum as a fundamental right, the large majority of the text refers to the conditions of reception of asylum seekers and refugees, presenting a typical humanitarian discourse. This difference of discourse was explicitly underlined during an interview
with an employee of the Secours Catholique, who stressed the different logics of argumentation at the national and European levels:

“When we refer to European asylum policies (through Caritas Europa), we deal with directives and regulations. Whereas in France, we base our activities on concrete statements (statements of poverty and exclusion). We deal with concrete situations faced by individuals every day. At the European level, what we have to do is to anticipate these statements. We are situated up stream. We have thus a much more theoretical and technical discourse. We defend fundamental principles of rights which are defined in international treaties.” (interview 20)

Through this shift of framing, these associations generally disconnect their framing of the European and national situations. The lack of connection between these two discourses is explained by the fact that these SMOs perceive a difference between the “European approach” and the “national approaches” on asylum policies. For them, European asylum policies are defined in a restrictive way because, in the process of policy-making, the European Commission and the European Parliament (who represent the “European approach”) are less powerful than the Council of ministers (representative of the “national approaches”). It is thus implied that the “European approach” on asylum policies is less restrictive than the approaches of the member-states. As the analysis of the diagnostic frame - and more precisely the attribution of a responsibility –shows, this perception is common to all French and German SMOs which follow a mode of externalization of their action. Thus, in a communiqué published in 2000, the German SMO Diakonie argues that, in comparison with the existing national norms, the EU Commission's proposal on family reunification is an improvement:

“In comparison with the practices related to family reunification in Germany (and in other European
countries), these proposals contain real improvements for refugees recognized by the Geneva Convention and they open the possibility of family reunification for the refugees with a subsidiary protection.”

The fact that humanitarian associations impute responsibility for the problematic situation mainly to member-states (and not to the EU Commission and Parliament) has been confirmed during the interviews with activists in France and in Germany. Thus, a member of Caritas Deutschland described the institutional process of harmonization in the following way:

“When we follow the course of European negotiations, we see always more or less the same pattern. The Commission proposes a directive which we consider as positive in comparison to the asylum policies we have in Germany. But then, the proposal is examined by the Council. After these negotiations, the proposal is completely changed. It becomes a restrictive directive which is made of the worst measures of each member-state. This is how new concepts like the idea of a list of ‘safe third-countries’ determine European policies. Finally, the European Parliament is consulted but it is not heard.” (interview 19)

*The transnationalization of social movements and the definition of diversified frame alignment processes*

In France and Germany, a second group of SMOs follows a mode of transnationalization of its action since the end of the 1990s: they target at the same time European and national institutions. Their aim is to have an influence on national as well as on EU politics (and not only on national politics like in the process of externalization). This group includes the Human rights associations and the more grass-roots SMOs. They participate in two different types of European networks: cross-issue networks involved in transnational protest events such as the European Social Forums or the Euromayday parades, and networks mobilizing specifically on EU immigration and asylum policies (such as Migreurop or No Border). Some of these
SMOs (the Human rights associations mainly) combine this mode with an externalization of their action and are thus also active in Brussels. In contrast with the externalization of collective action, this process is not correlated with the use of insider strategies: even if some organizations have contacts with European institutions (with members of the European parliament in particular), they have not established a relation of cooperation with them and they use protest as a main form of collective action.

The analysis reveals that these more contentious relations with European institutions lead these associations to follow two distinct frame-alignment processes when they europeanize their discourses: frame extension and frame bridging. These processes are the results of their strategies of mobilization at the European level: as they are in a contentious relation with European institutions, they tend to use the same frames that they use at the national level. They also reflect the types of interactions that they have constructed within the European spaces of mobilization in which they are involved: as they construct cross-issue networks, they tend to bridge different types of frames. They result in the production of an injustice frame characterized by a strong criticism of European orientations and a general incentive to mobilize.

The first process is a frame extension. It shows that, in contrast with the first group of organizations, the EU approach on immigration and asylum policies is not considered as being different from the national approaches. Thus, in a report by Pro Asyl, the evolution of European asylum policies is directly linked with that of the German policy:

“In 2004, the Refugees’ day was organized under the slogan ‘Europe fortifies itself’. Pro Asyl criticized the fact that Germany plays a leading role in the race to the most efficient country in refugees’ expulsions. In particular, the minister of Interior Schily is responsible for the rigid policy towards refugees in Germany and for the attempt to make the EU a continent without refugees through the externalisation of asylum
This continuity of discourse in national and European contexts has been underlined in the interviews. This is for example the case in an interview with a representative of the Migreurop network:

“When we write communiqués, we don’t make a synthesis of different national situations. For example, we can write a communiqué about the situation in Lampedusa or Sangatte because we think that it is representative of the general logic of European policies. So when Migreurop writes about these situations, it doesn’t do it because there are Italian or French associations in it that are worried about national measures. It does it because it believes that these are European situations.” (interview 2)

This continuity is often established on the basis of their perception of the history of European countries’ immigration and asylum policies and of the history of the relationships between “Northern” and “Southern” countries. This idea was thus expressed in an interview with an activist of the network No Lager (Kein Mensch Ist Illegal) in Germany:

