

**A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CIVIL
SOCIETY DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL PLATFORM OF EUROPEAN NGOs**

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ABSTRACT

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The dissertation engages in a critical analysis of the involvement of the Brussels-based European NGOs in European governance. It conducts a survey on the European Commission's relevant initiatives after the 1990s and interrogates the implications of these initiatives on one of the prominent European NGO network, the Social Platform of European NGOs. The common understanding conceives of these organizations as conducive to democratization of EU governance within the scope of participatory democracy. However, I endeavour to argue that the Commission has had an aim to make use of the civil society discourse for its institutional interests, while intentionally and unintentionally shaping (and reshaping) civic action in Europe. Participatory democracy project, which is promoted by the Commission, can be seen as a deliberate venture of shaping civic action and state-society relationships in Europe. With respect to this goal, it has encouraged the Social Platform to act like its interlocutor vis-à-vis the NGO community organised both at national and European level. Deriving from the Foucaultian concept of governmentality, I inquiry into the effects of this discourse on the Social Platform, which has been particularly created by the Commission to disperse the participatory democracy and good governance discourse in Europe.

Key words: Governmentality, European Civil Society, Normative theories of democracy, Governance

ÖZ

AVRUPA BIRLIGI KOMISYON'UNUN AVRUPA SIVIL TOPLUMU VE AB STKLAR'I SOSYAL PLATFORMU UZERINE ELESTIREL BIR DEGERLENDIRME

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Bu tez Brüksel merkezli AB STKları'nın Avrupa yönetiminde üstlendiği rollere eleştirel açıdan yaklaşmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Avrupa Komisyon'un 1990 sonrasında geliştirdiği inisiyatifleri ve de bunların etkilerini önemli NGO ağlarından biri olan Sosyal Platform üzerinde incelemektedir, Genel yaklaşım katılımcı demokrasi kavramına referans vererek, Platform tarzı kuruluşların AB yönetişiminin demokratikleştirilmesine katkı sağlayabileceğini savunur. Bu tez, Komisyon'un sivil toplum söylemi üzerinden kendi kurumsal çıkarlarını pekiştirmek ve öte yandan da sivil hareketleri biçimlendirmek çabası içinde olduğunu göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Komisyon'un taşıyıcılığını yaptığı katılımcı demokrasi de bu kapsamda sivil hareketlerin ve devlet-örgütlü sivil toplum ilişkilerinin yeniden şekillendirilme çabası olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Komisyon, Sosyal Platform'u kendisi ve sivil toplum örgütleri arasındaki ilişkileri düzenlemesi için kurmuştur. Foucault'nun yönetim-mentalitesi (governmentality) kavramından yola çıkan bu çalışma bu sürecin etkilerini Sosyal Platform üzerinde araştırır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yönetim-mentalitesi, Avrupa sivil toplumu, Normatif siyaset kuramları, yönetim

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, the legitimacy of the European Union (EU) has been one of the major concerns of EU studies and EU institutions alike. Several suggestions have been advanced to reinforce the EU's legitimacy, such as strengthening the European Parliament (Horeth 1999), enacting a European constitution (Habermas 2001a), searching for a European public sphere (Habermas 2001a; Eriksen 2005; Schlesinger 1995, 2007; Trenz 2008) and involving civil society organisations in European governance (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007; Smismans 2006, Fossum and Menendez 2005, Greenwood 2007a and 2007b; Heritier 1998, Schmitter 2003, Lord and Beetham 2001; Magnette 2003; Curtin 1999, Steffek and Nanz 2007; Kendall and Anheier 1999). This dissertation advances a critical analysis of the latter's promise by concentrating on the Social Platform of European NGOs (hereafter the Social Platform or the Platform), which is one of the prominent umbrella organisations of European NGO networks (hereafter EU NGOs) emerged after the 1990s in order to lobby (or doing advocacy service) in social policy field to the Commission.

This dissertation, in other words, critiques the common understanding of EU NGOs, which finds them conducive to the democratisation of EU governance. I rather examine the role of the European Commission in fostering discourses on European civil society and participatory democracy as well as their implications on the emergence of a certain kind of NGO categorisation by focusing on the Social Platform. The Commission has been promoting a discourse on "civil society", "participation" and "participatory democracy" since the 1990s. Within this discourse, the Commission related organised civic actors to the context of EU integration and its institutional interests (Smismans 2003). For instance, in the late 1990s, the Commission related civic actors to the legitimisation of its regulatory role in social policy. In the early 2000s, the Commission linked the discourse on European civil society to its proposal about an administrative reform within EU institutions and the EU's legitimacy crises. With respect to the latter, in recent years the Commission has

focused on the role of organised civic actors in “bringing the EU back to its citizens” and advancing a European identity, known also as active European citizenship, through “civic participation”.

In arguing that state power is allocated between many entities and scales, different disciplines have endeavoured to elaborate upon the democratic promises of recent reconfigurations of political power – a composition of which has been conceptualised in order to suggest a democratic polity beyond the nation-state and a general public. This process is conceptualised, for example, as democratic experimentalism (Eberlein and Kerwer 2004), direct deliberative polyarchy (Smismans et al 2005; see also Cohen and Sabel 1997) and reflexive right-based polity (Eriksen et al 2005). Due to limitations of collective will formation through the mechanisms of representative democracy at EU level (such as general public and political parties), some of the scholars within the afore-mentioned conceptualisations stressed on the democratising potential of the organised actors of civil society in decision-making processes (Schmitter 2003b, De Schutter 2003). They, therefore, argue that states (and the EU) should actively encourage, mobilise and support civil society (Schmitter 2003b; Cohen and Rogers 1998). Pragmatic philosophy has also supported this view by claiming that political power should not necessarily wait for the emergence of public spheres around the governance structures. Rather, politics can play an active catalyst role by creating its own publics (Bohman 2005).

This dissertation is critical of these arguments. I argue that governance is not a zero-sum power game in the sense that loss of state power is equally distributed among actors (defined as stakeholders), including civil society organisations (Sending and Neumann 2006). As an alternative to the governance paradigm, the dissertation proposes integrating power relations with the study of the effects of a politically constructed discourse – in this case European civil society (ECS). Foucault and his followers illustrated how certain types of subjects might likely to be created as intended and unintended effects of power relations. Here, the power relations are thought of within the scope of Foucault, i.e. as a constitutive and regulative concept.

Defined in this, power differs from an instrumentalist understanding, i.e. direct control of the person or institution “A” on “B”. Yet, the Foucaultian understanding refutes this casual explanation by rejecting that power cannot be possessed. Further, power is not a thing with regards to this understanding. Against this backdrop, governmentality, which stems from Foucault’s later writings, lectures and interviews, as a form of power—other and in addition to other forms of power, such as disciplinary power and sovereignty—sheds light on *how* political power subjectifies and renders its subjects as both the object and subject of government, as well as *what* kind of subjectivity it creates. Hence, when governance is defined as a form of governmentality (e.g. Shore 2009) it is “necessarily” embedded within power relations, with the latter implying the open ended process of subject formations (i.e. forming, reforming and even dissolving) as well as concerning the possibility of shifting power positions. In other words, neither power nor power relations are static and closed concepts; thus they are seen intrinsic to social control, sociological transformations and social evolution.

Central to this interpretation are the concerns like interrogation of power, knowledge, discipline and the formation of subjects in relation to political programming. Having related the constitution of the self to state formation, Foucault conceptualised these aspects of inquiry as governmentality (or the art of government). Foucault’s emphasis on governmentality provides an analytical tool for examining the relationship between the Commission’s project of empowering supranational intermediaries of European civil society and the constitution of subjects. The Foucaultian approach concerns taking into account the context in which the discourse of civil society’s involvement evolves, which technologies and strategies this discourse entails, what this discourse aims to achieve, which strategies it employs, and how the objects of this discourse perceive and receive this process. This dissertation first evaluates the evolution of the Commission’s interest in civil society and participation, and, second, it observes the implications of this project for one of the prominent umbrella European NGO networks, the Platform of European Social NGOs (hereafter, the Social Platform or the Platform).

EU NGOs in Brussels

The role of NGOs in EU governance is defined, first, with their epistemic contribution, particularly to the Commission in its proposal preparation process; second, coordination of policies, such as of Open Method of Coordination, in the EU; third, implementation of EU policies, such as humanitarian operations financed by the EU (Obradovic 2005). The previous research, however, shows that NGOs are not well integrated into the implementation and coordination of EU policies, if not totally excluded; though a few successful practices have been observed, such as in Finland (see Smismans 2006). Further, the research has also shown the Commission's consultation regime with the NGOs, which is also named as "civil dialogue" since 1996, has several shortcomings: such as, the consultations does not go beyond "right to be heard" – since there is no legal ground; NGOs do not receive appropriate feedback; and they are not informed whether and how their opinions had an impact on policy proposals (Obradovic 2005). In sum, based on the findings of the earlier research, the Commission's discourse on "participatory governance", - involving civil society actors into EU governance- does not necessarily result in effective and formal contribution of NGOs, at least at the present. Then, the most important function of "civil dialogue" is considered to legitimise the decision-making-processes within the EU institutional set-up (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2006). One could argue, having participated in "civil dialogue", NGOs not necessarily legitimise EU at large, but help advancing the Commission's institutional power and legitimacy of its consultation regime (e.g. Smismans 2007; Cram 2006).

Starting from the early 1990s the Commission has played a direct role in the establishment of the European NGOs, mostly in the social field, including the European Women Lobby (EWL), European Youth Forum (EYF) and the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the EU (CLONG) (Tarasenko 2010); European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Disability Forum (Cram 2006). These organisations, in turn, formed the Social Platform, when it was established in 1995 by the encouragement and financial support of the European Commission (Sánchez-Salgado 2007; Smismans 2003; Greenwood 2007a; and Tarasenko 2010). Following

the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Commission issued *a Green Paper on Social Policy* (1993), which entailed developing mechanisms for co-operation with the Commission and NGOs. In order to put this claim into practice, the Commission, DG Employment and Social Inclusion (EMPL), decided launching *the European Social Forums*, the first of which would be convened in 1996. Cram (1995) states that “in 1995, the Social Platform was created, and funded by the Commission, to act as interlocutor for the social actors with the Commission at the Social Forum”. Starting from the first *European Social Policy Forum*, the Commission’s interactions with the NGOs have been labelled as “civil dialogue”. Yet, the UK and Germany questioned the legal competence of the Commission to finance social NGOs, including the Platform. The European Court of Justice in 1998 consequently found the Commission’s act illegal; hence forced the Commission to suspend these funds. Nonetheless, these funds were released with a Council decision one year after. In other words, the roots for the idea of involving the NGOs to European decision-making stemmed from the Maastricht Treaty, inscribed into the Green Paper on Social Policy and put into practice with *the European Social Forums*. This project can be considered as part of Delor’s project to create “European social and economic space”; it continued under Santer (1995-1999), Prodi (1999-2004) and Barosso (2004- continuing) Commissions.

The Santer Commission had to resign in 1999 due to a corruption scandal about the mismanagement of EU funding and nepotism in recruitment. The Prodi Commission (1999-2004) started working under such condition in which instructional prestige of the Commission was significantly damaged. Prodi Commission, on the one hand, engaged in a decisive administrative reform of the Commission, based on the Kinnock Report, which suggested an activity-based management strategy (Kassim 2008).¹ On the other hand, the Commission proposed a new administrative-mentality for the EU institutions with the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001), including opening the decision-making processes to civil society. *White Paper* was reflected

¹ The Prodi Commission also launched a new post of Commissioner responsible from the public communications of the Communication; Margot Wallstrom appointed for this task.

by academic community critically (see Joerges et al 2001), considering it as a political intervention into EU structure.

Against this backdrop, the Convention on the Future of Europe was set in 2001 by the European Council, which prepared the *Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* in 2003. The Convention concerned EU NGOs in the sense that they were included in the discussions; yet, one of the vice-presidents of the Convention, Giuliano Amato, emphasized the importance of the “support of civil society in legitimising the final outcome of the Convention’s work” (*Economist* 2004). In turn, some scholars also considered this as a democratising promise (De Schutter 2002; Magnette 2003). During the Convention period the Social Platform played an important role; it mobilised the largest NGO networks working in the fields of human rights, environment, and development in order to take part in the debate. By the leadership of the Social Platform a NGO coalition formed the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG), which then initiated a campaign about the Future of Europe (act4europe) to mobilise the national level NGOs with regards to the Convention’s work.² With respect to this, act4europe, for example, published a toolkit for NGOs in order to inform them about the ongoing debate on the *Future of Europe* and mobilise them in fostering public debates.³ The Campaign’s second toolkit about the work of the Convention was distributed at the *Social Policy Forum* in 2002. Consequently, the *Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* contained an article about “participatory democracy, Article I-46, which then took place in the ratified Lisbon Treaty with a minor change replacing the use of word “constitution” with the “treaties” (and also appearing this time with a different number, the Article-11). Participatory democracy as a norm was enshrined in the Lisbon treaty.⁴

² See the Social Platform, *Annual Report*, 2003, p. 22.

³ This toolkit was downloaded 5000 times in ten days after it was published (see footnote 3).

⁴ It involves not only the involvement of “civil society” in EU decision-making processes, but also allow the citizens submitting any legal proposal, with no less than one million signature.

Since its establishment, the Platform has worked largely with the Commission, particularly with the DG Employment and Social Inclusion (EMPL): it has the privilege of co-organising bi-annual meetings, known as the *European Social Policy Forums*, with the Commission and consulting the Commission on social policy related issues. The DG EMPL recognizes the Platform as a “partner”; yet, it is currently financed through the *Community Action Programme to promote active European citizenship* with the aim of promoting active citizenship in Europe. The Platform, however, has not merely developed relations with the Commission, notably the DG Employment. It has been taking part in the consultations to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC); recently it has participated in the two *AGORA* civil society meetings organized by the European Parliament (EP); and it has been also trying to access the European Council meetings, though it has been occasionally and informally invited to those meetings, e.g. the Lisbon Summit 2000.

European NGOs and the Social Platform of European NGOs

There are five different ways through which the NGOs are institutionalised at the EU level: (1) the national organisations representations’ in Brussels (e.g. the Italian environmental organisation Legambiente, which has had a branch in Brussels since 1999 [Fazi and Smith 2006]); (2) the permanent offices of the international organisations in Brussels, such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and Oxfam; (3) the Brussels-based European NGO umbrella networks or platforms which appeared during the 1990s with the financial support of the EU, such as the European Network Against Racism and the European Women’s Lobby; (4) the second-level umbrella organisations of the networks of European NGOs, (e.g. the Social Platform, Green 8, Human Rights Development Network, development NGOs’ CONCORD alliance, consumer groups’ BEUC platform, and the cultural groups’ EFAH platform)⁵; and (5) the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG), which represents the EU NGO community with the participation of the second-level supranational networks, particularly in promoting “participatory democracy” at the EU level

⁵ It should be noted that there are organisational differences among these networks. For instance, while the Platform has eight permanent staff, the human rights network has one coordinator (L. Sedou, personal communication, May 2009).

(Ibid.). The EU NGO as a concept, therefore, excludes the Brussels representations of national NGOs (first model) and the branches of international NGOs (second model).

This dissertation's object of inquiry, the Social Platform of NGOs, is the alliance of European federations and networks of forty non-governmental organisations active in the social sector (i.e. the networks which refer to the third organisational type); it is also a member of the CSCG coalition (the fifth organisational type). The members of the Platform claim to represent thousands of organisations, associations and voluntary groups at the local, regional, and national levels, including organisations of women, older people, people with disabilities, the unemployed, people affected by poverty, gays and lesbians, young people, and children and families, along with those organisations devoted to issues such as social justice, homelessness, health and reproductive rights and racism. Stated in this way, the Platform represents people who are not represented, and whose voice is not heard in Brussels. In other words, the Platform and its member associations can be seen instruments for representing the "excluded" in EU politics. However, I would like to indicate a problem about the work of the Platform, which has not been addressed by the current literature.

European civil society and European NGOs

Supranational intermediaries of European civil society (ECS), EU NGOs, have been studied by three schools: the normative approach (Armstrong 2002; Magnette 2001; 2003; Eriksen 2001; Curtin 1999; Smismans 2006; Fossum and Trenz 2006; De Schutter 2002), the social movement approach (Della Porta and Diani 1999; Della Porta and Caiani 2010; Della Porta 2007; Imig and Tarrow 2001; Cullen 2005), and the governance approach – including also the third-sector and interest intermediation (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007; Eising and Kochler-Koch 1999; Finke 2009; Zimmel and Freise 2006; Mahoney 2004).

Normative approaches to European civil society: Drawing inspiration from the tenets of deliberative democracy, the normative camp argues that there is a new type of

political system emerging in Europe, a reflexive polity (Eriksen et al 2005). Since substantial power has been transferred to supranational institutions in this new setting, national democracies fall short in translating will formation to this new type of decision-making and law-making processes. The more difficult it has become to scrutinise supranational institutions, the more they have gained political power. Based on this, the normative approach considers European civil society and the European public sphere to be crucial agents which can carry the public use of reason and articulate societal deliberations to political public spheres. Furthermore, these organisations could apply a “critical gaze” to decision-making processes, thus rendering governance processes transparent and accountable.

The normative approach to civil society argues that what makes *a* political system democratic is the articulation of the discourses which emerge *from within* the life-world of civil society to the decision-making and law-making structures through public sphere(s). The tendency of the normative approach in ECS studies has been, therefore, to conceive of the EU NGOs as the nucleus and medium of the emerging European civil society and the agents of trans-European participation beyond national territorial boundaries. On this view, EU NGOs could function as a transmission belt between citizens and EU governance. For instance, the Convention method, which involved the EU NGOs during the preparations of the European Constitution, is seen as a successful experiment (De Schutter 2002). Thus, the normative approach assigns the role of linking public deliberations to EU decision-making to the medium of Brussels-based EU NGOs (Curtin 1999; Smismans 2006; Magnette 2001; 2003; De Schutter 2002). This suggests that EU NGOs could function as the public sphere of civil society by incorporating the public reason to governance structures (Magnetete 2003; Curtin 1999). In Kantian terms, this also asserts that EU NGOs embody the burden of *authentic public reason* articulation on behalf of all-affected. In other words, EU NGOs function as the intermediary of European civil society (defined in a broader sense, but not referring to the institutional actors), thus reflecting the discourse of opinion-forming publics (Habermas 1996a) and anonymous societal discourse (Behhabib 1996). However, an

exceptional conceptualisation of ECS—beyond an actor-based focus—has been developed by Fossum and Trenz (2006), who define ECS as a realm, a social constituency of the European polity.

The social movement approach to European NGOs: The literature on social movements has studied EU NGOs from the vantage point of supranational contention and the promise of these organisations in fostering European collective identities (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Della Porta 2007, and Cullen 2005). In parallel to the normative approach, this school also focuses on the articulation of societal concerns to decision-making processes. Imig and Tarrow (2001) maintain that EU NGOs perform “excellent work” in interest representation. However, the scholars draw a pessimistic conclusion: these organisations are unlikely to mobilise civil society in Europe, since they are disconnected from the grassroots. Cullen’s survey (2005) also supports Imig and Tarrow’s assessment of the EU NGOs’ success in lobbying, but she conceives of the Social Platform as an agent that resists the neo-liberalisation of EU integration.

The governance approach to European civil society: There has not been an agreement on the conception of governance, as Rhodes (1996) demonstrates it has at least six different meanings, including “the minimal State, corporate governance, new public management, good governance, social-cybernetic systems and self-organised networks”. The flexibility of the meaning of the concept makes governance for the practitioners (including the politicians, civil servants and civil society actors) and scholars a versatile concept (Rhodes, *Ibid*), a floating signifier (Shore 2009) and in most cases a buzzword. Notwithstanding its several possible connotations, governance in its broadest terms is defined as the participation of public and private actors in “intentional regulation of social relationships and conflicts”, as well as “non-hierarchical forms of decision-making” (Kochker-Koch and Rittberger 2006:28).

Democratic features and the legitimacy of these newly emerged structures have been questioned on the grounds of their accountability, inclusiveness and representativeness (Swyngedouw 2005). One of the solutions, suggested by Scharpf (1997), was to separate normative considerations of democracy (i.e. input-oriented legitimacy) from its results (i.e. output-oriented legitimacy). With respect to the latter, the legitimacy of the actors has been explained in terms of their efficiency in producing satisfactory results efficiency in solving the social issues and generating wealth etc. accordingly. On the other hand, the notion of “good governance”, which has been introduced by the World Bank and United Nations with respect to economic development since 1980s, entails a different concern about the legitimacy of the actors with its focus on the principles of openness, participation, effectiveness, transparency. Good governance also gives a particular importance to the involvement of NGOs in decision-making processes, as well as their projected role in activating the grassroots (Weiss 2000).

Against this backdrop, governance turn in EU studies (see Jachtenfuchs 2001) has developed against the intergovernmental (e.g. Moravcsik 1995) and neo-functional theories of integration (e.g. Haas 1958; Schmitter 2003a), with an aim to provide an alternative to state-centric interpretations of EU politics. One interpretation has applied the concept to European governance at large, and defined the EU as a polity of multi-level governance (Hooghe and Marks 2001). This political entity is characterised as having the competencies of more than an international organisation, but less than a state, wherein the governance responsibilities are shared between the supranational entities, member states along with the non-state actors. Defined in this way, the governance approach to European civil society concentrates on the role of civil society organisations in effective problem-solving of common concerns (Kochler-Koch and Rittberger 2006; Jachtenfuchs 2001; Kooiman 1993), including the third-sector such as the delivery of the welfare services (Kendall and Anheier 1999; Zimmer and Freise 2006)). Another interpretation of European governance, on the other hand, separates from the multi-level approach: it restricts the application of the term with the EU decision, policy and law-making processes; focuses on the

implementations of the EU laws; and also applies the notion to the institutional structure and performance of the EU institutions (see Smismans 2006; Shore 2009; Obradovic 2005). This view point has been inscribed into the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001), the document of which was introduced by the Commission in order to “boost the legitimacy of the institutions, increase the accountability of European executive bodies to the elected assemblies and open up the Union's decision-making procedures to allow citizens to participate in making decisions which concern them”. Elaborated in this way, the governance approach to European civil society primarily studies the influence and impact of organised civil society actor (notably based in Brussels and called as EU NGOs) on EU decision-making processes (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007). This scope is also covered by interest group research, including the corporatist (Balme and Chabanet 2008) and neo-pluralist (Greenwood 2007a; Bouwen 2004) explanations to interest-intermediation at EU level.

