Glossary

Coalition refers to an alliance of policy actors or to looser camps or constellations of third sector policy actors who come together to pursue policy change or policy perpetuation goals motivated by shared commitments, values and/or interests. In the TSEP network, research effort has been directed at describing and analysing coalitions formed and perpetuated by full- or part-time specialist third-sector-specific policy actors.

Collective noun refers to the language used by domestic or EU-level actors to group organizations sectorally at a level higher than vertical policy fields, and involving some implicit or explicit reference to ownership and control not reducible to either the market or the state. In some countries the collective noun and associated expressions involves a relatively stable or dominant language supported by formal or informal institutions and practices, while in others there is a more open field, with competing concepts and formulations, often fluidly coexisting and interacting with one another.

Community method has been described by the European Commission as ‘the EU’s usual method of decision-making, in which the Commission makes a proposal to the Council and Parliament who then debate it, propose amendments and eventually adopt it as EU law. In the process they will often consult other bodies such as the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions’ (European Commission, 2009). It was the ‘classical’ or ‘traditional’ method of processing EU policy in the second half of the twentieth century, but in the twenty-first has been increasingly supplemented or displaced by more nationally-oriented processes, including most prominently the Open Method of Coordination, which rebalances control away from the EU institutional level, towards member-state-level actors.

Cross-cutting is used as a synonym for ‘horizontal’.

Domain refers to a level of policy between vertical policy field and the macro system of policy and politics. In relation to the third sector, the domain that is of empirical relevance in Europe, and in particular North West and Southern EU member states, is the social welfare domain.

Governance has multiple and contested meanings but, at its broadest, it can be used to refer to institutionally-ordered arrangements for shaping the processing of policy at the key stages of agenda-setting, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. It tends to be linked to steering or strategic – as opposed to tactical – processes; patterned as opposed to unstructured relationships and interactions; and to be associated with such values as accountability, transparency and effectiveness. The ways in which the third sector is linked to governance vary significantly across contexts, but often considered in scope are issues both in relation to internal governance – the design and application of appropriate legal structures and micro-constitutional models in the light of third sector
specificities such as voluntarism and non-profit-distribution – and issues in relation to external governance, including how the third sector can and should fit as an actor at each of the policy stages, wherein it is one policy actor among many.

**Horizontal** refers to concepts/beliefs or policies/practices/actions that are not confined to within **vertical policy fields**, but that are either held to be relevant or applied discretely but according to common principles within two or more vertical policy fields, especially in the **social welfare domain**; or that are held to be relevant/applied as a matter of ‘generic’ policy. Policy development in relation to these processes typically involves **specialist third-sector-specific policy actors** within and outside the state, forming relatively loosely-coupled policy networks and/or a more formally institutionalized and recognized ‘policy communities’. The result can be the creation and perpetuation of a policy space jointly recognized by these actors as constituting the subject matter of third sector policy (using some collective noun) that is not reducible to the policy contents of a particular vertical field.

**Horizontality** refers to the extent to which policies and institutions reflect horizontal or cross-cutting policy initiative.

**Industry-specific policies** are relevant to a particular **vertical field** only.

**Multi-level process** refers to how the European, national and subnational levels of public policy are inter-related. The extent to which this constitutes third sector policies is examined in the TSEP network by **policy cases**. Note that this is not synonymous with **multi-level governance**, which is typically used as a framing concept to claim that substantive power is situated at more than one level. The extent to which multi-level processes involve a reconfiguration towards multi-level governance is treated here as an open question for research.

**Open Method of Coordination** is based on mutual agreement of policy objectives by member states; the development of common guidelines, indicators and targets; benchmarking of performance and exchange of good practices, formulation of national action plans; and peer review and joint monitoring of implementation in an iterative multi-year cycle. It increasingly supplements and even displaces the **community method**.

**Path dependency** refers to how historical policy decisions create a ‘policy legacy’, which can have long-term consequences for the possibilities of current and future policies because of high set-up costs, learning effects, institutional interdependence, and the operation of adaptive expectations. These features apply to the complex and sometimes opaque policy environments in which third sector policy is shaped, and mean that, while policy legacies do not predetermine future options, they do tend to constrain them in significant ways.

**Policy** is used in TSEP as shorthand for **public policy**.

**Policy activism** refers in general to actions taken to initiate, enhance or protect policies, in this volume, in relation to the third sector. The relevant actors can sometimes be seen
as ‘policy entrepreneurs’ with specialist political or technical knowledge responding unambiguously to relatively clear windows of opportunity in well-structured and institutionalized contexts. But in the face of institutional complexity, third sector policy action may also often be considered more akin to looser, uncertain and more improvised ‘policy bricolage’. Both types of effort typically involve the formation of ‘coalitions’ between individuals or organizations, or both. In the TSEP network, research effort has been directed at describing and analysing the entrepreneurship of full- or part-time specialist third-sector-specific policy actors.