“We are a Left anti-racist association. This means that we fight against the racist policies of exploitation of migrants by Northern liberal states. In this perspective, our action has since its beginnings an international dimension. The policy implemented by the German state today is of course the one we fight concretely, but this policy is not specifically German. It is more generally the policy that is implemented by European and Northern states towards states and populations from the South. This is the sense of the motto: ‘we are here because you destroy our countries’.” (interview 15)

From the perspective of these arguments, it is also because these associations have traditionally a politicized
discourse that they establish a continuity between the national and European approaches on the immigration and asylum issue. The features of their discourse lead them to develop arguments that go beyond the national level. As I have developed above, their (politcized) discourse is turned towards general principles (anti-racism, the defence of fundamental rights…) rather than towards particular situations (like the humanitarian discourse). Consequently, the construction of a process of frame-extension is easier for politicized associations than for humanitarian associations. This is visible in their communiqués, calls and petitions, where linkages between national and European policies are very often made, and both policies are presented through the same frames. This dynamic is thus clear in a communiqué of the Coordination Nationale des Sans-Papiers in 1999:

“Three years ago, we were some hundreds of people occupying the church Saint-Ambroise. In doing so, we presented to the French, European and international public space the question of the administrative situation of the political refugees and migrants coming to live in Europe. (...) Today, thousands of people are still living in Europe without having any rights.”

In this text, a particular situation (“some hundreds of people”) is used in order to put forward general principles (the denunciation of “the total absence of rights”), and this general principle is extended beyond national boundaries (“several thousands of people in Europe”).

This frame extension is often coupled with a process of frame bridging. While the process of frame extension relates to the diagnostic and prognostic frames, frame bridging relates mainly to the motivational frame, and in particular to the construction of a collective identity and of a cause. Indeed, in the course of their interactions with SMOs mobilizing around other issues (during transnational events such as the European Social Forums in particular), they tend to establish linkages with other causes and to participate in
the definition of general master frames such as the “global justice movement” (della Porta et. al., 2006). This dynamic is for example visible in a call signed by several hundreds of SMOs across Europe, in which the situation of migrants is linked with the situation of the “whole workforce”:

“Camps are the dark symbol of a migration politics which is not simply aimed at keeping refugees and migrants out of Europe, but rather at promoting a process of selective inclusion, also through legalization, of the migrants. This process corresponds to the production of a hierarchy of rights as well as of legal and political positions, that lies at the core of the material transformations of citizenship in Europe and which is far from regarding only the migrants. And it corresponds to a new model of labor force management centered upon precarization and exploitation. The migrants are the subjects who experience in advance life and labor conditions that the whole workforce, certainly with different degrees, is beginning to experience in Europe.”

This process of frame bridging is important as it points to the fact that SMOs which construct European social movements participate in the construction of new forms of identities, through the definition of common claims at that level. It shows thus that the construction of protest at the EU level leads to a cognitive evolution through the creation of linkages with other movements. This evolution is particularly visible in the German case, where, for historical reasons, the cause of asylum-seekers and refugees is more isolated than in France. Thus, the anti-G8 protests in Rostock in 2007 were seen by many pro-asylum SMOs active in Germany as a way to “reinforce the strategy of alliances” with other social movements (interview 14). As it is illustrated in a call for participation in an action-day on immigration at these protests, this strategy leads them to present the struggle for the rights of migrants as being part of a more general struggle:
“We seek connection to other social movements, progressive groups in trade unions and other institutions, who wish to join us in this struggle against social and political inequality and marginalization. For this reason, we will participate in the actions against the G8 summit. We aim for a strategy based on commonality, as we are struggling against the same apartheid- and migration-regime and for global social justice.”

Conclusion

As the example of the French and German pro-asylum movements shows, social movements organisations construct specific frames to support their mobilizations at the European level. First, the use of frame analysis shows that they increasingly recognize the role of EU institutions and policies. It shows moreover the existence of different frame alignment processes. While social movements organizations which externalize their action follow a process of frame transformation, those which transnationalize their action follow a combination of frame extension and frame bridging. These processes lead to different perceptions (different framings) of European asylum policies. While the first group of SMOs establishes a clear distinction between European and national policies, the second group sees a continuity between both policies. This leads the first group to present a fragmented and technical framing based on the defence of Human rights and supporting supranational policies. It leads the second group to present a politicized and general framing which is more critical of supranational policies.