The governance approach to European civil society is problematic in the sense that it does not question whether EU NGOs are linked to the grassroots or not, the condition of which is seen as their fundamental promise for democratisation, i.e. acting like a transmission belt between political power and European citizenry (Nanz and Steffek 2007; see also Smismans 2003). Hence, governance seems not to have an explicit problem with the autonomisation of the EU NGOs, in the sense that they act external to their local constituents. Governance, therefore, does not propose a substantial strategy which aims to build a connection between public interests and the EU. Prioritising efficient and effective problem solving, it rather prefers a stakeholder and partnership democracy (Schmitter 2003b). In the assessment of one of the prominent scholars of governance, the theoretical relationship between governance and democracy is presently taking shape (Kochler-Koch 2009).

Compared with the normative approach, governance, however, does not conceive of civil society (organisations) vis-à-vis a sovereign power. Ascribing governing functions to civil society organisations, governance rather dismantles the boundaries

between the public/private and state/civil society (Rhodes 1996). Nonetheless, governance abandons the very feature that is intrinsic to the conceptualisation of civil society: being the domain from which a critical rationality has emerged (Cohen and Arato 1992). Limiting the function of civil society organisations as effective problem-solving actors, the governance approach closes off any opportunity for the emergence of communicative rationality, counter-hegemonic movements, or liberty to deny the requirements imposed by political rationalities *from within* civil society. For example, to Habermas, civil society is the space in which the “communicative rationality”—as opposed to the rationalities of the market and bureaucracy—flourishes. For Gramsci, it is the space in which counter-hegemony is built. Foucault also argues that the confrontation to the governing rationalities might emerge from within civil society. As highlighted, this dissertation concentrates on the Foucaultian critique; through this critique it interrogates whether and how political programming constitutes the actors of governance before (and during) incorporation into the governance mechanism. In other words, this dissertation starts from the argument that civic actors are not, necessarily, incorporated into the governance mechanism “as they are”; rather, they might be formed due to the effects of political programming, which would endeavour to create certain types of subjects – such as through manipulation and guidance of their actions- and make them subject to political power. Though, this does not imply that political programming is necessarily operationalised without any failures and confrontation; yet, it may well be thought of a process between successes and failures (O’Malley et al 1997).

The dissertation finds the assessments of both normative and social movements approaches to studies of EU NGOs problematic. Both seemed to agree that EU NGOs represent public interests; however, they do not question whether the actors of civil society could manage this task by lobbying and consultations. The abovementioned perspectives do not question the process of civic actors’ becoming lobbying actors. This dissertation, therefore, is a departure from previous works that have studied EU NGOs. It differs from governance literature in that it does not aim to discuss the extent to which EU NGOs contribute to EU governance. It also differs

from social movements literature in attempting to refute the claim which considers their work as contention. It is also critical of the normative approach, since it takes for granted the moral credentials of EU NGOs in articulating the public use of reason to decision-making processes (e.g. Eriksen et al 2005; Fossum and Menendez 2005; Armstrong 2002; Magnette 2001, 2003). This dissertation avoids any normative orientation about involving EU NGOs to EU decision-making processes. Therefore, it does not attempt to study the Commission's ECS discourse and the Social Platform in terms of their potential democratising and legitimising impacts. A study of this kind would orient answering the question whether EU NGOs are democratizing or not and in turn conclude that: "yes" they are democratising, or "no" they are not democratising; democratising, but not sufficient; or, gradually democratising.

Therefore, I suggest interrogating the role of the political programming (in this case the Commission's initiatives) in shaping and guiding the very practices of the Platform (including its organisational structure, administrative method, reporting framework and tools of communication). I also examine the content of lobbying, and inquire into whether the relationship between formal and procedural mechanisms frames the qualitative aspect. By integrating the interplays between power, knowledge, subject, and discipline in the analysis of the Social Platform, I rather produce a critical survey and endeavour to examine whether the Platform performs an "excellent job", as Imig and Tarrow (2001) argue, in representing the social interests. In this respect, I argue that governance as a new form of governmentality may result in forming subjects (and subjectivity) which have the capacity and willingness to participate in the new setting. According to this reading, governance is not, necessarily, an improvement in our understanding of democracy, but reconfiguration of power relations. Therefore, supporting civil society actors does not necessarily promote democracy and create public spheres.

Governmentality, EU governance, and the EU NGOs

I would, instead, propose studying the constitutive impacts of this political project—constitutive in the sense of how power, intentionally or unintentionally, may create

certain type of subjects and makes them amenable to governance. Governmentality can help us investigate how the EU, particularly the Commission, constitutes actors of governance. This project is rendered through rational means, tactics and procedures. It is not a mere act of directing the interests of the actors towards the EU. Rather, it targets the conduct of the self with itself, with others and with society. Thus, it is a moral activity in the sense that it renders a certain form of governmentality appropriate. In sum, I argue that governance is rendered as the new art of government, and sponsored civil society is both the subject and object of this new form of government: governing civil society and governing through civil society.

The governmentality approach, which I will apply, differs from the governance approach. Although the governmentality approach shares the main argument of the governance perspective (governance beyond the administrative units of state apparatus), it develops a different, critical understanding. According to governmentality, “governance” does not necessarily result in a zero-sum distribution of power among the actors of governance. Governance advances a new constellation of politics that suggests replacing the sclerotic bureaucracy with a more democratic and innovative regime by sharing sovereign power with new actors. Governmentality takes issue with this interpretation, stressing that political power constitutes these actors before involving them in governance practices. Governmentality thus concentrates on the ethics and morality inherent in the political programmes; thereby, it focuses on the episteme, morality and style of reasoning involved in these programmes. In other words, governmentality is not merely interested in policy frameworks (or public policy); it depicts the underlying *ethos* and *mores* of these policy frameworks. Against this backdrop, therefore, I will examine how these political programmes are *translated* into certain technologies and practices, and how these are received and perceived by the actors who are subject to these programmes.

Foucault’s interest in governmentality is related to his earlier work on power, discipline, knowledge and the subject. With this concept, he emphasises the linkage

between the processes of state-formation and the constitution of the self. There are two usages of governmentality. First, it is a form of power which differs from strategies and domination, two other forms of power which Foucault compares with government (Lemke 2001). Governmentality, then, refers to conduct and the “conduct of conduct”, including governing of the self, governing of others and governing the state (Foucault 1991). As Dean (1999: 10) explains, conduct as a verb “means to lead, to direct or to guide, and perhaps implies some sort of calculation as to how this is to be done”. As a noun, “conduct refers to our behaviours, our actions and even our comportment, i.e. the articulated set of our behaviours” (Ibid., 10). Governmentality thus entails an understanding that “everything and everyone be managed” (Allen 1998). With respect to this meaning, governmentality draws attention to “reciprocal constitution of the power techniques and forms of knowledge” (Lemke 2001).

Second, Foucault applies his earlier writings – namely about power relations and subject formations- to explicate how the state power is exerted; or what should we understand from the very notion “state power”. With this respect, Foucault does not necessarily endeavour to explain the state as such, i.e. from a perspective à la political science. Rather, Foucault problematises the role of the state (power) in constitution and evolution of social relations and subject-formations; therefore, he relates a constitutive and productive understanding of power to explicate the relationship between the state and the self. As Foucault and his followers inform us, in most cases, this involves also creation of certain subjects and subjectivities (Rose and Miller 1992; Dean 1999; Barry et al 1996). Yet, the latter concerns a form of power which endeavours to make subjects amenable to take part in a certain task, not necessarily by coercion or force, but through mobilising their *willingness*, empowerment to adapt *skills* and enabling them to *access* power⁶. Although this form of power empowers and gives certain liberty to subjects, it also brings mechanisms of control and surveillance. Thus, Foucault delineates that after eighteenth century

⁶ See Avelino and Rotmans (2009) for a theoretical discussion of different interpretations and Detel (2005) for a Foucauldian account of power.

the issue in the western world was not the statification of society, but *governmentalisation of state*. In this case, Foucault compares art of government with sovereignty and discipline to elucidate that state power does not merely concern with the security of the territory, but the population. Bob Jessop (2007) asserts that Foucault thus questions the state initiated projects with regard to the analysis of “micro-physics” of power. In this analytical framework, governmentality sets political reason itself as its object of inquiry, and studies the mentalities of politics along with the devices which it invented to exercise its rule. It examines the impacts of the mentalities and governing practices upon those who are subject to them (Barry et al 1996:2). Hence, the art of government considers knowledge (rationalities and the systematisation of a certain set of rules), principles, frameworks and visualisations to be intrinsic to a discursive field which renders society governable (Barry et al 1996; Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1996; Dean 1999). Central to this argument is that political power is rationalised through this connection between rationalities and practices (Lemke 2007; Lemke 2002; Rose and Miller 1992, Rose 1996; Barry et al 1996; Dean 1999). Elaborated in this way, governmentality traces the connections between political rationalities and the strategy of governing society with knowledge.

Rose (1996:42) details three features of political rationalities. First, they entail a moral form of selecting the appropriate ideals and principles of governing. Second, they embody an epistemological character in generating particular conceptions of their objects (nation, population, economy, society, community) and subjects (citizens). However, political rationalities are not pure and neutral knowledge which simply “re-present” the governing reality; instead they are intrinsic to the “intellectual processing of the reality” (Lemke 2001). Third, political rationalities employ a certain style of reasoning in order to “render reality thinkable and practicable, and constituting domains that are amenable—or not amenable—to reformatory intervention” (Rose 1996: 42). Political rationalities, therefore, are not ideational structures: they are exerted in daily practices, guide actions and motivate our ambitions, intentions and desires. Governmentality with this regard examines

how certain mentalities are applied to practices and translated into political technologies. The latter comprise the instruments, procedures, mechanisms, vocabularies and techniques which endeavour to enable the political rationalities practicable (Dean 1999:31). In other words, power manifests itself through these practices (Merlingen 2003). Yet, neither political programmes, nor do the power relations by definition refer to a smoothly progressing process: rather, they can be seen as a process between successive implementations, failures and evaluations (O'Malley et al 1997). In turn, the constructive role of contestation, and the failures can be interpreted as the source for further reform.

According to this reading, “governance” is not necessarily an improvement in our understanding of democracy. Therefore, a political project of empowering civil society actors as one of an *ideal* model of state-society relations does not by its own nature promote democracy. Governmentality, instead, suggests studying the constitutive impacts of this political project, examining how power projects to create certain types of subjects and make them amenable to control. Constituting actors involves action upon action—shaping, forming, and manipulating conduct and the conduct of conduct. Governmentality, therefore, provides analytical and conceptual tools for interrogating the Commission’s civil society discourse and its implications on the Social Platform. I will, then, argue that political programming (e.g. the Commission’s initiatives of funding the EU NGOs, developing a consultation regime, enshrinement of “participatory democracy” as a norm in the Lisbon Treaty, fostering a discourse on civil society and active citizenship in order to close the gap with the citizens) might likely have an effect of forming subjects (in this case the Social Platform) and a subjectivity (as a form of NGO categorization) which have the capacity and willingness to participate in the new setting, which is associated with the notions of governance, New Public Management and good governance. I should, however, note that although this survey focuses on the Commission generated discourse on European civil society, the aforementioned notions have not been created from within the Commission. Therefore, rationalities behind the constitution of subjects (in this case the Social Platform) are not, necessarily, reduced to the

Commission's projects. Yet, the Commission, to some extent itself is exposed to this process, considering it has conducted an administration reform during 1999-2004, one that can be associated with NPM (Kassim 2008). The Commission, hence, is not of necessity seen the intellectual centre of "governance"; rather an actor playing a certain role in carrying it into the European context, while adopting it to its institutional concerns.

Application of governmentality to empirical research

The governmentality approach can guide our study by deciding the methods of inquiry and empirical material to be selected. It informs the limits of investigation as well as how we should make of sense the materials we have access to. Our survey, then, tracks the imprints of the Commission's ECS discourse on the Social Platform by examining how it perceived and reacted to the discourse of participation, new modes of governance and the reconfiguration of power relations.

Dean (1999) draws four parameters for analysing the art of government, or political rationalities: fields of visibility, technical aspects, knowledge, and the impact on the formation of identities. An analysis of the Platform through these four parameters will help us observe what kind of a subject the Platform has become, i.e. how it thinks, how it operates, how it represents its activities, and what kind of an identity it represents. Dean explains the first parameter, fields of visibility, as follows: "An architectural drawing, a management flow chart, a map, a pie chart, a set of graphs and tables, and so on, are all ways of visualizing fields to be governed. These all make it to be possible to 'picture' who and what is to be governed, how relations of authority and obedience are constituted in space, how different locales and agents are to be connected with one another, what problems are to be solved and what objectives are to be sought (Dean 1999: 30)". Dean's second parameter, the technical aspects of government, involves questions of "by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished (Ibid:31)". Third, the *episteme* of government—the art of government as rational and thoughtful activity—concerns

“the forms of thought, knowledge, expertise, strategies, means of calculation, or rationality employed in practices of governing” (Ibid, 31). Finally, Dean’s governmentality approach focuses on the processes of subjectification and subjectivation and the formation of identities. Subjectification implies how power constitutes, creates, forms, and re-forms subjects, whereas subjectivation concerns the practices and the processes through which the individual makes herself a subject. This final aspect of the analysis of government thus asks, “What forms of person, self and identity are presupposed by different practices of government and what sorts of transformation do these practices seek? What statuses, capacities, attributes and orientations are assumed of those who exercise authority [...] and those who are to be governed? (Ibid, 31)”.

Methodology

The empirical work entails the analyses of the Social Platform’s annual publications, its reflection papers on participatory democracy and governance, interviews with the Platform’s leaders (as well as the ENAR’s and the coordinator of the Civil Society Contact Group) and the observations on the Social Platform’s conference about the civil dialogue. The rationalities of government are further investigated by examining the organisational structure of the Platform, as well as its methods of conduct with EU institutions, other “stakeholders” and its members. Furthermore, the scope of our study includes not only the content and ideas voiced by the Platform, but also the inscription of political rationalities and the techniques of their representation.

First, this analysis entails an inquiry into the leaflets, guidelines, toolkits, brochures and websites of the European Commission and European Economic and Social Committee and the Social Platform (and Civil Society Contact Group).⁷ In order to examine the Commission’s civil society and participation discourse, I focus on the Commission’s “connecting with the citizens/bringing the EU back to the citizens” initiatives—the communication policy, Plan D, Europe for Citizens—and its attempts

⁷ The CSCG is a prominent actor in the EU NGO milieu in that it prepares for EU NGOs toolkits and strategic guidelines for lobbying the EU institutions.

at incorporating civil society organisations in EU decision-making processes. In order to inquire how the EU NGOs reflect upon the Commission's discourse, I scrutinise the Platform's publications, organisational structure, and technologies through which it interacts with European institutions and its members. The aim here is to understand the reflections of the Social Platform on the Commission's ECS discourse in order to track the imprints of the political rationalities. The analysis in this case is thus not limited to finding out what the Platform expresses; the inquiry into the organisational structure of the EU NGOs and their mode of conduct take on a central role in examining their pertinence with respect to the political rationalities.

Interviews with EU NGOs' secretariats constitute the second main method of this dissertation. In 2009, I conducted six interviews: two with secretariats of the Social Platform, three from the European Network Against Racism, and one from the Civil Society Contact Group in Brussels.⁸ Finally, I also attended a two-day conference, *Civil Dialogue: How can we shape the Europe we want?*, which was organised by the Social Platform in December 2008. Since 2006, the Platform has concentrated on a single issue each year as part of its working strategy, and the 2008 conference explored the notion of "shaping an effective dialogue at national and European level—with people, for people". Bringing together bureaucrats from the EU institutions, academics, and the NGOs along with their networks, this conference explored how to influence EU decision-making and strengthen ties with European networks. This conference thus provided the opportunity to observe how the NGO community perceived the concepts of civil society, participation and European governing.

⁸ Originally, I planned to focus solely on the Social Platform as the unit of observation in order to limit my focus on EU NGOs. My initial aim was therefore to arrange interviews with as many people as I could in the Social Platform's secretariat in different positions. However, I faced some limitations in this approach. First, it was not possible to conduct interviews with each of the eight members of the secretariat's permanent staff; my request for an interview with each of them was met with an answer from the communication officer that their Coordinator would only allow me to talk to one person. I tried to overcome this by trying to access other EU NGOs which had an office in Brussels. Here, my affiliation with the Eurosphere research project (www.eurospheres.org), which is funded by the Commission, proved helpful. One of the goals of this project was also conducting interviews with the EU NGOs, and in this respect the project offered support for my field work in Brussels, on the condition that I use the project's interview questionnaire. The semi-structured questionnaire was a useful tool for answering my research question, in that it concentrated on the phenomenon of the European public sphere.

This dissertation applies the governmentality approach to analyses of the Social Platform as follows: 1) it examines the documents produced by the Platform in order to trace the ways of seeing and perceiving the governing rationalities. This concerns detecting the frameworks for representing the aims and goals, such as through graphs, flow charts etc. 2) The dissertation inquires how the Platform perceives and receives the participation discourse of the Commission; further, the analysis also takes up how the Platform related to the Commission's policies during the 2000s, including the adoption of new modes of governance, preparations for the EU constitution, enlargement and the Commission's motto of bridging the gap with citizens. 3) The dissertation examines the Platform's working methods and communication instruments in order to delineate the relationship between knowledge and action. This analysis implies that practice is endogenous to knowledge. Knowledge, in this case, refers to expert knowledge of the *way of doing things*, such as running an organisation, developing negotiation skills, and communicating with other stakeholders in the EU governance system. Practice and action, on the other hand, refers to the translation of knowledge into practice, including the strategy of working and representing aims and achievements. I will endeavour to show how the Platform's way of *thinking* and *doing* things has been grounded on an economic rationality, with the latter leading to performance-oriented action, results-based management, evidence-based practice and producing quantifiable and calculable outcomes. This process also establishes a surveillance mechanism through reporting and auditing. I will also argue that the Platform's management structure can be related to a broader perspective about the contemporary debate on governance and "new managerialism".⁹

Limitations

Nonetheless, this inquiry has several limitations. The first limitation concerns the *empirical scope and the sample of the survey*. In this respect, our examination mainly

⁹ The Commission launched the *White Paper on Governance* in 2001 as an administrative reform proposal for the EU institutions. Despite other institutions were doubtful about this, the Commission had already started an administrative reform in 1999, which resulted in an activity-based management structure in 2004.

concentrates on the Commission's initiatives; though relevant documents of other EU institutions are also examined. For instance, the relevant opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and position of the European Parliament are addressed as well. The implications of the Commission's civil society discourse are examined on the Social Platform; in this case, the investigation focuses on the Social Platform's administrative structure, position papers, reports, working strategies and six interviews (two with the Platform's staff, one with the coordinator of the Civil Society Contact Group and three with the ENAR's staff). This inquiry does not, though, include the members of the Platform: it does neither have an aim to shed light on the intra-network relations of the Platform, nor examines the implications of the Platform's work on national NGOs. These are relevant and important issues which deserve to be answered; yet, they can be seen as the most important of limitation of this survey. However, our problematique is not how the Platform achieves collective action or maintain horizontal consensus between its members.

Furthermore, it is not possible to measure the impact of the Platform's work within the NGO community, both at EU and national level. This empirical scrutiny first and foremost focuses on how a political institution strategically employs a political project in order to enhance its power and mobilises certain instruments in order to rationalise and operationalise this project; and how this project is being reformed according to failures, confrontation and changing contexts. The Platform is investigated as both the effect and the agency of this project. Therefore, the analysis and the conclusions which can be drawn from this dissertation are limited with the Commission's civil society discourse and its impact on the Social Platform. The Platform, however, is not studied as just any organisation, but regarding its double roles of being the main interlocutor of the Commission in "civil dialogue" vis-à-vis the social actors organised in Brussels and functioning like a trainer of the NGO community (the latter concerns its roles about capacity building and reshaping the sector). With respect to European social policy, the Commission (particularly the

DG Employment and Social Inclusion) refers to the Platform as a partner¹⁰; it represents the *European Social Policy Forum*, bi-annual meetings of which are co-organised with the Platform as well as the consulting service of the Platform as an instance of the involvement of civil society (and realisation of participatory democracy). The Platform had been initially financed by the Commission's instruments. However, this was not grounded on a legal basis; thus, this funding has been suspended in 1998. It was released with a Council decision in 1999. Since 2004, the Platform has been supported through the *Community Action Programme to promote active European citizenship*, a Council decision to finance civic participation in relation to the aim of promoting active European citizenship.¹¹ EU umbrella NGO networks working in the social field (which are the members of the Platform) has continued to be supported through the Commission funding, namely through the PROGRESS program. Chapter 4 addresses this discursive turn, i.e. how the participation discourse has been linked to European identity in the mid 2000s, yet it had emerged on the functionalist premises (i.e. sectoral representation) in the mid 1990s.

Thematic limits: Therefore, participation and civil society are the central concepts of this dissertation. What makes the Social Platform prominent for this inquiry is primarily its central role in "civil dialogue" (interlocutor of the Commission), while conveying the tenets of the "participation" by preparing toolkits and training programmes for the NGOs about "participatory governance and democracy". The Platform was created and has been financed by the Commission; the question which will be posed whether, and if yes, how it functions as an instrument of the Commission. I will delve into its interlocutor role: this underscores the role of the

¹⁰ See for instance: Com (2000), "European employment and social policy: a policy for people", prepared by the DG Education and Culture.

¹¹ Council Decision 2004/100/EC of 26 January 2004. This programme also covers the following bodies: "Our Europe" Association; Jean Monnet house; Robert Schuman house; European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE); Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the European Union.

Platform in representing the project on participation to NGO community (it can have access to) by conveying the tenets of this discourse.

Spatial limits: This implies that this survey concentrates on Brussels; it takes on an analytical investigation of the Commission's initiatives and inquiries into their effects on the Brussels based Social Platform. Nonetheless, and within the limitations, it considers the environmental influences as well. For instance, it detects the origins of the NGO participation and "good governance" discourse within the World Bank. Having focused on the Social Platform's capacity building activities in the European countries, it points out that the Platform also has aim to shape (and reshape) the social actors in the national space; though it cannot measure. In the meantime, with respect to development of this discourse, it takes into account the contribution and confrontation of other EU institutions, including the EESC, the Parliament and Committee of the Regions. Therefore, our survey is not "necessarily" a closed-system analysis.

Further, our research does not have a goal to explain the Europeanisation of third-sector, which implies the promises of horizontal cooperation at European level and harmonisation of the methods of service delivery by the NGOs and through the instruments of the EU at national level (e.g Kendall 1999). As the Platform's work vis-à-vis the Commission is lobbying *per se*; the manoeuvre space of the Platform is restricted with epistemic assistance to the Commission's work and thus is closed to service delivery. Yet, the Platform's capacity building activities also have an aim about reshaping the third-sector in national space, the inquiry of the effects of these are beyond the objectives of this survey.