**Policy bricolage** involves policy-oriented actions that evolve in a relatively improvised, ad hoc and circumspect fashion, in the face of chronic complexity and institutional uncertainty. It is insufficiently instrumental, well-bounded, specialized or clear-cut to be termed ‘policy entrepreneurship’ as that formulation is usually understood. A significant amount of third sector policy activism seems to be of this form.

**Policy case** refers to the TSEP unit of analysis concerning multi-level public policy. These were policy initiatives, instruments or programmes chosen to capture a range of *policy modes* and stages in the policy process of relevance to the third sector in Europe.

**Policy community** may either be used as a general term to apply to the ensemble of policy actors who jointly shape and implement public policies; or it may be used specifically as an antonym for policy network, signifying a relatively high degree of institutionalization and stability compared with the looser network form.

**Policy entrepreneurship** refers to discrete, reasonably institutionally well-bounded actions taken either to deliberately change, or to deliberately protect, in relation to identifiable public policies (here, third-sector-specific policies) in response to the emergence or cultivation of windows of opportunity. Such efforts typically involve the formation of coalitions between individuals or organizations, or both, and are heavily constrained by national political opportunity structures.

**Policy field** is shorthand for *vertical policy field*.

**Policy learning** refers to the impetus for policy change that occurs when actors adopt strategies, or various forms of policy belief, in the light of experience; or policy changes due to new information and analysis, often generated by *policy activism* and the activities of coalitions.

**Policy mode** is a helpful way of recognizing and analysing the different types of broad policy approaches that jointly constitute the highly complex EU public policy process. Examples of distinctive modes are the *community method* (relevant to the third sector in the European Statute of Association ‘case’) and the *Open Method of Coordination* (relevant to the third sector in the ‘case’ of National Action Plans for social exclusion and employment).

**Public policy** comprises two elements. Unless otherwise qualified, ‘policy’ refers to intended courses of action that are explicitly and proactively articulated by actors with
significant levels of political authority, and reflected in patterned policy discourse, events and institutions. ‘Public’ refers to institutions and events involving that dimension of human activity that is regarded as requiring governmental or social regulation or intervention, or at least common action.

**Social exclusion** is a notoriously polysemic term, but has usefully been defined by the European Commission as ‘referring to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to housing, education, health and access to services’ (European Commission, 1993).

**Social welfare domain** is a ‘meso-level’ concept nested within prevailing national political and public policy systems, while being broader than a single *vertical field*. Within it are the family of ‘human services’ or ‘social [welfare] services’ whose vertical components include International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO) Group 4 (‘personal’ social services, or social care, and income maintenance), Group 6 (development and housing, including employment and training), part of Group 7 (advocacy, to the extent it is geared towards social welfare; and excluding political parties); Group 3 (health) and Group 2 (education and research). Many of these services are (jointly) implicated in tackling *social exclusion*.

**Specialist third-sector-specific policy actors** are the carriers of purposive *third-sector-specific policy* who claim to hold relevant expertise and knowledge. They may be full-time specialist individuals or organizations, but such actors are often part-time, fulfilling this role separately and/or in conjunction with other contributions to the policy system (particularly in the social welfare domain). At a minimum they share a language involving third sector collective nouns (otherwise they cannot be specialists).

**Third sector** at the highest level of generality refers to organizations situated between the market and the state in terms of ownership and control. TSEP needed more specificity to initiate research into this construct as an object of policy. It was therefore provisionally taken to include those organizations that are self-governing and constitutionally independent of the state; do not involve the distribution of profits to shareholders; and benefit to a significant degree from voluntarism.

**Third sector [specific] policy** is usually used as shorthand for *horizontal* third sector policy. As used in this network, it is by definition concerned *only* with public policy that is horizontal to at least a certain extent. Third-sector-specific policies are sustained by policy networks or communities characterized by specialization, and involving claims-making in relation to third sector expertise. The agendas of these policy networks or communities tend to include reference to the third sector’s overarching policy environment in terms of legal structures and wider governance arrangements; institutional processes for mediating third sector–public sector/state relations; arrangements for involvement across policy stages and policy modes; and the promotion of voluntarism, including volunteering. These agendas may be bound up with concerns shared across *vertical fields*, most obviously relating to the *domain* that constitutes a
cross-cutting frame of reference: the *social welfare domain* in the case of many third sector communities.

**Third sector stakeholders** include actors who consciously have a significant role in third sector policy. It includes third sector organizations themselves, but also other policy players including politicians, public officials, the social partners, academics, the media and business.

**Vertical policy field** refers to policies that are developed and apply essentially *within* a particular field or domain: here, horizontal institutions may differentiate between organizations but in the background or incidentally, rather than as the focal point of policy activity. To define ‘field’ boundaries, we follow the standard industrial classification adapted to account for the specificities of the third sector, as represented in the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO). Policies that relate to a particular group or subgroup of the ICNPO are considered ‘vertical’; while those that relate to two or more fields may be considered horizontal, either ‘narrower’ or ‘broader’ according to the range of fields in scope. Empirically in Europe, relevant policies are often (but not always) closely linked to the *social welfare domain*.

**References and further reading**