These different frame alignment processes are explained by the strategies of protest and networking at the EU level, and by the types of interactions with European power-holders. They show thus the existence of distinct (and often disconnected) European spaces of mobilization in which different perceptions of EU
institutions and policies are constructed. Thus, going back to the general idea of the construction of a European public sphere, this analysis points to the fact that it is fragmented. It is a sphere in which different (and disconnected) spaces of mobilization emerge. Even if they address the same policies, the (humanitarian) associations doing lobbying in the European political space are disconnected from those (the politicized associations) organizing protest at the transnational level. It is a remarkable fact however that, even if they are coming from distinct contexts of mobilization, French associations could not be clearly differentiated from German associations in terms of their framing of EU asylum policies. This leads to conclude more generally that this emerging European public sphere does not simply superimpose the existing national public spaces. It is not plural: it creates a new context of mobilization that is common to social movements coming from different countries.
i “First call for mobilization for a counter-summit and an alternative forum on ‘Migrations and development’. For a Europe of openness and solidarity”, May 2008

ii Frame bridging refers to “the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue, problem or set of events” (Snow et al., 1986: 467). Frame amplification is the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events. Frame extension is the extension of the boundaries of a framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to the primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents. Finally, frame transformation refers to the definition of new interpretive schemes.

iii In their study on the Solidarity movements in international perspective, Marco Giugni and Florence Passy (2001, pp. 6-7) present a definition of the “solidarity movement” based on the notion of “political altruism”:

“Political altruism is a form of behaviour based on acts performed by a group or/and on behalf of a group, and not aimed to meet individual interests; it is directed at a political goal of social change or the redefinition of power relations; and individuals involved in this type of social change do not stand to benefit directly from the success deriving from the accomplishment of those goals. Following this definition, the actions performed by the solidarity movement can be characterized as political altruism. Participants in the solidarity movement act collectively with a clear political aim, and their actions are pursued to the benefits of other people.”

iv The results show that French SMOs tend to produce more documents with Europeanized framings than German SMOs. This does not mean however that they Europeanize more. In line with the developments presented in the precedent part, it means that the French pro-asylum movement is generally more active than the German one, and tends to communicate more.


vii Diakonisches Werk der EKD, “Stellungnahme des Diakonischen Werkes der EKD zum Richtlinienentwurf der EU über das Recht auf Familienzusammenführung”, April 2000
viii Pro Asyl, Tätigkeitsbericht des Vorstandes des Fördervereins PRO ASYL 2004/2005, p. 8 (author’s translation)

ix CNSP, 18 MARS 1996 -18 MARS 1999. 3 ans de lutte des sans-papiers, March 1999 (author’s translation)

x “2/4: For freedom of movement and the right to stay. Call for a second European day of action For freedom of movement and the right to stay”, April 2005

x Call for an action-day “escape and migration”, June 2007
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Table 1: The europeanization of the frames of French and German pro-asylum SMOs

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Annex 1: List of interviews

Interview 1: Spokesperson for European developments, France Terre d’Asile, 19 December 2005
Interview 2: Spokesperson for European developments in the Gisti, and president of Migreurop, 20 December 2005
Interview 3: Coordinator of the section “Refugees” Amnesty International Section Française, 23 December 2005
Interview 4: Spokesperson for European developments in Act Up Paris, and member of Migreurop, 5 January 2006
Interview 5: General Secretary of the Ligue des Droits de l’Homme, and Vice-President of the European Association for the Defence of Human Rights, 5 January 2006
Interview 6: Spokesperson for European developments, Cimade, 6 January 2006
Interview 7: Responsible for the section on refugees, Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin, 19 May 2006
Interview 8: Activist in The Voice Refugee Forum and the Karawane für die Rechte der MigrantInnen und Flüchtlinge, 23 May 2006
Interview 9: Spokesperson for the Flüchtlingsrat Berlin, 1 June 2006
Interview 10: Spokesperson for European developments, Pro Asyl, 6 June 2006
Interview 11: Spokesperson for European developments, Flüchtlingsrat Hamburg, 8 June 2006
Interview 12: Activist in Kanak Attak, 15 June 2006
Interview 13: Activist in Initiative Gegen Abschiebhaft, 17 June 2006
Interview 14: Activist in the networks Kein Mensch Ist Illegal, No Lager and Frassanito, 19 June 2006
Interview 15: Activist in the networks Kein Mensch Ist Illegal and No Lager, 20 June 2006
Interview 16: Spokesperson for the section on “Refugees”, Amnesty International Deutschland, 22 June 2006
Interview 17: Activist in the networks Kein Mensch Ist Illegal and Frassanito, 24 June 2006
Interview 18: Coordinator of the section on “Foreigners”, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, 4 July 2006
Interview 19: Spokesperson for European developments, Caritas Deutschland, 7 July 2006
Interview 20: Spokesperson for European developments, Secours Catholique, 21 December 2006
Interview 22: Spokesperson for the network Migreurop, 24 July 2007
Interview 23: Coordinator of the section on refugees, Human Rights Watch Europe, 27 September 2007
Interview 24: Director of the Platform for an International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, 11 October 2007
Interview 25: Spokesperson for the section on immigration, European Network Against Racism, 23 October 2007
Interview 26: Project coordinator “Eastern-Europe”, European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 12 October 2007
Interview 27: Spokesperson for the Jesuit Refugee Service Europe, 23 October 2007
Interview 28: General Secretary of the Churches Committee for Migrants in Europe, 24 October 2007
Interview 29: Executive Officer Justice and Home Affairs, Amnesty International European Office, 24 October 2007