Social policy and Platform: The Social Platform has been established with regard to social policy; however, neither a debate on European social policies, nor are the reflections of the Social Platform regarding these policies are the main concerns of this survey. However, the current investigation touches upon these within certain confines. The Platform's positions on European social policy is examined and

assessed from the perspective of governmentality. However, I should state that the literature on governmentality approach to European social policy is rudimentary; yet, achievement through our research is far beyond the ambitions of this dissertation. When I attempt to make some evaluations, I refer to studies which have applied governmentality perspective to social policy in national realm (e.g. Clarke 2005; Dean 2006; McKee 2009).

Defining the concepts

Finally, a word should be devoted to defining our concepts. European civil society has attracted attention from several different disciplines, with each applying its own notions regarding the societal organisations and associations which operate within and constitute European civil society. Political science scholars who have studied these groups in terms of their role linking the public reason to decision-making (Magnette 2001, 2003; Armstrong 2002, Eriksen 2001) and their role in European governance (Finke 2007; Finke and Kohler-Koch 2007) have given preference to the civil society organisation concept. Whereas scholars of public policy are inclined to speak of “interest groups” (2007a), the sociological approach, which studies these groups in terms of collective action and mobilisation, tend to use “movement advocacy coalitions” (Ruzza 2005; Ruzza and Salla 2007) or transnational coalitions (Cullen 2005, Imig and Tarrow 2001; Della Porta and Caiani 2010). Although I propose the concept of “extra-governmental”—as opposed to non-governmental—in order to emphasise the roles of the EU NGOs in governing society, I will continue refer to them according to the way they define themselves, as the platform of EU NGOs, throughout the dissertation. Second, I should also note that the use of the term “governance” differs from the European art of government and European governing. While the former can be defined as a certain type of political system in which the problems of society are resolved by allocating responsibilities among many actors, government refers to a broader conception that encompasses the rationalities and mentalities of how nature, society and even selves are governed. Third, the difference between the most common use of the notion of neo-liberalism and the neoliberal governmentality (and neoliberal political rationalities) should be underlined. The

former entails the process of the economic liberalisation, de-regulation (and re-regulation), hollowing out the state and dominance of the market mechanisms. The latter examines the underlying “rationalities” and “practices” of this process; hence, it does not aim at replacing the contemporary use. Rather, it investigates the philosophical foundations and sociological implications. Neoliberal governmentality was first used by Foucault (see Lemke 2001). This usage has been largely applied in the literature (see Allen, B 1998; Barry 1996; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, P. 1991; Clarke, J. 2005; Cruikshank, 1999; Dean 1999; Haahr 2004 and 2005; Lemke 2001; 2002; 2007; MacKinnon, 2000; Mithcell. 2006; Morrison 2000; Moss 1998; Patton 1998; Rose 1996; Rose and Miller 1992; Shore 2006; 2009; Simons 1995; Swyngedouw, 2005; Yeatman 1997; O’Malley et a 1997 etc). Chapter 3 elaborates upon of this usage; the reflection of neoliberal rationalities on social policies is addressed in Chapter 5.

The outline

The first chapter concentrates on the normative credentials of the NGOs, and elaborates on what makes NGOs and the discourse on civil society appealing to contemporary scholarship and public administration. It elaborates the roles and functions assigned to NGOs in different models of the normative theory of democracy, such as liberalism, communitarianism, republicanism and deliberation. This chapter critiques these approaches by introducing the notion of radical democracy. In this respect, this section relates NGOs to three main political premises: socio-political integrity, belonging, and will formation. The implications of this debate for our discussion concern whether European NGOs promote a certain “we feeling” and solidarity in Europe, such that strangers can be integrated in a given political community through political participation. Whereas the communitarian approach argues that this can only be achieved through shared values, history, language, religion, ethnicity and culture, deliberative scholars detach ethnic and civic identity from each other and advocate the integrative potential of the latter. The promise of NGOs with respect to will formation, on the other hand, concerns their role in fostering public deliberation.

The second chapter develops a theoretical discussion of whether EU NGOs could be conceived as an agent of deliberative democracy and a carrier of a European public sphere. This discussion implies a debate regarding the possibilities of public spheres beyond the nation state (see Fraser 2007; Bohman 2004 and Dryzek 1999), as well as translating the tenets of traditional normative theory to global governance. In this context, this process is considered to have the democratic potential of incorporating organised actors of civil society into decision-making processes (Schmitter 2003b, De Schutter 2002). This approach also argues that the state (and the EU) should actively encourage, mobilise, and support civil society (Schmitter 2003b; Cohen and Rogers 1997). This view claims, further, that political power should not necessarily wait for the emergence of public spheres around the governance structures; rather, politics should actively assume a catalyst role by creating its own publics (Bohman 2004). Nonetheless, this chapter argues that when the debates about the relationship between citizens' associations and democracy are translated to the transnational level, a functionalist interpretation— emphasising effective and efficient problem solving—seems to be more compatible with the tenets of global governance.

The third chapter critiques the discourse of participation, with a particular focus on the Foucaultian interpretation of Europeanisation. It endeavours to deconstruct the symbiotic relationship between the NGOs and democracy that was explicated in Chapter two and is far too often taken for granted. It explains how the discourse on NGOs relates to the consolidation of political power, as well as how power constitutes subjects. It draws inspiration from the governmentality perspective, which stems from Foucault's later writings, lectures and interviews. Foucault shows how power relations create certain types of subjects. In this respect, governmentality—as a form of power—sheds light on how political power subjectifies and renders subjects as both the object and subject of government.

Chapter four investigates the extent to which the Commission is embedded in the emergence of EU NGOs and shapes their values, aims, and organisational structures.

The European Commission has shown an interest in societal organisations and civil society discourse since the early 1990s. The Commission has referred to the societal organisations in different contexts of EU politics. They have appeared in the following EC initiatives: (a) the regulation of “interest politics” and “interest intermediation”; (b) the restructuring of EU governance; and (c) discussions of the EU’s “democratic legitimacy crisis”. The Commission’s relevant policy programmes and projects, which aim to cultivate legitimacy through the ECS discourse, have been developed in accordance with the motto of connecting with the citizens and consultations with EU NGOs. This chapter focuses on the development of the Commission’s discourse on ECS, i.e. from the EU NGOs’ incorporation into EU decision-making under the Commission’s intermediation policy to their integration into administrative reform and the legitimacy crisis of EU governance. With respect to the latter, Chapter four evaluates the Commission’s motto of connecting with the citizens, which has been introduced as a remedy to the legitimacy crisis of European governing, i.e. Plan D (Com 2005), Communication Policy (Com 2006), and Europe for Citizens (Com 2007). While the first of these consists of the Commission’s documents specifically related to the role of NGOs in EU governing, the second one seeks the extent to which and how EU NGOs are embedded in the Commission’s technologies of bridging the gap between EU governing and the citizens.

Finally, Chapter five explains how the platforms of EU NGOs conceive and define the Commission’s discourse on ECS and participation. It sketches out a debate on the Social Platform by concentrating on how it receives and perceives these policies (defined as the European art of government). The inquiry into the Social Platform aims at understanding how the actors of civil society which are subject to EU governance reflect upon these policies. This chapter, first, explains how the Social Platform perceived the major developments of EU politics during the 1990s, including the introduction of new modes of governance, the convention on the future of Europe, enlargement, the motto of bringing the EU back to its citizens and social policies. Then, it examines the Platform’s decision-making processes, working methods, and communication tools. This chapter also explores the Platform’s

relations with its constituencies, with a particular focus on capacity building and training activities. Finally, it analyses how the Platform perceives the Commission's discourse on participation and participatory democracy.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRATISING PROMISE OF NGOs IN NORMATIVE MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

NGOs can be useful for a democratic model in several aspects. Fung (2003) delineates six ways by which societal associations contribute to democracy: “the intrinsic value of associational life, fostering civic virtues and teaching political skills, offering resistance to power and checking government, improving the quality and equality of representation, facilitating public deliberation and creating opportunities for citizens and groups to participate”. On this basis, this section interrogates normative theories of democracy by concentrating on how they evaluate the role of societal groups in the construction of a democratic system. It evaluates the roles and functions assigned to NGOs (as conceptualised in different models of the normative theory of democracy) according to three aspects: socio-political integrity, belonging and will formation. The first of these emphasises that a political entity’s vital objective is to maintain *socio-political integrity* among its constituencies; it presumes that associational life would foster any required social values and civic skills. Second, *belonging* is the rational or emotional basis for fostering the feeling of membership in any political system. Whereas the communitarian approach argues that this can only be achieved through common values, history, language, religion, ethnicity and culture, deliberative scholars deemphasise ethnic and civic identity in favour of the system’s integrative potential. Yet both the communitarian and deliberative approach agree that associations would generate belonging to the political community. Finally, the normative theory of democracy considers *will formation* a prerequisite for any political entity in order to attain legitimacy in its decision-making and policy implementation processes (Habermas 2001; 1996a). In the contemporary era, the extent of the rules and policies taken beyond the national democratic spaces are increasing each day. The legitimacy of these rules is under question, given that they lack any process of will formation.¹² This argument is based on the claim that it is not merely technical and regulative issues, such as

¹² It has been claimed that 80% of the policy areas which used to be governed by national governments are falling into the domain of European Union (Curtin 1997:3).

environmental policies, telecommunication or transportation issues, that are controlled, steered, regulated and governed at the European level. In addition, the policies at the heart of state sovereignty now fall under the European governance, including social policy,¹³ fiscal policy, immigration policy,¹⁴ culture and education. Scholars of normative democracy have elaborated upon this process as the legitimacy crises of European governance. Based on this discussion, this section will elaborate the normative grounds of societal participation in politics, namely in will formation, the construction of belonging, political integrity, and articulating “public reason” in decision-making processes.

In the following, I will elaborate the roles and functions assigned to NGOs in different models of the normative theory of democracy: *liberalism*, *communitarianism*, *republicanism*, *deliberative models*, and *associative models*. Further, as a critique of the deliberative model, I will refer to *radical democracy*.

2.1. Liberalism of Rawls

The self of liberalism is autonomous and conferred with rights. For this reason, it has been criticised for being atomistic, and thus not providing a solid basis for political-social integrity. Further, it depicts will formation in a metaphorical moment of contract; the contract illuminates the transformation from a pre-political to the political society. For instance, Rawls describes “the will to live together” prior to the construction of a polity; constituents of political system “consent” on the basic principles of a just society.¹⁵ Thus, principles of political society are pre-consent; Rawls does not illustrate consent as a process but as a set of pre-established

¹³ The European Union determines the guidelines for social and employment policies, and leaves the governance of the labour market and industrial relations to the nation-states. For details, see the European Employment Strategy 1997, Lisbon Agenda for a knowledge-based economy 2000, and the open method of coordination.

¹⁴ See Sicakkan, H (2008).

¹⁵ For Hobbes the ethos of the contract was survival; for Locke it was the need to secure the natural rights of “life, liberty, and property”; for Rousseau it was freedom; and for Rawls it was the fear of not being poor and the will to live a just society.

principles. Therefore, will formation does not reside in public deliberation, yet associational life is not of a particular concern.

The liberalism of Rawls draws a narrow definition of the public sphere, and draws a distinction between public sphere and civil society. Rawls' public sphere is related to "overlapping consensus". Rawls depicts a clear demarcation between the public and the private; he does not acknowledge the appearance and representation of the features belonging to the private in the public. This view suggests that as long as the differences and contests inherent to private claims (e.g. religious, ethnic and other cultural issues) are not carried to the public sphere, social cohesion is not disturbed. As his theory is individual rights-based, he does not assign a normative role to collective action as the prerequisite for democracy and justice. In other words, Rawls does not consider societal participation to be a prerequisite for a well-functioning democracy, and societal participation does not necessarily entail democratising consequences to Rawls. Rather, in a Kantian ethical framework, he posits an *a priori* autonomous self, a situation which does not leave any space for the contextual reason that could emerge from within civil society. In other words, the principles of justice and the frame of public reason are already pre-determined as "generally valid norms" (Forst 2002:96). Hence, Rawls' depiction of a good society does not necessarily depend on societal participation, since his political project aims to constitute political legitimacy on the basis of justice,¹⁶ which stems from "overlapping consensus" on the reasonable comprehensive views in society.¹⁷

In sum, to Rawls, the principles of "public reason" are given *a priori* for social interaction; therefore, civil society is not acknowledged as origin of "public reason", but rather as the realm of heteronomy, the realm of many competing reasons and

¹⁶ The two principles of justice in Rawls are the following: "1) Each person has an equal claim to a fully adequate scheme of basic rights and liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their fair value. 2) Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (1993:5)."

¹⁷ Rawls calls this project political liberalism, which differs from ethical liberalism. In this sense, liberalism, as an ethical political philosophy (i.e. Locke, Kant and Mills) becomes one of the comprehensive doctrines (Charney 1998:98).

interests. Furthermore, Rawls does not define civil society as the private realm either. Rather, he locates civil society in a public vs. non-public distinction. The non-public corresponds to associational life within civil society, and it includes the family, voluntary associations, clubs and churches (Ibid., 98). Therefore, non-public reasoning entails the social uses of reasons and it constitutes the background culture of the society, as opposed to the public political culture (Ibid., 98). For Rawls, the public sphere is therefore not institutionalised in civil society, but in a supreme court, which monitors the public use of reason “as a regulative ideal”. Defined in this way, it is the public use of reason, in contrast to its non-public use, which constitutes Rawls’ conception of the public sphere. Moreover, Rawls adds that public reason also applies to citizens when they “engage in political advocacy in the public forum and vote on issues concerning constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice” (Rawls 1993:215-216 in Charney 1998:98).

It can be concluded that Rawls does not define associational life as the constitutive element in politics. In such a project, NGOs cannot attain a normative role, in the sense that they are defined as the background culture for the non-public use of reason.¹⁸ Accordingly, liberalism does not suggest that the state should support civic organisations and involve them in decision-making. Yet what is most important for liberal thought is the right to establish associations, along with the state’s guarantee of non-intervention in citizens’ activities and programmes.

2.2. The Communitarian Participatory Model

Communitarianism suggests a critique of the rights-based approach and the individualism that underpins liberal thought. Communitarianism is inspired by

¹⁸ The liberalism of Rawls also differs from Lockean liberalism, in that it tries to conceptualise the basis of political legitimacy in the complex diversity that characterises modern societies. Rawls’ *Political Liberalism* (1993) therefore discusses how to make these differences possible when living together in a democratic way. In other words, Rawls distances himself from a Hobbesian stance of everyone for him- or herself, as well as Lockean liberalism in which each individual tries to foster his or her own interest. Rather, Rawls illustrates a model of political integration where the moral clusters, such as religious and philosophical attitudes, can provide access to an agreement on issues of common concern.

Aristotle, Hegel and Rousseau, as opposed to the Kantian influence behind Rawls' theory. Communitarians criticise the atomistic self of liberalism and prioritises rights over the good (Taylor 1989 and 2004; Sandel 1995; Walzer 1983; MacIntyre 1984). They try to reverse this dichotomy, challenging the Kantian basis of the rights-based autonomous self and replacing it with the notion of the common good and the community. The community life which is based on the people's interactions constitutes the very idea of communitarian thought. Communitarian thought asserts that the rights, justice, democracy and the construction of self cannot be considered apart from the community's role in maintaining the society's "ethos" (*what the society is and what the essences are that define the society*), and its "telos" (*where the society is headed and what the future purposes of the society are*). Forst describes the communitarian critique of liberalism thus: "Liberal public purposelessness does not permit a form of democracy that gathers the citizens around a common good. Moreover, such a legal-individualist society not only cannot survive in the long-run, it cannot be just either" (Forst 2002: 101).

With respect to our focus, this critique implies that the right to assemble does not guarantee social-political integration. Rather, the latter requires shared social values (Etzioni 1993) and social trust (Putnam 1993). It is expected that these can be achieved through associational life. Tocqueville, for instance, mentions that the ethos of common problem-solving was the main integrative force of American society. In parallel to Tocqueville (1835/1840[2000]), Dewey (1927) also stresses the "problem solving public", a political model which maintains integrity through a pragmatic search for common solutions to common problems. Putnam (1993), on the other hand, focuses on the psycho-cognitive consequence of participation by arguing that associational life reinforces the social capital of citizens. The views of the aforementioned scholars, in general, are promising in that they think of identity in ways other than ethno-cultural origins; hence, the cosmopolitan and deliberative scholars have revealed the possibility that a polity could emerge in the absence of a common past, language and ethno-cultural identity.

2.3. The Republican Participatory Model

In republican thought, all citizens are attached to each other through membership in the political community. It emphasises collective will formation processes. The nation-state, then, cements the community through the political principle of citizenship. In this respect, whereas a communitarian reading of republican thought suggests a mobilisation of the people under a certain “ethos” and “telos”, the republican model emphasises nourishing individuals with civic skills. The role of associations, in this model, is defined as reinforcing civic education, through e.g. “attention to the public goods, habits of cooperation, toleration, respect for others, and respect for the rule of law, willingness to participate in public life, self-confidence, and efficacy” (Fung 2003, see also Barber 1984). Hence, republican thought advocates the potential of participation to provide political-social integration through the promotion of civic culture and endowing all citizens with the idea of finding common solutions to common problems. The republican model entails the state’s involvement in encouraging associational life; however, this involvement is related to the very idea of republican thought of self-governance and positive right:

Political participation and communication are positive rights. They guarantee not freedom from external compulsion but the possibility of participation in a common praxis, through the exercise of which citizens can first make themselves into what they want to be—politically autonomous authors of a community of free and equal persons (Habermas 1996a:22).

As Habermas stresses, the republican ideal refutes an autochthonous understanding of the state by embedding sovereignty in the will of the people. The people, then, perform their own self-regulation by participating in elections, referendums, protests and associations. For our concern, consequently, republican thought does not necessarily imply any incorporation of the associations into the decision-making process. The stress here is rather on transforming the individuals into virtuous citizens; in other words, the stress is on identity formation.

2.4. The Deliberative Participatory Model

The deliberative model proposes an understanding of democracy with a particular focus on dialogue, communication and communicative rationality. As a project it

aims to refocus “vote-centric” democracy to “talk-centric” democracy. For our purposes, we question whether this model assigns a role for associations in this dialogue: this question can be elaborated by focusing on how the deliberative model defines the public use of reason and Habermas’ notion of communicative power.

Contrary to the holistic notion of a collectively acting citizenry as the basis for the will formation of communitarians, proponents of deliberative school advance will formation as inherent to the process of participation. To shed light on this, Benhabib defines the understanding of democratic legitimacy in a deliberative model thus: “...legitimacy in complex societies must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern. Thus a public sphere of deliberation about matters of mutual concern is essential to the legitimacy of democratic institutions” (Benhabib 1996:68).

The deliberative model opens the possibility for an “authentic reason” which can be generated *from within* civil society, which in turn could have implications for the political situation, both in terms of the entrenchment of the ethos of the polity at the macro level, and the implementation of policies at the micro level. It should be noted that the normative role assigned to civil society and the public spheres which emerge at the sub-systemic level in the participatory model mean more than the merely instrumental role of articulating the former to the state structures. It goes beyond a instrumental approach and ascribes an ethical and normative power to the institutionalised or non-institutionalised sub-publics, conceptualising them as capable of generating an authentic reason vis-à-vis the reason of the state.

Benhabib elaborates the different conceptualisations of the public use of reason in the public spheres of Rawls’ liberalism and deliberative democracy. Keeping in mind that the “public sphere” is defined as the “carrier of the public use of reason” (Fraser 2007), it is necessary to elaborate the way the public use of reason is interpreted in the two different models. Benhabib draws three points in which her deliberative model diverges from Rawls: “[first,] the deliberative model does not restrict the

agenda of public conversation: in fact it encourages discourse about the lines separating the public from the private; second, the deliberative model locates the public sphere in civil society, and is much more interested in the ways in which political processes and the ‘background culture’ interact;¹⁹ and finally, while the Rawlsian model focuses upon ‘final and coercive power’, the deliberative model focuses upon noncoercive and nonfinal process of opinion formation in an unrestricted public sphere” (1996:76). Benhabib elucidates a different conceptualisation of the public reason:

[C]ivil society is also public. Civil society and its associations are not public in the sense of always allowing universal access to all, but they are public in the sense of being part of that anonymous public conversation in a democracy. A deliberative model of democracy is much more interested than Rawls in what he calls “background cultural conditions”, precisely because politics and political reason are always seen to emerge out of a cultural and social context. Public reason certainly can distance itself from this context and evaluate it critically, but it can never completely render transparent all the background conditions that give rise to it. This is the kernel of truth in postmodern critiques of Kantian rationalism, which point out that reason is always situated in a context that it can never render completely comprehensible to discursive analysis (1996:76).

In this respect, the deliberative model develops a different understanding of the public use of reason, and this understanding constitutes one of the distinguishing aspects of deliberative democracy. Having embedded the public sphere in civil society, the deliberative model enables associations to generate a rational-critical discourse and articulation of the public use of reason. Hence, it refutes the metaphysical interpretation of public reason in Rawls’ model, where it is defined as a regulative ideal. Rather, it delineates an authentic public reason, which is generated from within the communications in civil society. Associations attain a crucial role in this model, since they constitute the institutionalised segments of civil society. Their roles concern fostering public deliberation and the critical gaze on decision-making, i.e. the watchdogs of democracy. Their efficacy is then explicated by exerting

¹⁹ This is what Fraser (1992) argues with respect to the conceptual contribution of the sub-publics.

communicative power on the system. In the following, I will focus on what communicative power entails in Habermas.

Within the scope of the deliberative model, Habermas focuses on the role of law as the integrating mechanism through a *procedural understanding of democracy*. Habermas' further contributions include a de-substantialised notion of legitimacy and sovereignty (Habermas 1998). The de-substantialised notion enables the constitution of legitimacy in the process of lawmaking. Conceptualising the legitimacy in a process enables a contingent definition of consensus: it contradicts the liberal definition of pre-political consensus and the communitarian definition of a pre-determined collective good. Habermas affirms the Lockean approach of separating administration and market, whereas he shares the republican idea of solidarity as an integrative element.

However, rather than focusing on culture as the repertoire of solidarity, Habermas points out the role of law and politics. The centre of his argument is that a just and fair process of lawmaking that includes all affected, integrates the people as participants in their *self-direction* of society. This view, instead of dealing with the outcome of the political processes, thus focuses on the *procedures* themselves. Habermas portrays a deliberative model as a post-metaphysical premise of integration in modern societies, in the sense it provides a critique of the communitarian reading of the ethical construction of political discourse. He moves instead from ethics to justice, taking particular inspiration from Kantian morality; thus, he stresses the moral construction of political discourse through discourse ethics. This implies that public reason should refer to universal principles, extending the ethical reference of a given community. Habermas, then, draws his methodological Kantian ideas from the communitarian critique of republican thought in his focus on the deliberative model.

Habermas finds the republican notion of a citizenry collectively acting through popular sovereignty utopian. In complex societies it would be challenging for the

sovereign to maintain integrity in the society under a certain “ethos” and mobilise the nation through a “homogenous value system” on ethno-cultural grounds (Habermas 1998; 1996a and 1996b). Procedural democracy questions the “*homogenous imaginative structure*”, based on the *substance* of republican communitarian thought, and the processes of entrenchment of general will. First, the *substance*-based understanding of communitarians assumes the existence of a homogenous nation, within which a homogenous “general will” can emerge, and in turn, the members of the political community consent to be loyal to the idea of a homogenous future (Habermas 1996b, 2000).

Second, procedural democracy questions *the process of collective will formation*. In republican thought, collective will is pre-determined: the “will” is there to be discovered by the people. In Rawls, will formation is not even a process; individuals (not organised groups) consent to the constitutive norms of society at a transcendental stage (not necessarily in literal daily life). Procedural democracy at this point criticises republicanism by asking who discovers the will, and under which conditions. Further, it asserts that these questions are of no less importance than the content of the “will itself”. In contrast, procedural democracy endeavours to suggest a “democratic realistic” formula for these questions. First, it explains that sovereignty is decentred and relies on procedures, as opposed to the utopian idea which asserts that the whole nation comes together and launches common will. Rather, people initiate their sovereignty in the processes of lawmaking; all affected participate in the process. For instance, Habermas illustrates the procedures as compromises, discourses of self-understanding and justice (1996b). Furthermore, deliberative democracy is based on a specific mode of conduct among the interlocutors in which the interaction is to be held in communicative action, in contrast with instrumental rationality—a form of rationality through which people try to maximise their self-interested goals through their interactions. The fair procedures and the principle of guaranteeing the inclusion of all affected enable society to self-determine its direction, goals, values and telos. Society is thus defined as the agent of its own making. In this view, then, the societal institutional settings can function as public

sphere(s) wherein and through which the communication from within civil society could resonate in other publics, considering the horizontal network communication among the networks and the public as society in general, and restrict the action of the state (Habermas 1996a; 1996b).

This debate is related to associational life in the sense that it necessitates associations' reference to universal validity claims, i.e. claims that no one would reject. Hence, Habermas' stress on the associational life strictly differs from an interest intermediation: whereas Habermas refers to universal values, the stress of the latter is on particular interests. In this context, the influence of associations is to promote a communicative power, but not necessarily a consultation with the administrative power:

Informal public opinion formation generates "influence"; influence is transformed into "communicative power" through the channels of political election; and communicative power is again transformed into "administrative power" through legislation. (Habermas 1996b:28)

In sum, the deliberative model of Habermas and Benhabib assigns NGOs the roles of detecting new issues of public concern and bringing them to the public agenda, without necessarily solving these issues. Therefore, Habermas is critical of the proximity between the state and NGOs, particularly state financing of NGOs, since it can lead to a colonisation of the life-world (civil society) by the system (the state).

The writings of Habermas have made a great contribution to the normative theory of democracy, specifically at the point where he de-substantialises the sources of legitimacy and sovereignty, and reveals the theoretical grounds of deriving them through the procedural processes of lawmaking and public deliberations. The formalist approach of Habermas confers an ethical and moral value on the procedures, since he claims that if "the process of lawmaking is fair, the results would be fair too" (Habermas 1996b). In other words, to Habermas, what makes decisions or systems legitimate are not the outcomes, but the process itself. Habermas derives the principles of the procedures from the universal validity claims

of equal participation of all and being open to all affected. Habermas further assesses the manner in which communicative rationality can originate from within the sub-systems of civil society. As has been shown, this is a parallel claim with Benhabib, who emphasises that public spheres are located in the civil society and public reason generated from the sub-systemic level of communication. Nevertheless, Habermas has been criticised for neglecting several important points. Primarily, it is claimed, he neglects power relations; he does not take seriously the background of the processes which led to the emergence of the procedures (Flybjerg 1998). The critique further challenges Habermas' argument that the principles which determine the procedures are universally valid, since power relations can hinder the realisation of an ideal procedure of equal participation and open to all.

2.5. Associative Democracy, Deliberative Direct Governance

The conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing discussion is that the normative theory does not suggest that associations should be incorporated into decision-making, i.e. neither in a corporatist nor pluralist way. Yet a corporatist understanding and an over-politicised society could also be seen in a totalitarian regime, such as the fascist regimes in Italy and Germany during the interbellum. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, a group of scholars have endeavoured to revitalise democracy through the direct integration of associations in the political system (Cohen and Rogers 1995; Hirst 1994). Associative democracy suggests that the associations could provide equality of representation and efficiency in governance; therefore, it proposes a rescue plan for democracy, particularly through mobilisation, empowerment and the creation of associations.

The proponents of associative democracy propose a democratic model of which the state plays a central role in integrating the societal interests to politics. The resources of state are used to balance the representational asymmetries, so that marginal groups and the underrepresented find formal channels to be integrated into the political system (Baccarro 2006). Furthermore, the state uses its discretion to choose the organisations which show potential to promote the common good (i.e. transcending their particular interests) (Cohen and Rogers 1995). It is therefore associative

democracy which argues that associations should be supported by the state and then integrated into decision-making.

Associative democracy draws on deliberation as a mode of conduct; in this system, the source of legitimacy is based on deliberations and procedures. In contrast to Habermas' focus on the subjectless communication—anonymous public communication—of political discourse, associative democracy concentrates on the immediate actors in deliberation, namely the associations. In this respect, Cohen and Rogers (1995) have portrayed the benefits of associations as follows: epistemological assistance to policy makers; equalising representation, so that functional interests can also be represented; educating citizens (as the communitarian and republican models assert); and providing alternative modes of governance. The last of these implies the incorporation of societal organisations into the governance of society. To quote Cohen and Rogers (Ibid.), “associations can provide a distinctive form of social governance, alternative to markets or public hierarchies, that permits society to realise the important benefits of cooperation among member citizens”. Nonetheless, this definition stresses the problem-solving credentials of associations, rather their representing their members. Therefore, the functional division between the state and civil society disappears. Cohen and Rogers (Ibid.) elucidate the roles of associations in this model: “[Associations] help to formulate and execute public policies, and take on quasi-public functions that supplement or supplant the state’s more directly regulatory actions”

2.6. The Critique of Deliberation

Moralising the problem-solving premises of the public use of reason at the sub-systemic level, in this case civil society, could mask the macro-mentalities. This could lead to a definition of politics merely defined in utilitarian and pragmatist terms (Mouffe 2005). Habermas places the principle of the participation of all affected on equal ground as morality. However, when the political is merely defined as a problem-solving activity, the constitutive ethos of the political rule could be hidden or avoided. From a critical point of ideology, political rule would require an

internalisation of hegemony (and the methods of ruling), while reproducing the societal control mechanisms. As an illustration of this debate, Mouffe (2005) gives the symbiotic relationship between environmentalism and neo-liberalism. The procedural understanding would affirm the participation of the all-affected in (in his example) an environmental issue, including the local and national governments, industry, environmental citizen groups, experts etc. However, radical democracy does not perceive this “stake-holder” understanding of democracy as a radical effort, and it urges that the mentality, the neo-liberal policies, which prepared the ground of the damage of nature in the first place should primarily be attacked. Mouffe (Ibid.) further asserts that since universal claims are contingent and context-dependent, they can be resisted and reformed. In contrast with Mouffe’s proposal of a strategy of resistance to address the macro-mentalities of political power, Foucault suggests that political rationalities can also be challenged at the margins, in daily practices, wherein political rationalities are exerted. Having cut off the King’s head, Foucault (1991) attempts to portray, detect and problematise the characteristics of political power—beyond the state and decentred—while shifting the direction of analysis from “*who governs*” to “*where and through which rationalities political power governs*”.

2.7. Concluding remarks

This chapter elaborated the roles and functions assigned to NGOs in different models of the normative theory of democracy: *liberalism*, *communitarianism*, *republicanism*, *deliberative models*, and *associative models*. Furthermore, it developed a critique of the deliberative model. It sketched out the literature on the contribution of associational life to democracy, and the way relations between state and society are illustrated in each model. The latter entails the role of the state in the emergence, empowerment and funding of societal organisations, and their incorporation into public policies. We focused on the role of the state in order to portray the extent of associations’ autonomy. We focused on whether the respective models prioritise the involvement of associations into public policy in order to detect the normative grounds of the contemporary discourse on civil society, participation and civil

society and governance. The conclusion to be drawn is that it is associative democracy which stresses a proactive role for the state in constituting a type of organisational form which directly engages in public policies. Other models (liberalism, communitarianism, republicanism and deliberation) do not suggest the “governmentalising of civil society”. In Rawls, it is a right to assemble; the state, in fact, should not intervene into civil society. Communitarians concentrate on community organisations, and hence the socialising impacts of associational life. Republicanism, on the other hand, conceives of participation in associations as an instrument nourishing individuals with civic consciousness and civic duties. Yet Habermas and Benhabib stress the communicative power of the anonymous (subjectless) political discourse within civil society; hence, they stress the impact of associations in public deliberation.

The main difference between Habermas and Rawls is that while Habermas generates public reason from within public communication, for Rawls, public reason is a regulative ideal which the citizens and political actors *ought to* refer to. This difference can be illustrated in the example of the dissertation’s object of inquiry, the EU NGOs. In a Habermasian conception, EU NGOs can be considered constituent of the public sphere if they manage to link the anonymous deliberations emerging within the civil society to the political public sphere, thus acting like a transmission belt (Habermas 2008). To Rawls, NGOs should refer to pre-set principles and norms which regulate their actions.

Liberalism of Rawls further suggests that the right to assemble is one of the main rights of individuals. However, the question is whether it is better to posit this right within the categories of negative or positive rights (Berlin 1969). With respect to negative rights, the state is simply responsible for guaranteeing the rights of individuals, and does not interfere in the individual realm. Negative rights are inherent to the individual, so that it is the individual who determines whether or not to benefit from that particular right (here, the right to form civic organisations). Positive rights (associated with republicanism), on the other hand, entail the state’s

interference in the individual realm; they constitute necessary measures to ease the life of the individual. Related to the discussion here, a positive-right perspective would conceive of the right to organise as a precondition of a good society, independent from the will of the individual. For instance, some countries, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, apply a positive-right perspective in promoting and financially supporting immigrant associations. Nonetheless, in a negative-right perspective, the initiative to create these institutions belongs to the immigrants themselves. In the light of this illustration, it can be seen that Rawls is closer to the negative-right perspective when it comes to right to organise.

The debate surrounding the public sphere also concerns the limits of the private and public realms. The action theory of the public sphere elucidates the publicity involved in face-to-face relations. Arendt advocates a strict division between the public and private, defining the public realm as the realm of *freedom*, and the private realm as that of *necessities*. Arendt identifies the private sphere as the household, so that the outside of the family is then defined as public—idealised in the agora and the arenas of the Greek *polis*. Along with Rawls, Arendt does not have the aim of integrating the private into the political. Nevertheless, while Rawls develops a limited notion of the public sphere, Arendt defines almost all space outside the family as public. Rawls tries to conceal differences in the private with an aim to prevent any possible grounds of contestation and clashes which could derive from them. Hence, the public sphere of Rawls is free of conflicts. In contrast, Arendt's public sphere is open to clashes since it is the arena for arguing everything that is related to the public (Arendt 1958). Arendt, furthermore, claims that with modernity the public sphere has also become a realm of necessities, so that the political has turned out to be the economy, an activity of ruling the people as a household. In this respect, Arendt shows parallels with the Foucaultian concept of governmentality. Foucault, too, points out the shift of state power from the security of the territories to an art of government, i.e. pastoral power, which is the government of the population as economy (as Arendt would define it).

To continue with Foucault's emphasis, the governmentality approach considers public reason not as a transcendental, metaphysical ethical concept, but as political (Flyvbjerg 1998). Further, though civic rationalities (i.e. rational-critical reason emerging from within civil society) propose an alternative system of governing, there is no guarantee that that these bottom-up reasons would offer a better way of governing. The Foucaultian critique argues that civic rationalities are also embedded in power, and as with all relations of power, this situation oscillates between liberty and tyranny (Cruikshank 1999).

CHAPTER 3

A THEORETICAL INQUIRY INTO PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AT EUROPEAN UNION LEVEL

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and normative necessity to discuss public spheres beyond the nation-state, and addresses some possible challenges for its democratising promises. The first chapter elaborated different models of the normative theory of democracy, with a specific focus on the democratising promise of institutionalised societal participation in political processes. These models, however, rest on the national paradigm, and they do not take the consequences of transnational social relations into consideration. Furthermore, the normative theories of democracy still entail a nation-state and a Westphalian state system-specific perspective. This chapter, on the other hand, addresses the debate about the possibility—and necessity—of transcending the Westphalian state system and the methodological nationalist paradigm in social theory and philosophy. In other words, the first chapter compared different models of normative theory by evaluating their different positions on political integrity, belonging building, will formation, and the role of societal participation in the public sphere. Having introduced the debate on the possibility of transnational public spheres with Fraser (2007), we will now discuss, first, the reasons behind the emergence of the transnational public sphere, and further, the European public sphere(s).

Contemporary social theory emphasises the transformation from the “national constellation” to the “post-national constellation”, in which the understanding of the “government” has been shifted to the “system of governance”, along with de-bordering and globalising trends (Habermas 2001b; Zürn 1999; Beck and Grande 2007). At the national setting there has been a congruence of the “territory, state, and the national citizens”. The nation-state has been the locus of power solely responsible for the governance of the national people, for whom the external territorial impact on domestic politics is limited. While the traditional national approach focused on the national domain as the space of governance by the nation-state, within the national

territories, and for the national citizens, a contemporary conceptualisation of politics has emphasised the transcendence of governance beyond the nation-state. This has entailed the argument that nation-states have shared a substantial amount of their sovereignty with EU institutions and newly-emerged extra-governmental institutions. Based on this, scholars of European studies developed several concepts to define the current political structuring within Europe, such as a “polity” (Eriksen et al 2005; Delanty and Rumford 2005), a “system of governance” (Kochler Koch 2006; Koch and Rittberger 2007; Jachtenfuchs 2001) and a “multi-level governance” (Hooghe and Marks 2001).

Arguing that the transformation from the “government” to the “system of governance” challenges traditional understandings of state/society relations, these scholars have further debated the possibilities of democratic decision-making and legitimate EU governance. The governance approach has not concentrated on democracy and legitimacy. Although it has also recently attempted to develop a theory of participatory governance (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007; Finke 2007), here, the focus will be on the normative theory of democracy.

The proponents of the reflexive polity approach have asserted that people living in the European space are impacted by the decisions and policies of the EU institutions; however, they cannot participate in the “will formation” for the collectively binding decisions (Eriksen et al 2005). In the national constellation, where “society, territory and politics” coincide, it is the national state that forms the locus of popular sovereignty. However, the trinity of “national equilibrium” has been shattered, resulting in the territory of the national space being governed by the decisions of different actors (Beck and Grande 2007). Therefore, on this account, the system of EU governance has suffered from problems of legitimacy. This in turn has led to a political theory that discusses the manner and possibility of *post-national sovereignty* and its implementation beyond the nation-state.

The reflexive polity approach in EU studies has been inspired by the writings of Habermas (Eriksen et al 2005). Habermas' procedural deliberative democracy appeals to this approach in that it rests upon the idea of a *procedural implementation of sovereignty* through the institutionalisation of procedures and communication. Hence, procedures and deliberation could overcome the obstacles which hinder the emergence of a common communication space, a public sphere, namely a common demos, language and culture. Procedural democracy has developed a critique of liberal and republican thought. While the former suggests a strict state and market separation that prioritises the market as the mechanism of social cohesion, the latter advocates the idea of a collectively acting citizenry. Habermas argues that neither of these perspectives offers sufficient alternatives for the current era of complex and diverse societies (Habermas 1996b). Habermas' views of implementing sovereignty through the procedures and institutionalised channels of communication has given impetus to debates of democracy beyond the nation-state, as this model provides an alternative way of thinking beyond the representative and substantive understanding of democracy (Drzyek 1999, 2001; Bohman 2004, 2005, 2007). Habermas links the market and politics through the peripheral networks of political public spheres derived from civil society. Hence, the (political) public sphere emerges as an analytical category that links societal demands and public opinion to the political structures.

Through the critique of communitarian and liberal thought, cosmopolitans in European studies have investigated the theoretical grounds for the application of the deliberative understanding of politics, such as Habermas' ideas, to the European polity. "Deliberative democracy" appeals to Habermasian European scholars in that, first, it theoretically allows ethnic and civic identity to be detached from each other. Second, it provides the philosophical and theoretical basis to bridge the gap between society and the system of European governance, developing *post-national* participatory models of democracy, since it derives the public sphere *from within* civil society (Vink 2007). Based on the discourse ethics of the Kantian tradition, deliberative democracy suggests *deliberation*, as opposed to rational choice and

utilitarianism, as the mode of conducting trans-European communication, making the political interaction of strangers possible.

3.1. Organised civic action and Imagining Trans-national Public sphere(s)

It has been argued that platforms of European NGO networks could be conceived as the nucleus of European civil society (Curtin 1999; Magnette 2003; and Eriksen 2005b). This, however, is contingent on their functioning as the public sphere of civil society (Calhoun 1992, 1993; Habermas 1996a), i.e. the extent to which they are integral to *public opinion formation processes, decision articulation, and the spread of the norms and discourses* in European space through the network of communications (see also Figure 1). In other words, their democratising promise hinges on their bridging the system of governance and society. We elaborated on the manner in which normative theories of democracy entail a definition of public sphere and assign a role for societal participation in the processes of socio-political integration. The following pages will endeavour to translate this discussion into European governance. It discusses the extent to which the public sphere beyond the nation-state at a transnational level could be possible, and how it could be conceptualised in the European context.

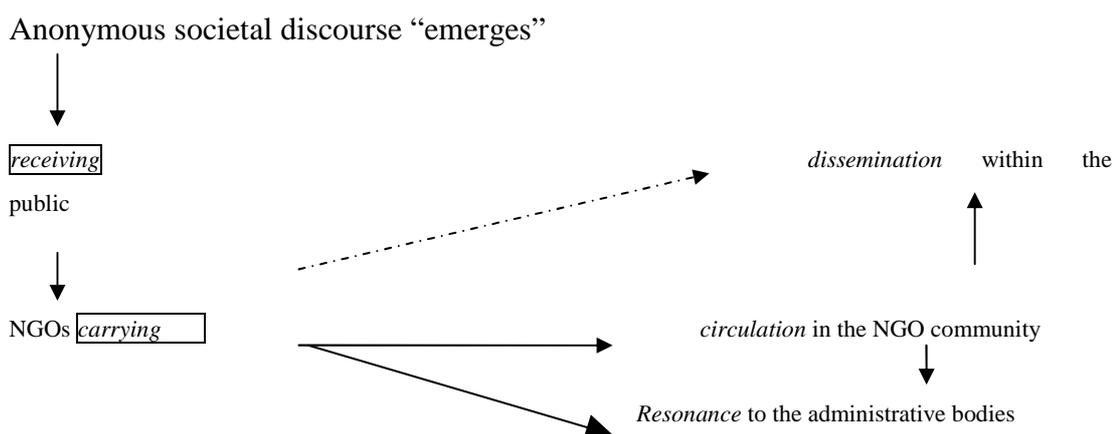


Figure.1 A discursive depiction of the role of European NGOs in the European Public Sphere

The recent seminal work of Fraser (2007) addresses the necessity to theorise the public sphere beyond the nation-state. Fraser (2007) recently presented a prominent contribution to the theory of the public sphere, considering the contemporary globalising trends, extension of the governance mechanism beyond the nation-state and spread of new technology. In this work, Fraser tries to reconsider the theory of the public sphere in a transnational context where she revisits Habermas' *Structural Transformations* in order to depict the relationship between the nation-state and the public sphere. Fraser points out that *Structural Transformations* showed the public sphere was only possible within the nation-state; as a matter of fact, it was the nation-state which made public communication possible (Ibid.). Fraser elucidates how the nation-state built the infrastructure that enabled the formation and circulation of public opinion in her reading of Habermas. First, Fraser stresses that *Structural Transformations* showed how people are bound by the strong ties of citizenry, so that they can establish commonality with strangers under a universal category of citizenship. Second, these citizens reside in a territorial space which demarcates the boundaries of the nation-state from other nation-states. Third, the nation-state is also recognised as sovereign by other nation-states under international law. Fourth, the nation fosters the mechanism of spreading a unique language and formal education system inside the territory. In this way, the public becomes possible: the citizens of the nation-state can talk about the national interest within a national territorial space, through the print media, with a language that everyone understands, ultimately directing their talk towards a sovereign-national state (Ibid.).

Indicating the symbiotic relation between the public sphere and the nation-state, Fraser's assessment (which refers to Habermas' early work) does not leave any space to discuss the possibility of public opinion formation beyond the nation-state. Nevertheless, in the contemporary era of transnationalisation, in which politics is in a process of restructuring due to the emergence of governance mechanisms beyond the borders, it is necessary to revisit the classical conceptions of social science. This includes the relationship of the state and society in general, and public opinion formation in particular, which is what Fraser herself admits. The public sphere as an

analytical concept can be reconsidered in a transnational context through two aspects. The first is inherent to its categorical definition. The underlying aspects—which for Fraser are what make the public sphere indispensable for democracy (in parallel with the claims of deliberative democracy, which places public spheres within civil society, for e.g. Benhabib)—are “communicative generation of the public opinion” and the “carrier of public use of reason” (Fraser 2007). That is to say, normative theory focuses on the generation of the public opinion and public use of reason *categorically*, independent of context, time and space. The nation-state might have faced serious challenges, and the affiliation between the nation-state and democracy might have been distorted in many points. Nevertheless, normative theory keeps directing the *categorical* question: “How could the public opinion emerge, the public use of reason become possible and both articulate to the decision-making structures?” Therefore, the normative theory of democracy conceives as a prerequisite the query of the possibility of public opinion formation in entrenching decision-making bodies beyond the nation-state. Though, this entails some problems.

Fraser (Ibid.) indicates that consideration of the public sphere is related to the application of the Kantian principle of “all-affected” into the transnational governance mechanism. The question is whether Fraser’s position in the debate over transnational public sphere(s), as well as her stress on the “communicative generative” character of public spheres could be realized with the “de-substantialised notion of sovereignty and deliberative democracy”. The challenge to transnational public spheres firstly concerns the difficulties of envisioning a unique global public sphere, or a narrow and limited public sphere which could be envisioned above civil society, for instance a global supreme court as the liberalism of Rawls would suggest. The second challenge to transnational public spheres concerns that the depiction of public spheres in the system of transnational governance in terms of communitarians or liberals is not only theoretically implausible, but also has normative shortcomings. For instance, communitarian or liberal transnational public spheres can only be possible under a world-government or the hegemony (in Gramscian terms) of a superpower – and both would be equally undesirable. Against

the liberal and communitarian understanding of transnational public spheres, and in parallel to Fraser, however, Bohman (1997:181) argues that the global public sphere and an international civil society are conceivable through the Kantian idea of a cosmopolitan public sphere.

[...]it is primarily the force of opinions of world citizens, like the opinions of republican citizens in the state, that will bring about the limitations of military power necessary for peace. The prospect of a united international law emerging out of the current state of nature between nations is remote. For Kant, this means that a federation is required. Since he denies any analogy to the governmental form of the newly formed United States, the pluralism of this association has no real analogy in the republican form of government. In the cosmopolitan sense, the supreme coercive power of public right in the state is replaced by the initially very weak power of the public opinion of world citizens, that is, the power of a *critical* public. Even under the conditions of political pluralism, the formal principle of publicity has a constraining influence, if only an indirect one, upon already constituted forms of power and civil authority.

Communicative spaces are transcended beyond the national territories, and new forms and channels of interaction have been established transnationally, for instance around the supranational and regional institutions, and through global social movements (and the Internet). The question that Kantians pose is whether *publicity* is entrenched *within* and *from within* the new communicative spaces that have emerged beyond the nation-state. The critique – which neo-Kantians do not employ-, however, discusses the extent to which are these opinions are grounded upon the common good (or public interest), “distilled from the hegemonic discourse”, “challenging governmentality”, “restraining the political power” and eventually producing an “authentic reason”. Some empirical studies of the public spheres in the transnational context take a critical stance toward those newly emerging communicative spaces, e.g. those spaces which claim to perform critical roles within transnational decision-making settings. These studies question the extent to which the representatives of public are attached to power centres²⁰ and related to the reproduction of governmentality (Fraser 2003; Morison 2000; Dean 1999; Lemke

²⁰ This entails a Gramscian approach which examines the newly-emerging extra-state, as well as associational and non-institutional assemblies beyond the nation-state within the scope of the reproduction of hegemony.

2002). We will elaborate upon these critiques in Chapter three; in the following, we will focus on the notion of public sphere within the context of EU.

3.2. Putting the European NGO Phenomenon in a Normative Frame: European Civil Society and European Public Sphere(s)

EU integration has been in a different phase since the Amsterdam and Maastricht Treaties. As Europe has become a space of growing de-territorialisation and de-nationalisation which is to a great extent shaped by the actions of the EU, the legitimacy of the EU as the prime force behind these crucial historical transformations has started to be intensively debated.²¹ This debate underscores, first, whether the EU needs a direct legitimacy for its existence and its policies, in contrast with the pre-1990s era when the decisions and actions of the nationally elected and appointed politicians in the EU institutions were accepted as legitimate, and second, the manner in which the system of EU governance proves its legitimacy. The French and Dutch rejection of the Constitution and the Irish rejection of the Reform Treaty were recognised as signs of the vast distance between the national societies and EU institutions and the idea of the EU itself. The growing focus on the concept of the European public sphere, as well as its potential promise for socio-political integrity, stems from these concerns.²²

The transnational public sphere and the European public sphere(s) should be studied as analytically distinct phenomena. The normative prerequisites to envision public spheres beyond the nation-state, for instance by legitimising decision-making beyond the national territories, apply to the European Public Sphere *per se*. Therefore, the notion of the European public sphere is loaded with more demanding normative claims, such as socio-political integrity and demos construction. Henceforth, we

²¹ See, for instance, Bellamy, R. (2006); Bohman, J. (2004); Føllesdal, A. and Hix, S.(2006); Horeth, M. (1999); Lord, C. and Beetham, D. (2001); Lord, C. and Magonette, P. (2004); Offe, C. and Preuss, K. (not cited); Risse, T. and Kleine, M. (2007); Lord and Harris 2006.

²² Eriksen, E. O. (2005); Koopmans, R. and J. Erbe (2004); Risse, T. (2002); Schlesinger, P. (1995); Schlesinger, P. (2007); Van de Steeg, M. (2002); Trenz, H.- J. and Eder, K. (2004).

should integrate the traditional concerns of normative political theory into the European integration studies.

Communitarian vs. Cosmopolitan Approach to the European Public Sphere

Scholars have debated the concept of the European public sphere, first, as a *category* which could provide a solution to the EU's legitimacy and democratic deficit problem, and second, as a *possibility* that could also contribute to the "common identity problem" in the European space. Scholars who have elaborated the concept of public sphere through the "statist paradigm" try to explain it through the lens of the nation-state. Thus, the lack of a "communality of communication" based on a common language and genuinely European media was interpreted as the impossibility of the emerging European public sphere (Grimm 1995). In this communitarian perspective, the lack of a "common identity", or European demos, has been perceived as a barrier to the emergence of a European public (Schlesinger 1995). It can at the same time be claimed that the communitarian perspective embeds a "state paradigm", falling into the *teleological trap* of trying to equate European institutions with the state and the European polity with the nation. Further, this view questions whether EU integration abolishes the nation-state and builds a supranational state as the replica of processes inherent to the nation-state. As a matter of fact, the conception of a European public sphere contained in the communitarian state paradigm fosters a narrow approach of the European public sphere that is based on an idealised picture of an almost homogenous national public sphere which is then transferred to the European level (Van de Steeg 2002). Furthermore, the communitarians argue that thinking of public spheres beyond the nation-state is not possible.

There are three fallacies contained in the communitarian line of thought. First, the European polity is not becoming a state-like entity and it is far from competing with the nation-state, not only in the literal sense but even in the hypothetical sense, for the construction of a community which would erode the already-existing structures of identity building inherent to the nation-state. Second, there is a new type of polity

emerging in the European space which is driven by the European integration process. It does not erode the nation-state and already-existing structures inherent to the nation-state, such as national citizenship, democracy, legitimacy and culture. Rather, the existing structures are kept, only transformed and transcended into the new era, and begin to coexist with the newly emerging ones. Therefore, this is a dialectical process. The discussion of the new type of state, society and market relations through the outdated paradigms would lead nowhere but to absurd and meaningless discussions of the fictitious competition of the nation-state and the European state.²³ Third, communitarians are missing a crucial point about European integration and its impact on the nation-state and citizens. From the communitarian perspective, it is the state that maintains the ethos of the community, with respect to who its members are what they would like to be in the future. However, the recent reconstruction of the polity has some repercussions on what the state has defined as its ethos. Although the nation-state has an unchallenged dominance in providing its members through an ethics of universal category of citizenship, the determination of the telos of the nation, where it is evolving to and what it would like to be, is challenged by European integration. The EU is promoting a certain way of political culture and set of norms for the nation-states, such as political liberal democracy, liberal economics, respect for human rights etc. Therefore, growing cross-border impacts on the national territorial domain are exerting a pressure on the national domains. These cannot be elucidated through interest-driven power politics, as the International Theory of Realism would suggest. Considering the political restructuring within the European space, there is a normative impact on the “political ethics” and the ethos of the nation-states, which operates as an omnipotent ideal pressure in such a way that it threatens national communities as the unique centre of their ethical evolution.²⁴

²³ Beck and Grande (2007:34) illuminate the contemporary socio-political restructuring with the Hegelian term “sublation” in which the past has not been eroded, but transformed and transcended into a new form. It is a dialectical reading of history, and when the dialectical reading of history is reconciled with the methodology of the relational approach, we could have a critical hermeneutical position of the *Zeitgeist*.

²⁴ Linklater (2007; 2005) discusses the normative impact of European integration within the European space through the assessment of “civilising impact”, which entails a highly parallel argument with this statement.

In contrast to the communitarians, Kantian scholars advocate a reflexive polity in which they argue that common culture, language and history are not necessary requirements for polity building (Eriksen et al 2005), but rather, the problem-solving for common issues may well provide the basis of socio-political integrity. Drawing inspiration from Habermas in *Structural Transformation*, cosmopolitans examine the emergence of public spheres as communicative stages in which European civil society can deliberatively organise its interests and articulate them to decision-making bodies. They interpret the public sphere(s) as intermediary channels between the civil society and administrative bodies in the governance mechanism, and relate the concept to legitimacy and democracy. This perspective suggests that the public sphere does not exist prior to or independent of decision-making agencies, but emerges in opposition to them as a vehicle to test the legitimacy of legal provisions and as a counterweight to governmental power (Eriksen 2005a). It consists of actors who debate in public a topic which they consider to be in the public interest, and who are aware that they are observed by a public. It is the presence of a public which makes the interaction resonates “on stage” (Stegg 2002: 50). That is to say, “it includes not only those who take an active part in the debate but always presupposes that communication resonates among others who constitute a public for this communication” (Trenz and Eder 2004: 9). Eriksen (2005b) claims that freedom of communication makes possible the public use of reason.

Cosmopolitans build their arguments on the basis of deliberative democracy and discourse theory, in which deliberation is defined as the mode of conduct between the interlocutors “which does not depend on the collectively acting citizenry but on the institutionalisation of corresponding procedures and conditions of communication. This concept of democracy no longer needs to operate with the notion of social whole centred in the state imagined as a goal-oriented subject” (Habermas 1996b:27). Deliberative democracy directs an “ontological shift away from the exclusive focus on the state and its institutions” (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger 2007). It is based on an understanding of the communicative problem-

solving among free citizens on the principle of reason (Benhabib 1996; Elster 1998; Dryzek 2001; and Forst 2001).

The literature that discusses deliberative democracy in the context of the EU agrees that a post-national European polity is emerging and deliberative politics stands as the critique of the communitarian statist understanding of democracy (Schmalz-Bruns 2007; Bohman 2005; Joerges and Neyer 1997; Eriksen 2005; Eriksen 2005b; Neyer 2003; Eriksen and Fossum 2002). However, this extensive literature also distinguishes within itself those who stress the supranational political and legal power of the EU (Eriksen and Fossum 2002; Eriksen 2005; Schmalz-Bruns 2007), and those who advocate a multiple-demosi thesis with a focus on a weak or non-hierarchical political authority (Bohman 2005, Weiler 1998, 1999, 2000, Neyer 2003). Both approaches agree when it comes to defining the EU as a rights-based polity; however, the problem arises when it comes to identifying the subjects of these rights and the manner of implementing popular sovereignty. The disagreement stems from whether it could be a post-national demos constructed in constitutional terms, as Habermas developed with the concept of constitutional patriotism, or multiple demoi. The latter approach, in focusing on the differentiated and diverse mechanisms, ignores the unifying elements in the European polity, and considers the market to emerge as the integrative mechanism of that polity. On the other hand, a rights-based polity perspective asserts that the law is itself the integrative element, when right is elaborated in a Kantian sense as a categorical universal concept.

3.3. Pragmatic Philosophy and Democratic Experimentalism

The pragmatic approach endeavours to merge the premises of discourse ethics and direct governance (Bohman 2005; Dryzek 1999; Cohen and Sabel 1997). Arguing that democracy should not wait for the spontaneous emergence of critical publics, it suggests that the state should mobilize civil society by financially supporting civic organisations and formally incorporating them into the decision-making structures. This strategy would eventually create a “critical gaze” around the bureaucratic administration, while reinforcing efficient and effective problem-solving governance. This is particularly appealing to European governance in a context where a European

public cannot be built on the basis of a common identity or a common public sphere. I argue that a pragmatic strategy combines the tenets of functionalism and associative democracy (with a particular focus on direct governance).

With respect to Commission's role of supporting the EU NGOs, therefore, I argue that the Commission's strategy combines a pragmatic philosophy, a functional approach and associative democracy. It is pragmatic because it suggests that the Commission take the initiative, instead of expecting a critical rationality and a common identity to emerge from within the dynamics of the life-world of civil society. It is functional because it endeavours to orient the particular interests towards a common European interest, in addition to entailing a functional representation of different sectors. Finally, it is based on associative democracy since it presents sponsored associational life as a good way of doing politics; hence, this proposal involves an ethical aspect. The latter requires new forms of societal organisations, those which are constituted, motivated, directed and guided in order to become actors in European governance. That is to say, only those organisations which adapt to these requirements can take part in the Platform (and then in the new forms of governance). We should, however, note that the ethics of association does not consider associational life as a closed system, but as embedded within networks, e.g. networks of governance.

3.4. Concluding Remarks

The neo-Kantian deliberative school (De Schutter 2002, Magnette 2003, Eriksen 2001; Stekkek and Nanz 2007)) elucidates the democratising promise of the EU NGOs in terms of their potential for functioning like a transmission belt for European civil society (i.e. establishing a link between grassroots movements and political power) and generating a critical rationality. The governance school (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007; Zimmer and Freise 2006; Greenwood 2007a; Bouwen 2004; Balme and Chabanet 2008; Pedler 2007) concentrates on the role of EU NGOs in effective problem solving. This approach rests on the quality of political end products and the happiness of the people. The pragmatic approach, on the other hand, endeavours to

merge these two approaches (Bohman 2004; Cohen and Rogers 1995, Cohen and Sabel 1997, Fung 2003, Smismans 2006, Hirst 1994). Arguing that democracy should not wait for the spontaneous emergence of critical publics, it suggests that the state should mobilise civil society by financially supporting the civic organisations and formally incorporating them into the decision-making structures. This is particularly appealing to European governance in a context where a European public cannot be built on the basis of a common identity or a common public sphere.

The proponents of associative democracy propose a democratic model in which the state plays a central role in integrating societal interests into politics. First, the resources of state are used to balance the representational asymmetries, so that marginal and underrepresented groups find formal channels for integration into the political system (Baccaro 2006). Second, the state uses its discretion to choose the organisations which show potential to promote the common good (i.e. transcending their particular interests) (Cohen and Rogers 1995).

What I argue is that the relations between the EU NGOs and the Commission fit well into this model. Beginning in the early 1990s, the Commission has followed a strategy of empowering societal associations, even though it has prioritised Brussels-based organisations. It has focused on instrumentalising these organisations to orient the interests of local NGOs towards the EU. In doing so, it has concentrated on entrenching a European common good, a common good which is channelled through associations. The latter is pertinent with the functionalist instance of the pragmatic approach. In this respect, the EU is trying to create a discursive field which attempts to build a direct connection between citizens and the EU institutions. Chapter three details how the European Commission tries to achieve this through the discourse on European civil society and participation. The implication of this debate for our discussion is whether the EU NGOs promote a sense of “we feeling” and solidarity in Europe, as suggested by deliberative scholars (who also advocate a cosmopolitan understanding) in the sense that strangers can be integrated into a given political community—European polity not excepted—through participating in politics.

Nonetheless, the strategy of merging the tenets of direct governance through associations (Cohen and Rogers 1995) and deliberative democracy could have normative limitations. The conceptualisation of EU NGOs as the nucleus or transmission belt of European civil society is theoretically problematic. The deliberative approach in EU studies suggests that the incorporation of the European NGOs (EU NGOs) into EU decision-making processes and EU governance contributes to the democratisation of EU governance. However, this argument is problematic in that it fails to interpret the roles of the EU NGOs in accordance with the tenets of deliberative democracy, such as those outlined by Habermas (1992, 1996b) and Benhabib (1996). According to the latter, civil society democratises the political system linking the public reason that has emerged from within civil society to the decision-making processes; the emphasis is on the communicative power of the influence that NGOs could foster. Assessed in this way, the democratising promise of EU NGOs is contingent on articulating *publicity, the public use of reason, and collective will formation* to the EU decision-making process. A pragmatic approach, however, places emphasis on direct governance, but neglecting to elaborate the main premise of deliberation, i.e. that actors should refer to a common good. One aspect of this discussion concerns whether EU NGOs link with grassroots movements in order to articulate a European collective reason (a requirement to act as a transmission belt). If not, they would otherwise be required to perform a double role: opinion-forming (imagined as embodying the notion of common good) and opinion-linking roles (imagined as linking anonymous opinions formed in civil society).

CHAPTER 4

GOVERNMENTALITY AND A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT ON THE PARTICIPATION DISCOURSE AS REGARDS EUROPEAN NGOs

Eriksen (2005:351) claims that there is in fact a European public sphere that revolves around the mutual observation of institutional actors and their audiences, stressing the fact the EU governance mechanism has already evolved into a multilevel character and networks beyond the nation-state. Eriksen argues that networks take the form of publics insofar as there is coupling between collective actors and the audience when the actors do not only communicate among themselves but also have resonance in other forums (Eriksen 2005; Dryzek 1999:35). Eriksen is optimistic about the promise of these networks; to him, transnational deliberative bodies, which are transnational networks, exert communicative pressure, raise the information level and contribute to rational problem solving because they include different parties on the basis of knowledge and interests. According to Erikson's definition, EU NGOs could be regarded as a constituent of a grand European public sphere, while also constituting their own public sphere.

However—as will be shown in the following chapters—when it comes to the EU's recent definition of the public sphere, it is apparent that the EU adopts a neo-liberal conception of public spheres. On the one hand, it paves the way for a pluralisation of the actors which participate in the policy debate. However, on the other hand, it privatises the public interest, in the sense it defines each actor or stakeholder as categorically equivalent to each other. Hence, the pluralised public sphere does not necessarily lead to democratisation as a result of an increase in actors in the debate. Rather, it paves the way of particularisation of the common interest, so that the universal aspect of the common good is lost (see Kamat 2004 for a similar debate on the development NGOs). Therefore, the EU conception of the public sphere is neither liberal in the Rawlsian sense, nor communitarian as Taylor and Arendt suggest; it abandons the common good and the regulative ideal.

However, I will question, first, whether the integration of the NGOs into European politics is necessary, and whether the transnational NGO is the right agent for discussing participatory democracy and deliberation. Second, can these European NGOs be seen as representative of civil society? And with respect to the first question, can the concept of civil society easily be equated with the terms of NGOs? Third, assuming that EU NGOs are representative as the voice of the civil society, or that they are the appearance of what the civil society itself is, then the question should be whether the EU NGOs really function as a public sphere, as a link of civil society and the carrier of the public use of reason, in the sense that the normative theory of democracy argues. Last, but not least, is the question of whether they are really positioned against the state and have counter-statal features, such that we should directly accept them as the realm of civil society, as opposed to the realm of the state.

The EU NGOs argue that they articulate the interests of the European civil society into the European political structures. Its members are transnational networks of NGOs that claim to connect with the national NGOs. The presentation of this picture may, at the first instance, reveal that there is a well-institutionalised structure of NGOs from the national level to the trans-European level, and this structure functions as an intermediary mechanism for the civil society. This picture is moreover presented as an example of a functioning participatory democracy model, in which civil society is integrated into the political processes. The scholars who work on European democracy also argue that “civil society” reinforces European democracy and legitimacy, either by linking societal interests to European governance, or by taking part in solving society’s problems. Nevertheless, civil society’s involvement in politics has been criticised for its lack of accountability and representativeness (Kochler-Koch 2009). However, these debates ignore the context in which the EC discourse on the participatory democracy model, European civil society and European public sphere has emerged. In this respect, Smismans (2007) reveals how European civil society discourse has been developed in response to the EU institutional power game. For instance, as he argues, while the EC and the

European Economic and Social Committee advocated the discourse, the EP and the European Committee of the Regions reacted negatively to the possibility of growing power for any non-elected entity. Smisman's work illustrates the extent to which a normative discourse contingent on the EU institutional power game has emerged. This is one side of the coin. The other side is what this discourse entails, what its aims are, and how they are to be achieved; moreover, what the agents of this discourse, the European NGOs, actually do still merits further examination.

4.1. The Limits of the Normative Models of Democracy

The public sphere definition given by deliberative politics could assert that the network mechanism between the European NGOs facilitates "the discourses' *emerging, carrying and resonating*" within the European space, which in turn have impacts European decision making. For instance, EU NGOs could provide advocacy and "epistemological assistance", or restrict political power. This interpretation challenges the traditional dichotomies of "public space/public sphere" based on the difference of the "virtual/visual". The communication taking place in these institutions is not merely restricted to the idea of gathering in a certain physical place (public space as an arena). In other words, the communication in a public space, in this case the EU NGOs, resonates for wider publics, and has social consequences along with its political impact. Those institutions which, in addition to their visual character, are a space for enabling face-to-face interaction (in the Arendtian definition of the public sphere), at the same time use virtual instruments, such as position papers, newsletters, e-mail notifications and publications. Hence, the NGOs merge the visual and virtual aspects (contribution of Habermas) of the public sphere. In sum, on the one hand, they enable face-to-face interaction between individuals, and on the other, they circulate the discourse and norms virtually.

Nonetheless, both the Arendtian and Habermasian public sphere conceptions are conditional normative categories. Arendt (1958) argued that modernity brought about the dissolution of the public sphere, since it meant that private economic interests and hermeneutical self-examination prevailed. She stated, further, that modernity

eroded the distinction between the public and private due to emergence of the social and mass society, paved the way for the replacement of politics with bureaucratic administration, and the manipulation of public opinion. In other words, Arendt was strongly pessimistic concerning the idea that the public sphere, as a normative category, could be resurrected. To a great extent, Habermas shows parallels with Arendt. He also asserted that the public sphere disappeared with the domination of the administration and the market mentality over the free speech and action, which he defines as the colonisation of life-world. In sum, the public sphere of Arendt and Habermas is a possibility, a contingent normative category.

Therefore, from the above sketch of the views of Habermas and Arendt, the promise of the EU NGOs as constituents and actors of an emerging European sphere is a *possibility*. It remains contingent whether they can “promote the public interest”, or whether what they promote can be defined as the public interest (opposed to the particularised private interest), and whether they manage to identify the common good and authentic reason of civil society.²⁵ In this respect, it is necessary to examine the content of their discourse, if the aim is to discuss their democratising promises. They could carry and amplify the discourses emerging from the civil society, i.e. becoming the voice of European civil society. However, an inquiry into their work

²⁵ The impact of the communication of the public spheres on the society and decision-making process can be better grasped in the “process” understanding of causality. It is not methodologically plausible and at the same time not desirable to measure the “direct impact of the public spheres” on the policy making processes. The attempt to elaborate the relationship of the EU NGOs with the decision-making bodies merely on the grounds of consultation equates the definition of the public sphere with a “corporatist” notion of policy-making. Nevertheless, the consequences of the public sphere would be greater than assumed. We can evaluate it with the process understanding of causality given by the “realist philosophy of science” and “bifurcation” of complexity theory. The communication within the transnational public spheres could impact the transnational domain not necessarily directly. However, they could have an impact through circulation in the national domain. They could trigger a process which could have either great consequences or minor ones. Therefore, a focus of a discourse at the margins could have a greater impact on politics than the aim of addressing the EU institutions. As it is the case that EU institutions promote initiatives which affect the national domain, it is necessary to direct those institutions. Nevertheless, this upward focus should not lead to any ignorance of the local and national domains. The norm generated within the national domain could well translate into a universal European discourse. It is questionable whether a discourse or a feature can be named truly European, and can be thinkable outside of the national domain. Therefore, it can be claimed that the EU has promoted the institutional structure for a discourse and norm transcending its boundaries, and in turn could resonate in the larger space with the embodiment of a universal label. The French revolution, for instance, had these universal consequences.

reveals that they are well integrated into the European bureaucratic administrative structure and the neo-liberal governmentality. They are creating arenas (face-to-interaction) and communicative spaces (discursive spaces). Nevertheless, these do not necessarily have democratising consequences. Europeanisation from above, as a political hegemony and art of government, can well be reinforced by the technologies used by EU NGOs, as a medium of political rule.

The critique of the Cosmopolitan European Public Sphere

This perspective presents a blended approach of the “reflexive modernity” and risk society, theses of Beck (1992) and a Habermasian (1996b, 2001, 2003, 2006) deliberative understanding. Nevertheless, although they claim to be bringing a novel understanding to European studies, and have been influential in advocating the polity turn, what they have argued so far has not provided radical, new, novel or substantively strong arguments for the construction of the new type of state, society and market relations. In consequence, due to their *limited interpretation of politics* as a problem-solving activity and their *problematic social ontology*, their arguments regarding the European public sphere remain theoretically and descriptively weak. Their conceptualisation of the public use of reason, which stems from their narrow definition of politics, and their weak social ontology fall short of grasping the changing nature of the state, market and societal relations, and while also failing to provide a theory of transnational space. The debate surrounding their conception of public reason can be elaborated as tracing back to the debate between Benhabib and Rawls, and their social ontology can be criticised and developed through a relational approach to the social phenomena.

Limited interpretation of politics: The first critique questions the extent to which public reason, as discussed by the Cosmopolitans, emerged from within the institutionalised networks of civil society is democratising. For instance, Eriksen (2005) argues that these institutions inject the logic of impartial justification and reason-giving unto the participants. Nevertheless, I argue that the interpretation of the public use of reason in such a way, in a power-free imaginary instance, could

lead to the reproduction of a *neo-liberal bureaucratic technocratic deliberative technocracy*, contrary to what the proponents of deliberative democracy suggest. This assessment can be elaborated through a focus on the public use of reason. Two different notions of the public use of reason are mentioned above in the discussion of the debate between Benhabib and Rawls. To recap, participatory democracy derives public reason from within the communication and is premised upon a *substanceless* will-formation. Contrary to Benhabib, Rawls views public reason “not as a process of reasoning among citizens but as a regulative principle imposing limits upon how individuals, institutions and agencies ought to reason about public matters” (Benhabib 1996:75). The public reason of Rawls suggests a narrow but constitutive notion, applying the reason to constitutional essentials and the questions of basic justice, though not all questions.

It should be noted that the substanceless democracy approach of the deliberative perspective has the ambition of democratising the transnational system of governance and theorising the transnational spheres. As Habermas argues, when national popular sovereignty is de-substantialised through the procedures of lawmaking, it might be possible to translate the substanceless sources of legitimacy into EU governance. The procedural understanding provides a post-metaphysical theoretical source of integrity and legitimacy as an alternative to the communitarian line of thought, which draws the prerequisite of polity building on ethno-cultural grounds. In practice, nevertheless, procedural democracy and deliberative thought in general are criticized to be too idealistic, neglecting the power and the structural factors (for instance capital). The dissertation also suggests that what is currently being observed in the process of political restructuring of the European polity, however, is the re-colonisation of the life-world beyond the nation-state structures. It is debateable the extent to which “communicative rationality” is directed toward the common good and distilled from power relations, since the “impartiality” argument inherent in deliberative democracy is threatened on two grounds: first, because there is an asymmetry of power among the interlocutors operating in the system of

governance, and second, due to the administrative mentality dominating the system.

Before we elaborate the public use of reason and the possibility of impartial reasoning, we should sketch how the EU-level communication and participation is defined in the EU institutions. The inclusion of different actors, such as business groups and civil society organisations, into the European governance was discussed in the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001). The Commission developed the concept of European civil society in this document narrowly, in such a way that the definition of communication between the different sectors and the EU institutions amounts to neo-pluralist decision-making, and participation, on the other hand, becomes “participation in governance” (Armstrong 2002). The question is how it is possible to achieve impartial reasoning in this post-national neo-plural configuration, where the common interest is particularised and privatised. First, it will be difficult to argue that the participants in communication negotiate, or deliberate, on equal normative grounds. On the one hand, it is expected that each group reinforces their particular interest. On the other, it is assumed that each particular interest orients itself toward an ultimate good for society and humanity (the communitarian argument of *telos*-oriented action). Or else, the common good, as a regulative ideal, would already be inherent in each particular interest, so that each particular interest would contain in itself the principle of not violating the common good (but could compete with other particular interests) in the very act of private interest-seeking (the Kantian cosmopolitan depiction of reason). The economic groups have until now been defined as participants in civil and social dialogue, as actors that are functionally equivalent to civil society organisations (see *White Paper on Governance, Com 2001*). How is it possible to deliberate based on impartial reasoning, if one of the parties is seeking profit, while the other claims to voice public concerns? It will be hard to claim that the economic groups would refer to universal moral norms and act according to the common good, which are becoming ambiguous categories when it comes to defining them at the EU level. Second, the post-national neo-pluralist structure which has been advanced for adoption at the EU level is structurally different than the corporatism of the nation-state. The traditional

corporatist understanding defines the state as the arbiter. That is to say, the state has acted as mediator between the economic groups and labour as the entity that maintains and protects the public good. Nevertheless, EU integration has demolished this ethical space, constituted at the national level, and paved the way for the emergence of a system when the economic sector gained further strength both at the national and EU level. In another words, the political control of the economy is lost both at the national and EU level as a result of EU economic integration (Streeck 1998:3). In those issues, which are transferred to the EU level, it is not possible to find an arbiter as politically strong as the state. In such a system, in which the power is to a great extent decentralised, the economic groups gain significant power in negotiation processes. All in all, the post-national understanding of a neo-pluralist arrangement falls short in promoting a conception of common good beyond national borders. It is a reality that the EU decisions that impact the national space are expanding day by day, and in principal it is important that these decision-making mechanisms should be under public scrutiny. The challenge is to cope with the power of the market and the administrative mentality dominating the system of EU governance.

Problematic social ontology: As a second critique of the “reflexive polity thesis”, it can be argued that their social ontology prevents them from initiating an all-encompassing definition of a transnational public sphere. Transnational public sphere analysis should be considered integral to the national public spheres, since the transnational and the international domain are not analytically exogenous to the national domain. The cosmopolitans in European studies fall into the similar ontological trap of the multilevel governance approaches, which portray a nested depiction of the national, transnational and the international. The ontological weakness of the former has been addressed by the state-theoretical approach²⁶. The ontological weaknesses, first, restrict the notion of the European public sphere and European civil society with the Brussels-oriented political game, and second, conceptualize the civil society as an autonomous realm. An autonomous civil society

²⁶ For social theory of state see Jessop 2002, 2007.

at same time entails the claim that “state” and “state power” are not external to civil society and the market (Jessop 2002, 2007). It urges us to not to neglect examining the role of state power in the constitution of the social.

It should be added that the second critique about the ontology of the social, an autonomous civil society, is not merely an abstract academic discussion, but a reaction to the EU institutions’ definition of European governance, civil society and polity. A typical example can be seen for instance in the *White Paper on Governance*. The *White Paper* tries to build a concept of European Civil Society “above” the national level, in considering that the organized representatives of European people, defined as European civil society, would function as a link a between EU institutions and society (for a detailed discussion see Joerges, Meny and Weiler 200). It can be argued that *White Paper’s* approach to civil society is a reflection of the liberal interpretation of the state, market and civil society. Abandoning this exogenously conceptualised state and society relations enables us to integrate political power into very constitution of societal relations. Further, it helps us to discuss the activities of societal organisations in relation to the political power. Therefore, societal organisations should not necessarily be agents of democratisation and emancipation; however, they could also play roles in societal control²⁷. When NGOs are analysed within such a holistic perspective, it becomes possible to conceive them in relation to power relations, but not a “power sterilised” domain of authentic civil discussion.

It should be noted power relations do not necessarily entail “domination” or restrictions of freedom; as Foucault notes, power relations contain freedom. Furthermore, it is the very existence of power relations which enable the preservation of freedom. For instance, while European NGOs find themselves to be the regime of

²⁷ This is related to the previously mentioned paradigm shift from Newtonian to quantum physics in the philosophy of science. One consequence of this shift is its challenge to the traditional logical maxim, “A is A and A cannot be other than A”. Today it can be claimed, “A can also be at the same not-A”, which is the concomitant of quantum physics’ demonstration that atoms can have the character of both waves and photons. Hence, NGOs should not be simply be placed under the category of “civil society” as opposed to the state. Rather, they display both statal and societal features.

government's medium of social control, they have at the same time free action space not to do so, or have the opportunity to impact the rationalities of government. Therefore, European NGOs would most appropriately be described as having a hybrid character combining both civil and non-civil elements, and this would lead us to place them in a reformulated public category. Their "civil" features would include their consequences for the "general public", since they could provide a domain for discussing public interests, which would entail the process of the emergence of the public use of reason and public opinion. Habermas and his followers represent this option. Nevertheless, their close attachments to the political power structures, i.e. roles of governance and societal control, would at the same attach to them a public role, in the literal sense of "public administration", and lead us to define them as the mere agents of political power. However, they could turn out to be sites of counter-hegemony, which rests on their success in producing a counter-value system and establishing alliances in their manoeuvrings. As will be discussed in the following section, this option seems unlikely of late. In the end, the proposal of extra-governmental organisations could be recalled here in order to overcome the conceptual and theoretical tension. This could enable us to skip the speculative debates over the meaning of civil/non-civil, as well as to theoretically position the functions of the NGOs. Moreover, it would help us integrate Foucaultian perspectives into the studies of civil society.

It is necessary to reiterate that the emergence of the EU NGOs is related, first, to attempts to promote participatory democracy, when the mechanisms of representative democracy have shown signs of failing, and second, to empowering the extra-political initiatives in the system of European governance. Both are interlinked and interrelated; hence, they should not even be studied distinctively at the analytical level. The functions and roles of the EU NGOs in governance and their close proximity to political power can have normative consequences that could threaten their democratising premises. The democratising premises of EU NGOs were outlined, for instance, as the space where the "communicative rationality" could emerge, carrying the "public use of reason" across the European space, and

resonating in the political public spheres (Curtin 1999; Steffek and Nanz 2007). Nevertheless, the roles of EU NGOs in the system of governance force us to approach the EU NGOs critically as forerunners of democracy, given their role in diffusing political rationalities to the margins.

In this respect, the critique of ontology continues, it is necessary to abandon the classical Lockean liberal ontology of state/society relations which also influences our understanding of a rigid separation of the public from the private. The Lockean ontology of the state/society relationship supposes that civil society is capable of emerging, surviving and functioning according to its own dynamic, without the external intervention of the state; hence, the Lockean state of nature differs from that of Hobbes. In the latter, the self lives in a state of anarchy, chaos, and insecurity, and consents to the rule of *Leviathan* to guarantee its survival. In contrast, the Lockean state of nature is harmonious, peaceful and stable. Prior to the contractual consent which entrenches political rule, the Lockean state of nature is already a civil society. Accordingly, the Lockean state does not intervene in the very dynamics of the civil society; however, it protects its basic natural rights of life, liberty and property. Contemporary Lockean scholars do not integrate the state or political rule into their analysis when focusing on civil society (recently, civil society has been used in most cases as equivalent to the NGO). In sum, abandoning this Lockean liberal perspective will enable the integration of political authority as a category that is "related" to the study of civil society—in this case, European NGOs.

In contrast to the Lockean ontology of state-society relations, EU NGOs are embedded within the power structures, though they claim to represent "civil society". This transcends the strict divisions in our hermeneutical understanding of the political conceptualisations, which rest on the basis of dichotomies, in this case public-private and state-society. As Chapter three and four demonstrate, EU NGOs embody a public administrative role in governance and they do not define their

activities as something opposed to the governments and their political institutions.²⁸ Therefore, we cannot understand what the EU NGOs “are” and what they “do”, and in turn locate them at the very heart of the debates on the normative theory of democracy, as long as our paradigm is based on such “either/or” distinctions (public or private; state or civil society). Rather, we should make room for a paradigm shift of “both/and” which leads us to dialectically reconceptualise these dichotomies.²⁹ In this respect, the prefix *-non* in the non-governmental organisation loses its import. Rather, this work suggests extra-governmental as an alternative concept, which would enable the inclusion of aspects *with* and *beyond* the governmental roles of these organisations into their being.

Furthermore, the critique of Lockean ontology suggests that the social phenomenon is not static. The conceptualisation of the public sphere, civil society and the market, in the context of the modern state, can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, those concepts have been dramatically transformed with the rise of the modern nation-state. For instance, even in the highest stage of “methodological nationalism”, where the nation-state was the sole locus of governmental power over the economy, politics and its subjects, (i.e., the Keynesian National Welfare State), the configuration of the state, society and market relations had already become quite different from the one depicted by the Scottish political economists, Hegel and Marx.

To recapitulate my main points, 1) state and civil society are not mutually exclusive categories; 2) the public sphere is not necessarily an institution linking civil society, or weak publics, to the political public sphere, to strong publics; 3) the form and

²⁸ This is the statement the leader of one of these networks made in an interview conducted by the author of this dissertation in May 2009.

²⁹ The proposed way of thinking the social in accordance with the ontological/epistemological imagination of “both/and”, instead of the “either/or” dichotomy, is not a conceptual twist, but stems from a paradigm shift in philosophy of science from the Cartesian philosophy of binary oppositions and Newtonian physics to quantum physics. There is common ground shared between the philosophical and scientific knowledge shifts. The philosophical base follows the legacy of Hegel using a dialectical approach and the concept of “sublation” (*aufhebung*). The scientific base, on the other hand, follows the different schools of *critical realism* (Bashkar 1979, Sayer 2000, and Archer et al 1998), *complexity theory* (Urry 2003; 2005 and Walby 2007) and the *relational approach* (Ollman 1993).

function of the public sphere, civil society, state and market transform in time; and 4) the discussion of these concepts beyond nation-state does not mean abandoning the nation-state.

From Gramsci, we can see the role of the state in the reproduction of the economy and societal relations through civil society. Gramsci shows that state, society and the market are not mutually exclusive categories. He refutes the claim that the civil society is a realm external to the state, independent from state power. In other words, Gramsci shows that the state is not a separate entity in its own right and external to civil society, where the state power cannot penetrate, and indeed does not aim to penetrate. Therefore, he shows how the political power is present in the reproduction of social relations, whereas Foucault discussed how political power is reinforced through the microphysics of power in which society is governed (Jessop 2002, 2007). This will help us understand the European Commission's discourse on European civil society.

4.2. The critique of NGO activities

It has been noted that the European Commission's European civil society discourse and the EU NGOs have not been substantively criticised. Though Warleigh (2001), Smismans (2007), and Armstrong (2002) have all provided a critique of the ECS discourse, they advocate a gradual enhancement of the obstacles for the emergence of a democratising civil society. Arguing that either political power (states or global governing institutions, like the World Bank and IMF) or the economic interests manipulate the NGOs as agencies for social stability and popular status quo (Cox 1999; Leal 2007; Demirovic 2003; and Petras 1998), some scholars, however, provide a critique of the democratising role of the NGOs. This Neo-Marxist approach suggests that "dominant hegemonic forces" have strategically created a discourse and mechanisms for integrating the societal groups to politics in order "to create and maintain a social consensus around the interests of the dominant power" (Cox 1999:111; Leal 2007:543).

The most serious attack on the discourse of participation has been advanced by development studies. Some scholars have delivered a strong critique on participation, which they portray as a new tyranny, the new form of social control and reproduction of hegemonic relations (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Others, on the other hand, have concentrated on the emergence of the discourse as a strategy by the World Bank to suppress resistance to the IMF's economic policies. In this respect, Leal (2007) argues that the World Bank created the discourse on participation and supported NGOs in the third world in the late 1980s, when the people reacted strongly against the Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAPs):³⁰

[Given] the fact that SAP politics of 1980s and 1990s would only serve to heighten popular resistance throughout the Third World, it would become imperative for the global power elites to seek some kind of palliative solution, to put a "human face" on inhumane policies; at the very least, to create the illusion that they were not indifferent to the suffering inflicted upon the poorest of the poor by the new neo-liberal treatment. Consequently, a 1989 World Bank Report entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* advocated creating new institutions and strengthening civil society organisations (CSOs), inclusive of groups such as NGOs and voluntary organisations such that these might create channels of participation, by establishing links both upward and downward in society and voicing local concerns more effectively than grassroots institutions. (Leal 2007:542)

Leal further argues that with this strategy, the World Bank aimed to incorporate the counter-ideology into the system, since political power has learned that any frontal attack only strengthens and legitimises the resistance in the eyes of society. Therefore, political power prefers to involve the negating voices in the ruling bloc as part of the dominant ideology (Leal 2007:542). Defined in this way, counter-ideology does not threaten neo-liberal policies. Though it addresses the needs of "the excluded, the powerless, extreme poverty, gender or racial discrimination", it does not go beyond and challenge "the social system that produces these conditions" (Petras 1998:435). According to Petras (1998:440), NGOs, as a constituent of the counter-ideology, form the radical wing of the neo-liberal establishment. Parallel with this statement, Leal (Ibid., 544) further claims that the World Bank uses the

³⁰ For instance, anti-SAP riots in Caracas in 1989, Tunis in 1984, Nigeria in 1989, and Morocco in 1990. The SAP programmes included "privatisation, denationalisation, and elimination of subsidies of all sorts, budgetary austerity, devaluation, and trade liberalisation."

discourse on participation instrumentally as a “justification of the removal of the state from the economy and its substitution by the market”. In this sense, he opposes the views which consider it to be a form of popular government. To him, this entails “depoliticised versions of participatory action [which] inevitably serve to justify, legitimise, and perpetuate current neo-liberal hegemony” (Ibid., 544). This is why, to him, participation has become a “buzzword” that places emphasis on “the *techniques* of participation, rather than on its meaning (Leal Ibid., 544)”.

The general trend is to celebrate NGOs as democratising agents of European governance, either as institutionalised “public spheres” beyond the nation-state (the normative-oriented approach of Maignette 2001; Armstrong 2002), or as civic partners of European governance (the governance-oriented democracy of Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007). However, the analyses of the EU documents and the Social Platform lead us to approach them critically, to consider their role in dispersing the EU hegemonic discourse. An EU NGO is a transnational NGO lobbying network which is situated in Brussels. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to merely identify it as a transnational NGO. An EU NGO and a transnational NGO operate within different ontologies of “transnational”, in that the transnational spatial domain created by European integration differs significantly from other forms of cross-border interactions around the world. Trans-European interactions, in this respect, diverge from the traditional realist international relations definition of “international”, where states are regarded as the main actors. Nevertheless, in terms of European integration, extra-state entities have played significant roles. For instance, some scholars have emphasised that the EU has become an entity in its own right, since EU institutions can take decisions beyond national interests (see the institutional approach of Stone-Sweet and Sandholtz 1998; and the post-national reflexive polity approach of Eriksen et al 2005). On the other hand, some neo-Gramscian scholars have pointed out the structural impact of capital on European integration, which plays down national interest as the main determinant of interstate relations (Cafruny and Ryner 2003). Furthermore, society, as an international (in this case trans-European) actor, has also been problematised. For instance, Moravcsick

(1993) explains it under a two-level game in which domestic forces primarily influence the national governments, and in turn the latter articulate it to EU decision making processes. The growing literature on EU interest representation, on the other hand, examines interest groups at the EU level, including the EU NGOs. Therefore, EU NGOs operate quite differently than any other transnational NGO, since European integration has prepared a *sui generis* infrastructure for their communication, which would hardly be replicable in any other transnational NGO some other part of the world. Hence, we can discuss their normative implications for political/social integrity and identity, and ultimately, develop a critique.

4.3. Governmentality, ECS discourse and EU NGOs

We focused above on how the ruling class could use the discourse on participation as instrumental tactics of social control. The following pages will problematise this discourse and the role of the EU NGOs, particularly the Social Platform, in European governance from the perspective of the “European art of government”. This approach finds its origins in the writings of Foucault, especially his later writings about governmentality; it also draws inspiration from his followers’ further contributions to this approach (Rose and Miller 1992; Barry et al 1996; Dean 1999; Lemke 2002; and 2007). By studying EU NGOs from the perspective of the governmentality approach, I mean to examine the constitutive impacts of the “European art of government” within European space. We should understand the constitutive impacts as the forms of knowledge, subjectivity, morality and technologies which are created by the EU in order to render European space governable. To illustrate this, in the following chapters, we will examine the constitutive impacts of European governance, i.e. how the EU institutions’ policies shape a certain form of subjectivity. Accordingly, we will conduct an inquiry into EU institutions’ pertinent policy initiatives, namely white papers and procedures of interest intermediation. Following this inquiry, we will elaborate a debate on the Social Platform by concentrating on how it receives and perceives these policies (defined as the European art of government). The inquiry into the Social Platform aims at discussing how the actors of civil society which are subject to EU governance reflect upon these policies.

Foucault's interest in governmentality is related to his earlier work on power, discipline, knowledge and subject. Foucault defines governmentality (or the art of government) as a different form of power and relates it to ethics of the self. It is a different form of power than sovereignty and discipline: "In contrast to sovereignty, government has its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its conditions, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health etc." (Foucault 1991:100). As Moss (1998) relates, Foucault explains this form of power as pastoral power, which originated in the institutions of Catholic Church before being implemented more efficiently by the state:

Unlike ancient forms of power, pastoral power was concerned with the salvation of everyone in the "flock" on an individual level, requiring, ideally, a thorough knowledge of the subject's "soul" and officials who could monitor and account for each and every individual. It was an individual power in that it sought, through supervision, to structure the life of the individual, both through confessional technologies and techniques of self-mastery. As the ecclesiastic institutions declined and the modern period began, Foucault argues, the function of pastoral power spread from the monastery to the state and its institutions (Moss 1998:3).

Despite the fact that Foucault integrated the state as a category into his analysis, he draws a clear distinction between the juridico-political use of power and the microphysics of power (Jessop 2007). For instance, his interpretation of power differs both from "Liberals and Marxists, both of whom see the state as a unity and as the dominant locus of power" (Bevir 1999:353). Whereas liberalism considers state power a threat to the "autonomy and freedom of individual within civil society" (Ibid.), for orthodox Marxists, the state is an apparatus of the ruling class (and bourgeois interests) to reinforce the capitalist mode of production and in turn suppress and control the proletariat.³¹ Foucault, however, portrays the state as a polymorphic entity (Bevir 1999), analysing governance beyond the bureaucratic institutions in an assemblage of plural actors, ideas and things (Dean 1999). To Foucault, "the modern state [...] has come to be through the development and adaptation of various techniques of government, none of which are integral to the state nor necessarily products of intentional activity. Techniques of government are

³¹ For a discussion on state power, see Jessop 2002 and 2007.

not tied to a centralised state power but rather at work in diffuse and varied ways throughout society” (Bevir 1999:353).

The way Foucault conceptualises power originates from his post-structural methodology. He keeps a distance between structural interpretations of power (such as Althusser) and analytical concepts of Marxism (Bevir 1999). He escapes a reductionist approach of reducing the explanation of social phenomena to a monolithic political project (structural explanation), or to the autonomous actions of the actors (voluntarist explanation). Though he never fully appreciates the realist ontology of science (Bevir 1999: 347), he elucidates power relations in terms of its totality, embedding the state in a network-like configuration:

Power relations are rooted in the system of social networks. This is not to say, however, that there is a primary and fundamental principle of power which dominates society down to the smallest detail...It is certain that in contemporary societies the state is not simply one of the forms or specific situations of the exercise of power—even if it is the most important—but that in a certain way all other forms of power relations must refer to it. But this is not because they are derived from it; it is rather because power relations have come more and more under state control [...] power relations have been progressively governmentalised, that is to say, elaborated, rationalised, and centralised in the form of, or under the auspices of, state institutions. (Foucault 1983: 793)

Foucault detects two distinguishing doctrines of this new form of power: reasons of state and the theory of police (Ibid., 3). The former concerns the shift from the way the sovereign power is defined: political power is no longer considered the ruling and securing territory. Rather, according to new doctrine, political power governs things and men. The theory of police, on the other hand, implies that art of government should extend to all aspects of the individual, i.e. body, soul, wealth and health (Ibid., 3).

Foucault’s later focus also includes his interest in ethics, particularly ethics of the self. Dean (1999) names four aspects of “ethical government of the self, or of an attempt to govern the self”: ontology, asceticism, deontology and teleology. The ontology of government pertains to “what we seek to act upon”; to Foucault (1976),

this substance was flesh in Christianity, and pleasure in ancient Greece. The current substance on which the individual ought to be working is his or her own abilities; therefore, the activation, lifelong learning and empowerment policies constitute an ethos of new man, eternally upgrading his or her skills, or the active citizen even working on him- or herself when unemployed. The asceticism of self-government concerns “how we govern this substance” (Dean 1999). For Christianity, it meant abstaining from the normal pleasures of life or denial from material satisfaction. In antiquity, the concept of *askētikós* meant hard working, rigorous exercise and self-discipline. The contemporary implications of an ascetic morality, then, are closer to the ancient concept, since neo-liberal rationalities necessitate a hectic self, not necessarily active when involved in the modes of production, but in working on the self (e.g. to become an active citizen). The third aspect of ethical self-government involves deontology, which is concerned with the moral obligations that guide how we relate to ourselves and to others. Deontology, a branch of ethics, derives obligation from rule (*deon*); therefore, the analytics of government seek those rules and norms which are conceived as good, appropriate and normal. It is these rules, or regimes of truth, which Foucault argues play a role in constituting the self. Fourth, ethical self-government has a teleological aspect, which is concerned with “why we govern or are governed, the ends or goal sought, what we hope to become or the world we hope to create, that which might be called the telos of *governmental or ethical practices*” (Dean 1999:17).

The art of government revises the relations between power, knowledge and subject in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977) and *History of Sexuality Vol. 1* (1976). Whereas, in these studies, Foucault concentrated on the repressive power which is exerted on bodies, a power which limits the autonomy of agency, in his later works he emphasises the productive consequences of power and freedom of the subjects. He relates the techniques of governing individuals to the production of knowledge, tracing the connections between constituting people as subjects and governing them with knowledge. In this respect, governmentality is a re-conceptualisation of power and knowledge relations: it merges how power shapes the conduct of self and how

this new rationality entails an understanding that “everything and everyone be managed” (Allen 1998).

Governmentality as the conduct of conduct

Defined as the governing of the self, of others and the state (Foucault 1991), governmentality refers to the conduct and the “conduct of conduct”. Dean (1999: 10) explains what conduct implies: as a verb it “means to lead, to direct or to guide, and perhaps implies some sort of calculation as to how this is to be done. When it is used as a noun, ‘conduct’ refers to our behaviours, our actions and even our comportment, i.e. the articulated set of our behaviours” (Ibid., 10). Foucault makes explicit how we should understand power relations in the art of government: “What defines a power relation is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly or immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (Foucault 1983:788). “It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject” (Foucault 1983: 789).

Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends, and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes. (Dean 1999:10)

Defined as the conduct of conduct, government is apposite to power relations and how individuals become (certain forms of) subjects. To Foucault (1983: 781), governmentality “is a form of power which makes individuals subjects”. By referring to two meanings of the word “subject”, he draws an identical relation between the freedom and autonomy of subjects and subjection in power relations: “There are two meanings of the word ‘subject’: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a consciousness or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest that a form of power which subjugates and makes subjects to

(Ibid.)”. Hence, Foucault’s concern with subject and power relations in his later work, particularly *The Subject and Power* (1983), suggests that power acts upon free subjects—and only as far as they are free; “in order to act freely the subject must first be shaped, guided and moulded into one capable of responsibly exercising that freedom” (Haahr 2004). Foucault’s revisions of his approach to power in his later work, therefore, led to differing readings about how he interpreted the autonomy of agency. Some of his proponents argue that the later Foucault places more stress on the premise of free agency, not just reacting to power but altering power relations (Moss 1998). They argue that Foucault’s interest in ethics enables him to posit the freedom of the subject to work on itself, i.e. capable of rejecting unwanted forms of identity (Moss 1998) and in “conscious control of its capacities” (Patton 1998). In this respect, Foucault develops a contingent notion of autonomy which differs from Kant’s universal and metaphysical notion. According to some, however, Foucault did not abdicate his “hostility to the subject”: “Foucault vehemently rejected the idea of an autonomous subject, that is, of the subject as its own foundation, of the subject as capable of having meaningful experiences, reasoning, forming beliefs, and acting outside of a particular social context” (Bevir 1999:354).

In sum, governmentality focuses on “how certain identities and action orientations are defined as appropriate and normal and how relations of power are implicated in these processes” (Sending and Neumann 2006: 657). It analyzes the “relation between the individuals and the political order from the perspective of the different processes whereby the former are objectified as certain kinds of subjects through the ways they are targeted by political power” (Burchell 1991:119). Furthermore, the governmentality approach provides an analytical tool to study the government of the self in relation to the government of society, as well as; and the constitution of the subject in relation to the formation of the state (Lemke 2002:51). We have focused on the constitution of the self; the following will endeavour to elaborate how technologies of the self are pertinent with respect to the political programmes of rendering society governable.

Governing society, governing the self

Government sets political reason itself as its object of inquiry, and studies the mentalities of politics along with the devices it invented to exercise its rule. It examines the impacts of those mentalities and governing practices upon those who are subject to them (Barry et al 1996:2; Simons 1995). Therefore, it considers knowledge: the rationalities and systematisation of certain sets of rules, principles and frames, the visibility of knowledge and *techne* of governing, and the forms of subjects that it aims to create as the constituents of governing practices (Barry et al 1996; Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1996; Dean 1999). As Foucault argues (1991) governmentality research studies the rationalities in relation to certain historical contexts which are embedded within social relations. As noted above, this runs counter to the Kantian perspective, which conceives of reason as a transcendental phenomenon, a faculty of mind that exists prior to empirical relations. Hence, governmentality studies “political rationality not as an exterior instance, but an element itself which helps to create a discursive field in which exercising power is rational” (Lemke 2002:55). For instance, political rationalities create certain truths about a particular domain, e.g. madness, citizenship, and medicine, in order to render society governable. These truths, and the mentalities of rule, are endogenous to the constitution of certain forms of subjectivity, which entail the *ethos* and *mores* of ethics of self-government.

Rose (1996:42), in this respect, details three features of political rationalities. First, they entail a moral form of selecting the appropriate ideals and principles of governing. Dean (1999) argues that the art of government is an “intensely moral activity”, in that it constitutes a *telos* of “making oneself accountable for one’s own actions”. Dean further argues that the policies and practices of governments are also moral in the sense that they “presume to know, with varying degrees of explicitness and using specific forms of knowledge, what constitutes good, virtuous, appropriate, responsible conduct of individuals and collectivities” (Ibid., 12). The second feature of political rationalities, Rose stresses, is that they embody an epistemological character; they generate particular conceptions of the objects (nation, population,

economy, society, community) and the subjects (citizens). Third, they employ a certain style of reasoning in order to “render reality thinkable and practicable, and constituting domains that are amenable—or not amenable—to reformatory intervention” (Rose 1996: 42).

Following these features of the political rationalities of government, this dissertation will argue that the discourse on the ECS and participatory democracy constitutes a “moral form”, arranging the division of tasks in the governing of society while delineating the ethos of government of the self. This moral form is manifested in the political programs and policy indoctrinations, such as the *White Paper on European Governance* (Com 2001), European Employment Strategy (1997) and Active Citizenship. This moral form is further transmitted into other locales, i.e. Eastern Europe and neighbouring countries. While several notions, such as civil society, NGO, active citizen, and participating citizen constitute the epistemology of this discourse, its style of reasoning renders the consciousness of European citizens as an object of European governing. The latter is due the Commission’s diagnosis that the legitimacy crisis of the EU stems from the citizens’ lack of information about the EU’s benefits (see Chapter 3). Therefore, the Commission policies can be interpreted as attempts to create an imagined social constituency (Fossum and Trenz 2006), defined as European citizenship. The Commission, then, endeavours to make this imagined collective identity aware about its own existence, while rendering itself knowable. In other words, political programming plays a constitutive role in two senses: on the one hand, it delineates the style of reasoning, episteme and morality of society’s governance, and on the other, it forms subjects by acting upon their actions, ethics and consciousness. Concerning the European art of government, the subjectivity that has been promoted is not merely a concern of individuals; it also applies to collective identities, such as NGOs.

Political programming and addressing the consciousness of an imagined European citizenry is matters for the epistemology of the EU’s political power—how to render the EU knowable. Political power reinforces itself to the extent that it is knowable

and its knowledge of governing is being practiced. The knowledge of governing—the art of government—is intrinsic to the constitution of political power. Political power is reproduced in each space where its rationalities and the technologies are translated to those who are subject to it. Put another way, the art of government does not only shape the actions and frame of mind of the people, but also enables the reinforcement of the political power in daily interactions. This covers a broad range of aspects, such as the imperatives of how the governing of society, the environment, the economy, one's own organisation, and even the people becomes possible. In this respect, European governing cannot be thinkable without the rationalities through which the Europe is rendered governable. The EU presents itself as a governing power (an entity which acts on behalf of Europe); it also exposes itself as knowable not only to the states, but also the people. For instance, technologies of “connecting with the citizens” on the one hand aim to present the EU as a governing entity, and on the other disperse the aforementioned imperative of governing. It is here argued that the Platform translates the knowledge of political power to those who are subject to EU governing. The very act of translation is functionally different than being instrumentally used by the EU institutions to inform people about the benefits of the EU.

Political rationalities are not ideational structures, as constructivists would put it; they are exerted in daily practices, guide actions and motivate our ambitions, intentions and desires. Hence, governmentality literature examines mentalities of rule in the empirical realm, i.e. how they are put into practice; they are translated into technologies, defined as political technologies. The latter comprise the instruments, procedures, mechanisms, vocabularies and techniques which make the political rationalities practicable (Dean 1999:31). In other words, power manifests itself through these practices (Merlingen 2006). The proponents of the governmentality approach, however, assert that these are not the mere instruments of the political authority which serve to consolidate its power. Rose (1996:41-2), in this respect, argues that “the ‘power of the State’ is a resultant, not a cause, an outcome of the composition and assembling of actors, flows, buildings, relations of authority into

relatively durable associations mobilised, to a great or lesser extent, towards the achievement of particular objectives by common means.” Rejecting the interpretation of the practices of political power as domination, Rose elucidates the process through which the political rationalities are rendered into certain practices by the concept of *translation*: “The translation of political programmes articulated in rather general terms—national efficiency, democracy, equality, enterprise—into ways of seeking to exercise authority over persons, places and activities in specific locales and practices. The translation of thought and action from a ‘centre of calculation’ into diversity of locales dispersed across a territory—translation in the sense of movement from one place to another” (Ibid., 41-2).

Therefore, government concerns the link between rationalities and practices, prioritising questions that delineate four characteristics of power: 1) how the hermeneutics of visualising, i.e. ways of seeing and perceiving, is linked to subjectification; 2) how the genealogy of thought and constitutive impact of language and discourse (e.g. the knowledge produced in science) explicates subject formation; 3) how knowledge and action are pertinent; and 4) how techniques of subjection create collective identities (see Dean 1999). These questions will guide us in analysing the Social Platform.

EU governance as a new form of governmentality

The governmentality approach to EU governance is a recent, but steadily growing interest. Scholars who study European politics in terms of governmentality have concentrated on different aspects. The initial argument, among these scholars, is to conceptualise EU governance as a new form of governmentality (Shore 2006, 2009; Swyngedouw 2005). The point of departure for this perspective is in a critique of the governance approach. Although the governmentality approach shares the main argument of the governance perspective by explaining governance beyond the administrative units of the state apparatus, it develops a critical and different understanding. First, according to governmentality, “governance” does not necessarily result in a distribution of power between extra-state actors, a process of

which is generally associated with a zero-sum explanation of the reconfiguration of political structures. The latter connotes a new constellation of politics: to the extent that the state has shared its sovereign power with new actors, the sclerotic bureaucratic features of traditional governance evolve into a more democratic and innovative regime. The contribution of the governmentality approach to EU studies, however, is not restricted to a critique of the governance approach. The difference is in fact more substantial. Second, the governmentality approach originates from a postmodern interpretation of power, which itself originates from a post-structural understanding of social phenomena. This understanding stresses the constitutive impacts of language. Third, therefore, one of the main tenets of governmentality—governance at a distance—(Rose and Miller 1996) should not be confused with the central argument of governance—allocation of administrative responsibilities. Both suggest the governance of society beyond the state by the sharing of responsibilities between many different actors and the rescaling of governing practices. However, one of the primary differences between the governance and governmentality approaches is that the latter concentrates on ethics and morality. Government is concerned with political programmes: it focuses on the episteme, morality and style of reasoning involved in these programmes. It is concerned with how these political programmes are *translated* into certain technologies and practices, and how these are received and perceived by the actors who are subject to these programmes. In other words, government is not merely interested in the policy framework (or public policy); it depicts the underlying *ethos* and *mores* of these policy frameworks. Finally, in contrast to governance discourse, governmentality is not a contemporary phenomenon; Foucault traces the appearance of governmentality as a new form of power back to the seventeenth century. Hence, it would be misleading to assess how politics has followed a chronology from the Government to governance, and then to governmentality.

Having compared government with governance, we can continue our reflections on the former in EU studies. Government addresses the disciplining and productive impacts of EU governing; it studies the EU's role in shaping the conduct of conduct,

for instance, through the new modes of governance. Haahr (2005) asserts that the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) has been developed as a calculative and disciplinary project to shape the conduct of the states via the techniques of benchmarking, best practice and national action plans. His approach concentrates on the constitutive impacts of the OMC, i.e. the pertinence of the techniques of representation (such as annual performance graphs) and identity. Furthermore, the governmentality approach in EU studies also deals with the constitutive impacts of language. For instance, Walters (2004) tracks a genealogy of the EU integration by examining the role of the political and theoretical discourse in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) and the European Economic Community (1957). He argues that the dominant functionalist discourse formulated by Haas, Jean Monnet and Schuman was reflected in the treaty of Rome (1957), and this mentality had implications for the further development of EU integration. The governmentality approach, moreover, intervened in the EU democracy debate (Walters and Haahr 2005); however, instead of concentrating on democracy-in-itself, it has rather focused on the discursive field of the problematisation of democracy. In other words, the latter does not endeavour to democratise a system by devising normative models, but studies policies and scholarly debates as constitutive elements which make government possible.

The European art of government is associated with rationalities of neo-liberalism, also defined as advanced liberalism (Dean 1999). Larner's (2000) discussion of three different interpretations of neo-liberalism can in this respect be fruitful in grasping neo-liberal forms of governmentality. To Larner, neo-liberalism can be interpreted as public policy, ideology and governmentality. As a policy, its discourse encompasses the "hollowing out of the state, privatisation of public services, deregulation and liberalisation, flexibility of labour markets, expansion of the private sector, the promotion of new doctrines of 'good governance', and the spread of New Public Management (NPM) techniques and practices" (Shore 2009:11). As an ideology, governmentality implies a "form of rhetoric disseminated by hegemonic economic and political groups" (Larner 2000). Nonetheless, Larner argues that "there is a short

distance from ideology to discourse”; for example, he claims, Stuart Hall’s analysis of neo-liberalism as a hegemonic project draws more inspiration from discursive analysis than a traditional base-superstructure model. What Larner adapts from Hall’s analysis is that neo-liberalism has not been a unique ideology which was put into action by a specific class, or an alliance of several segments of society. Rather, the conflict and confrontation of different segments of society, both hegemonic and non-hegemonic groups, played a role in constituting hegemony. However, Larner (Ibid.) argues that this step from ideology to discourse “requires us to move from Gramsci to Foucault”. It is not only Larner who addresses the proximity between ideology and discourse, following Gramsci and Foucault; in particular, the scholars who work in critical social policy (Dean 2006), Clarke 2005, McKee 2009) and critical public management (McKinnon 2000) have also endeavoured to mingle both perspectives. Having interpreted neo-liberal governmentality more as an ethics and ethos, these analyses concentrate on the constitutive aspects of governance. Although they acknowledge the structural change in capital accumulation (from the Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian workfare state), they try to explain the impacts of this process on society and the self through a postmodern understanding of power. Thus, they have distanced themselves from structural effects and base-superstructure analyses.

The governmentalisation approach to the European art of government is similar to the understanding which defines the EU as a norm-building polity, e.g. Linklater’s approach, which considers the EU a norm-building project (Linklater 2005 and 2007). The EU as a norm-building entity is standardising, normalising, and homogenising daily life (Walters 2004). The abolition of genetically modified food in Europe, establishing a minimum level for the amount of lead in oil and the are among the many examples of how the EU standardises the relation of the self to itself and to its social, physical and biological environment. As a consequence, the “art of government transcends the spatial and institutional configuration of the “government” beyond the nation-state.

European Integration, therefore, has transcended the “know how” technologies of government beyond the nation-state (Rose and Miller: 1992). As Rose and Miller (Ibid:6) argue, “knowledge does not simply mean ‘ideas’, but refers to the vast assemblage of persons, theories, projects, experiments and techniques that have become such a component of government”. As a matter of fact, the episteme of the recent era, the power to produce knowledge, has transcended to a beyond-nation-state realm to such international organisations as the World Bank, IMF and EU—what Jessop would call institutions of meta-governance.

EU social policy and governmentality

Social policy is one of the terrains on which the governmentality approach has been applied. These studies draw an emphasis on the transformation from the ethos of welfare to workfare, and from employment to employability: “advanced government is now concerned to draw individuals into accepting individual responsibility for aspects of social protection once governed by the welfare state, but to do so according to appropriate or approved ethical techniques of the self” (Dean 2006:10). It can be argued that the current policies and discourse on social policies foster individualisation, self-responsibility, empowerment, continuously upgrading skills and activation. Active society, according to this perspective, “can be linked to a particular politics of self in which we are all encouraged to ‘work on ourselves’ in a range of domains” (Larner 2000:13).

The EU, particularly the Commission, started to intervene in social policies starting in the late 1990s; its interest involved the abovementioned dimensions of neo-liberal governmentality. The Commission’s social policy was based on an understanding which established a link between work and social protection; it has comprised the elements of activation, empowerment, adaptability and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among the citizens. It has furthermore emphasised the role of training and education in the development of personal skills. Mitchell (2006:398) assesses the Commission’s discourse in relation to the retrenchment of the welfare paradigm:

With the rhetoric of globalisation, competition, and lifelong learning there is a strong underlying message of the necessity for constant personal mobilisation and entrepreneurial behaviour on the part of the individuals while at the same time the emphasis on structural and institutional constraints to these goals is generally downplayed. Further, the inexorable emphasis on the *individual* and on his or her learning choices interpellates rational, atomised agents responsible for their own life paths in lieu of groups or classes experiencing collective dislocation as the result of widespread socioeconomic structuring under laissez-faire capitalism. This accompanies a more general abdication of welfarist responsibilities in providing truly viable economic opportunities for workers.

Governing through NGOs

The governmentality approach has been criticised for focusing on policy initiatives, but neglecting the impact of these compacts on those who are subject to governing. Thus, a few studies have examined NGOs in terms of governmental rationalities. While Morrison's work (2000) concentrates on the compacts signed between the British government and representatives of the voluntary sector, Sending and Neuman (2006) discuss the role of Norwegian NGOs within the frame of a global governmental rationality. Therefore, despite the main trend in governmentality studies of examining the public policies, our knowledge of how the actors perceive and receive these rationalities is still limited. Further, neither EU NGOs nor other international NGO networks have yet been studied in terms of the governmentality approach. The work of Morrison and that of Sending and Neumann are, however, promising.

Morrison (Ibid.) develops three main arguments. First, the compacts reflected the reconfiguration of the state by incorporating civil society organisations to the public administration. Second, the ethos of the NGOs shifted from welfarism to economism, and the professionalism and managerialism replaced the traditional volunteer ethos. Third, civil society should no longer be defined as a space external to state, but as a space where government can happen. Morrison's work is promising in the sense that it shows how NGOs can be studied through Foucaultian conceptual frameworks. Compared to Morrison, Sending and Neumann's concern (Ibid.) is not the new

public management structures and transformation of social policies, but the global governance structures. In this respect, the latter prioritises the critique of the dominant governance approach. Our analysis has to involve both insights, because they augment our argument on two main dimensions: the shift from a welfarist understanding to economism, and the incorporation of NGOs to EU governance structures. The challenge is to discuss the two together and within the same analytical framework; it involves elaborating the administrative reform of EU governance within the framework of the transformation of the art of government.

Such an analysis draws on several aspects of governance-beyond-the-state, such as technologies of agency, technologies of performance and contractual relations. Whereas technologies of agency render individuals and collective action (such as NGOs) responsible of their actions, technologies of performance have a results-based orientation toward effectiveness, efficiency and strategies of benchmarking (Dean 1999, Rose 1996). The actors are, then, made amenable to subjection to political power through technologies of contract, which also allow for a disciplining mechanism. To illustrate, initially actors are subjectified in accordance with an ethos of self-responsibility, self-esteem, and self-care. The performance of the subjects, then, can be measured through the indicators of efficiency and the quantification of success, whereas contracts create mechanisms through which the subjects are controlled of the former.

In this approach, “the role of non-state actors in shaping and carrying out global governance-functions is not an instance of transfer of power from the state to non-state actors. Rather, it is an expression of a changing logic or rationality of government (defined as a type of power) by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon and into an entity that is both object *and* a subject of government” (Sending and Neumann 2006: 652).

Intra-NGO communication in the same sector

The national NGOs of two different countries, working for the same section of society, e.g. immigrants, face different issues due to different public measures in

each country. Some states are better at integrating immigrants than others. The communication between immigrant NGOs can foster “sharing” and “learning” among them. The NGOs coming from better conditions can explain the situation in their national social space; this can foster a process of norm shifting. This is the level of transformation from *normalisation* to *leap in mentality*. As the mind is contingent on the institutional structuring, it internalises “what exists” as the normal. Unless interacting with an “other” normal—the societal equilibrium in some other society—or initiating a critical attitude that questions the domestic equilibrium (i.e. why it has become the normal, and whether it is possible to imagine a different equilibrium) in order to extend the horizon of the mind, the mind would not problematise the philosophical question of “what can be known” above and beyond the existing. This initiates a process which brings the ontological question of “what can be known” to an “intersubjective epistemology”—“how can *we* know”. In other words, epistemology finds an answer to the ontological question. The leap to the mental problematises the “normal”, triggering a process that generates a new normal equilibrium. In this process, *the normal of the self* is detached from *the normal of society*, due to entropy of the discourses. Hence the self realises that what it used to know, that what belongs to itself as “subjective truth” was in fact a reflection of “societal truth”. The mind (here the member of the EU NGOs) then establishes its “subjective equilibrium” beyond the “societal equilibrium” of the national.

In the example of communication between immigrant NGO networks, the NGOs stationed in places with worse conditions would start to mobilise the public and the national governments to upgrade immigrant policies, since they have learned “what is to be done”, and more importantly, that it is already done. Thereby, a discourse on better rights for immigrants can circulate in different national publics, which depends on the success of NGOs to carry this out in European space. Public pressure can find an immediate answer from the government. However, even if it didn’t, the media could continue mobilising the public around the issue, and the political parties could tackle the issue as per societal demand.

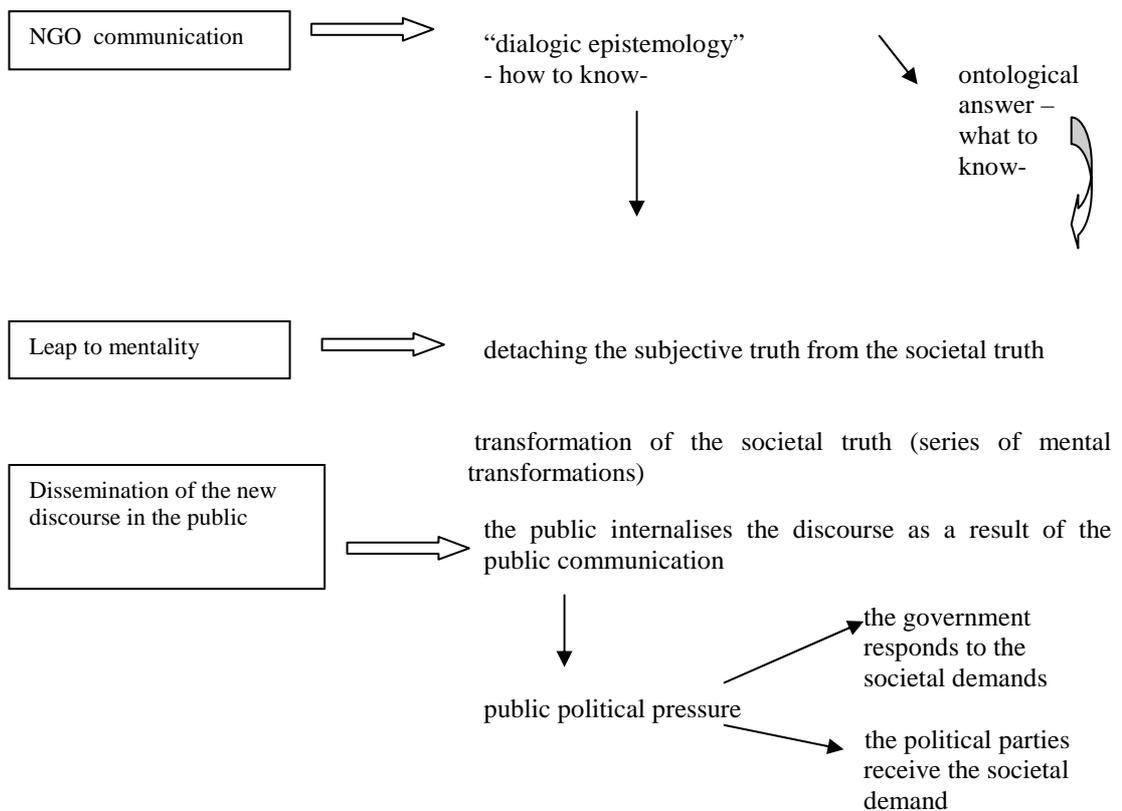


Figure 3. Network Communication: Condition 1. From Communication beyond the nation-state to publicising at the level of the general public

This portrayal entails the argument that EU NGOs could link the public’s concerns to the “public authorities” and to the “public itself”. For instance, an NGO can contribute to the process of internalising the rights of persons with disabilities as a norm that public space is to be modified in their favour. To start with, the NGO makes the discourse of disability rights visible. As a result, when someone sees e.g. a lift in the metro or a path in the streets constructed for the disabled, she would not question why they were placed there and would consider them “normal”. Furthermore, rendering the discourse of disability rights visible can make empathy possible, so that when one sees an obstacle for the disabled, it can be problematised. EU NGO communication can enable the circulation of this norm between the same issue-oriented NGOs in different societies. Even though improving disability rights could be a universal norm, what is evident is that the extent to which persons with disabilities participate in social life is different in each society. The same issue-

oriented NGOs can discuss “what more could be done”, while developing further “empathy” for other issues. As Arendt would say, the “enlarged mentality” could emerge from their communication. For instance, the discourse of the excluded is in itself important, as it produces the feeling of how one might feel when excluded. In this way, EU NGOs can transform a private interest into a common public interest, first informing, and then targeting the consciousness of the people. This process is by and large how an environmental, human rights, and anti-discriminativist discourse emerged and was disseminated across the globe.

This process depicts how deliberative participation can illustrate dialogical norm reproduction beyond the nation-state. EU NGOs can play a crucial role, as outlined above, if they are not dominated by the sovereign power and the mentality of the market. They could act as the “conscience of the society”, mobilising it against unjust decisions. According to the illustrations given here, the impact of NGO communication on norm shifting can also be extended to wider areas and to other issues NGOs are dealing with. The criteria for the success of NGOs, thereby, rest on their capability of presenting private issues as universal claims and the common public interest. The “public interest” and common issues have so far been defined within the national space. As more issues are taking on a global importance, the challenge is to extend the common interest beyond national territories. Can EU NGOs achieve this—and, or, do they want to achieve this?

Nonetheless, it should be remembered that this is a *possibility*; the reality can be different. The above illustration of the leap to mentality and the entropy of discourses, on the other hand, can be valid in the process of the constitution of hegemony and the dispersion of the rationalities of government. It can also shed light on subjectivation and political ethics, in the sense of how one becomes a certain type of subject. With respect to the theme of this work, this approach emphasises that the EC discourse generates the “normalisation” process and political rationalities. Defined in this way, the discourse on participation and active citizenship is brought into the agenda of EU NGOs as a technology of government. In this respect, the

European discourse has had an impact on self-ethics, i.e. what the self aspires to become, how it should act (empower itself in order to be able to negotiate with decision-makers), and how it should run its organisations. Hence, the EU NGOs articulate the knowledge of the system of governance to the NGO sector, from the power centres to the ruled.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

Drawing inspiration from the literature on governmentality, I try to contribute to governmentality research by depicting how ECS discourse tries to render Europe governable; which technologies the Commission has implemented for the ECS discourse; how this discourse has been translated into different locales (for instance Eastern Europe); the extent to which the discourse is contingent on the institutional power struggle (i.e. EU institutions' power game); how the Commission uses funding for civil society organisations as a disciplining instrument; how the ECS discourse subjectivises and governs the self and the organisations; the extent to which the discourse is embedded in the imperatives of neo-liberal government; and how the EU NGOs translate this to local NGOs, through e.g. technologies of capacity-building, participatory governance and active citizenship.

In this analysis, moreover, the discourse is not external to the social relations; it is embedded within them. It includes such disciplining elements as Commission funding for the survival of EU NGOs and their various projects. EU NGOs have to follow certain procedures in order to receive this funding. However, they are incorporated into the governance mechanisms and become a subject of government with their free choices. Further, the discourse is open to revision and change; it is articulated by several actors. As will be shown, whereas the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) plays an important role in shaping the discourse, the European Parliament challenges it, rendering its own definition of European civil society, and entrenching new procedures of "connecting with the citizens". Therefore, the discourse is not a mere apparatus of social control which is designed to mask some hidden dynamics of rule. Rather, it is the imperatives of the discourse

itself which render the society governable. With respect to the European Union, “what is being rendered ‘knowable’ and thus governable is the European Union itself” (Shore 2006, 2009; Haahr 2005; Williams and Haahr 2005; Merlingen 2006). One of the main issues our work problematises is the debate about the democratisation of transnational governance structures. With the contribution of the critique of governmentality, we can draw several assessments. First, Swyngedouw (2005) points out five aspects which threaten the democratising credentials of governance-beyond-the-State: status, inclusion or exclusion, the system of representation, scale of operation, and internal or external accountability. Concerning status, Swyngedouw attacks the notion of stakeholder. He argues that although the concept is discursively inclusive and allows many different actors in governance structures, in fact, the “internal choreography of systems of governance-beyond-the-state is customarily led by coalitions of socio-economic, socio-cultural or political elites.” In this respect, the governance structures are “limited in terms of who can, is, or will be allowed to participate” (Ibid.). Swyngedouw further emphasises that the very act of assigning stakeholder status is an exercise of power: on the one hand, it is conditional on other participants’ readiness to accept new groups to the existing structures, and on the other, on the new groups’ willingness to participate. Furthermore, transnational governance structures have to deal with the structure of representation. Although some deny the existence of such a problem (such as Moravcsik 1992), other scholars endeavour to entrench a relation between governance structures and all-affected (Habermas 2003, Eriksen et al 2005). According to the former, there is no democratic deficit, while the latter claim that not only transnational governance suffers from a democratic deficit, but also national democracies. Therefore, modes of democratisation beyond the state are of particular importance for the latter group—deliberative democracy. By claiming that national parliaments cannot respond to the changing circumstances, we are required to find new configurations of collective will formation; that is, extra-parliamentary actors and processes should also be considered within the scope of democracy. In this respect, scholars of deliberative democracy have formulated new insights into representation, wherein civil society and its organisations attain a crucial role, such

as discursive representation (Dryzek 1999) and functional representation (Cohen and Rogers 1997; Cohen and Sabel 1997; Hirst 1994).

Having sketched the new insights into representation, we can turn back to our main focus, the promise of the role of NGOs in establishing a representative link. It proves difficult in a traditional meaning of the concept, i.e. representing through a certain kind of authorisation (voting or membership). On the other hand, the new insights on representation would also face crucial difficulties in fulfilling its promises due to the other four aspects which threaten the democratising credentials of governance. The third aspect which Swyngedouw (2005) mentions concerns the accountability of governance. He claims that accountability is “very poorly, if at all, developed”, thus resulting in a more autocratic and non-transparent power (Ibid., 2000). As an accumulation of the former, he concludes that governance structures experience legitimacy problems. He emphasises that the recent formulations of legitimacy rely on “the linguistic coding of the problems and strategic actions” and “postmodern theories of political consensus formation [...] which implies a reliance on the formation of discursive constructions (through the mobilisation of discourse alliance) that produces an image, if not ideology, a representation of a desirable good, at the same time ignoring or silencing alternatives” (Ibid., 2001).

We have mentioned that critics of development have studied participation and civil society discourse in the context of attaining the consent of the public for political rule. It can also be argued that this is parallel with the emergence of the ECS discourse, i.e. to attain the consent of the ruled. Put another way, the discourse first emerged in a different locale, in this case the World Bank, and for a specific context, in relation to developing countries. The Commission then borrowed this discourse and adapted it to its own discourse on the legitimacy crisis. Similar to the World Bank’s discourse, the Commission suggested that the involvement of CSOs would bolster the legitimacy of the EU. Nonetheless, our argument here is that the discourse on participation and civil society does not correspond to a situation in which the discourse is instrumentally used by the political power. While the latter enunciates

the tactical use of the concept in order to tame public reactions, as a tool for social control, the governmentality approach investigates the discourse as a constituent of the art of government. The stress on the constitutive impacts of discourse and the productive consequences of power are the two major aspects of government. It is a move from ideology and hegemony to discourse formation; in this sense, it is a move from Gramsci to Foucault. For instance, Shore (2006) argues that the Commission used the concept of participation symbolically, in such a way that it created the illusion of entailing measures of popular participation, i.e. government by the people. However, this symbolic use of the term does not merely serve as a means to achieve a certain end, in this case attaining consent and masking repressive dynamics of social control. The very success of the discourse is that it goes beyond an instrumental use and renders the rationalities of neo-liberal forms of governmentality—such as New Public Management, supranational elitism, and managerialism—amenable and practicable in the guise of a normatively embedded discourse, i.e. participatory governance and active citizenship. Moreover, the discourse is concerned with constituting the NGOs according to the imperatives of a certain kind of subjectivity. It is also concerned with making NGOs the subject of government by ascribing to them the role of translating these rationalities to the local NGOs through technologies of capacity-building and training. The latter is particularly of concern for our argument. The proponents of participatory democracy emphasise the positive consequences of associational life, including the development of civic virtues, improving social trust, and promoting public deliberation. However, I propose that political rationalities may well be articulated through associational life; in particular, coordinated interactions of NGOs from different cultures may result in a dispersion of discourse. This argument does not necessarily contradict the social learning thesis of constructivists and the better arguments of the deliberative approach. Nonetheless, it concentrates on “what is learned” and “which argument wins, and how”. It is a move from communicative rationality (intersubjective reasoning) to governmental rationalities; it is a move from Habermas to Foucault.

The public gaze, surveillance, and self-disciplining society

In systems of governance, NGOs are ascribed a continuous control role, a critical gaze, in decision-making processes. Contrary to Bentham's panopticon, in the current era it is not only observed objects (such as prisoners, patients and students) that are kept under surveillance. Rather, political power creates a discourse and empowers agents to keep itself under a public gaze, constituting a societal panopticon. Under the name of transparency, decision-making processes are open to the public. However, not all can follow political processes. Hence, some groups are encouraged, empowered and sponsored to perform this task. Nonetheless, there is a further crucial difference between Bentham's panopticon and that found in today's society. The observation performed by the former aimed to discipline and control the actions and behaviours of those observed. In contrast, today's political power attempts to subjectivise, discipline, and govern the conduct of conduct by putting itself under scrutiny, and by making itself the object of inquiry. This societal panopticon is not a public sphere, but has reflexive disciplining implications: it does not merely function as a political watchdog, but agents continue to be subjectified while engaging with political power.

CHAPTER 5

MAKING OF PARTICIPATION DISCOURSE AND ITS TACTICAL USE

The Commission, European Integration and Civil Society

The Commission with respect to the Monnet tradition has endeavoured to act like the motor of integration, while claiming to represent the principles of unity, efficiency, responsibility and impartiality. Thus, it has developed some projects in order to further European integration, though sometimes pushing the limits of legal boundaries. Some of these projects have been successful in time, for instance during the most dynamic, and arguable the most successful, periods of Hallstein and Delors.

The Commission played a pro-active role in European integration during the Hallstein's two-term presidencies (1958-1967) and pushed the limits of its roles, which were constitutionally determined under the two treaties of Rome (1958), treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Although the two treaties of Rome recognized certain decision-making power to the Commission (which replaced the position of High Authority of the preceding European Coal and Security Community), its power to impose decisions to member states were restricted (Nugent 2010; Gillingham 2003). Hallstein, the first Commissioner of the EEC, achieved some success, such as in reconciliation of cereal prices despite the veto of France. Yet, substantial policy proposals of Hallstein Commission, such as a Euro-Constitution, common social policy requiring a single European Welfare state and common citizenship, regional policy and foreign policy making capacity for Commission, were met by a deep suspicion of the member-states at the time (Gillingham 2003). The Hallstein Commission's proposal about financing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) through Community funding deepened these suspicions. This proposal suggested the Community having its own financial resources independent from the member states, as well as enhancing the budgetary powers of the Parliament. The Commission managed to secure the Parliament's support to this proposal since it concerned discarding the veto threats of member

states, thus strengthening the supranational features of the Community. Nonetheless, France opposed to the idea of further supranationalism because the Commission's plan was seen as a threat to its national interests. When the debates about this issue were continuing, France took on the Presidency of the Community and the tension with France and the Commission grew. In turn, the French Presidency has marginalised the Commission, yet the Council became the centre of debates. As consequence of this tension between the Commission and France, France recalled its representative from Brussels; this act is also known as "empty chair" crisis. This crisis was resolved by the Luxembourg compromise in 1966, granting the member states the veto power for any decision if it was considered as a violation of national interest (though it was not clearly defined what national interest entails). The practice of unanimity in the Council decision-making was abandoned with the Single European Act (1986). On the other hand, after two decades of marginalisation, the Commission endeavoured to play a dynamic role under Delor's period (1985-1994).

Delor's Commission 1985-1994 was considered as a successful period for the European Commission (Gillingham 2003). He started his post when the European integration was in a period of stagnation - from the 1960s through 1970s; this period was defined as eurosclerosis. One of the greatest achievements of this period was the SEA, which has been described as 're-launching' of European integration. It was designed to give the Community a broader policy responsibility, and involved provisions altering aspects of Community decision making. On the one hand the capacity of the Council of Ministers to take decisions by qualified majority vote (QMV) was strengthened in order to complete the internal market by 1992. On the other hand, the influence of the European parliament was strengthened via the creation of a two stage legislative procedure – 'the cooperation procedure' - for some legislative procure. After 1986, regulations drafted in Brussels had the force of law in the member-states. SEA brought new competences to the Commission in the fields of environmental, social, regional, and monetary policy.

Although Delors period concentrated on completion of internal market and single currency, Delors also wanted to merge the social aspects to the economic liberalisation policies which were in progress. Thus, he introduced the notion of “European social and economic space”, which resulted in involvement of the representatives of the trade-unions (ETUC) and employers (UNICE) into the decision-making process through the “Social dialogue”. This practice did not have any binding force when it had commenced between 1985; however, the social protocol annexed into the Maastricht Treaty provided social dialogue a legal ground. There were also critiques to this initiative. Gillingham (2003:259), for instance states that “if central Brussels provides an intimation of it, the zone in question would be filled by lobbyists rather than “solidaristic” workers or virtuous peasants bound “organically” to the soil. The policy networking that took hold at the Commission during the 1980s would serve only special interests; the tax-paying public had no influence over it”.

The *Treaty of Maastricht* entailed by the SEA and brought the three pillars methods, which comprise the European Communities, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). It also included a Social Chapter - from which UK opted out- and as well as brought the notion of European citizenship. The *Treaty of Maastricht* furthered a policy and institutional deepening via introducing timetable for economic and monetary union; specifying the economic and budgetary criteria; creating new legislative procedure, co-decision, with the latter giving the EP the power of veto over some legislative proposals. Three pillar methods were abolished and the phrase of European Community was replaced with the European Union in Lisbon Treaty, which was signed in 2007 and ratified in 2009.

Treaty of Amsterdam was not seen as ambitious as SEA or the Maastricht Treaty (Nugent 2010). It was expected that the treaty would finalise the restructuring of the EU’s institutions before the Eastern enlargement. Rather, it brought relatively modest attempts, strengthening the EU’s decision-making capacity in JHA and extending the co-decision procedure to more policy spheres. It also expanded the competence of

the EU to the areas of employment, which resulted in the launch of Employment strategy and governance of this strategy via Open Method of Coordination.

In 1999, The Commission had experienced the most damaging incident of its institutional history. The Santer Commission had to resign due to an evidence of corruption in which some of the Commission officers involved. The Commission then has been seen to be in a permanent decline (Gillingham 2003). In order to recover its damaged image and maintain its legitimacy, the Commission engaged a decisive institutional reform between 1999 and 2004 (Kassim 2008). This reform brought new provisions about the Commission's recruitment and career policies; but, it also moved the Commission's administrative methods towards a techno-managerial style and activity-based management (see Kassim 2008).

Central developments during the 2000s were the failed attempts of a Constitutional Treaty and its replacement with the Lisbon Treaty, and enlargement of the European Union. Legitimacy of the EU has been intensely debated after the Maastricht Treaty (1992) era, with the claim that the "permissive consensus" – the traditional ground by which the EU indirectly attained legitimacy- has been perceived inadequate in supporting the growing competences of the EU. *Treaty of Nice (2001)* dealt with the institutional composition of the EU, but did suffice the expectations. After Nice Treaty, national leaders agreed to convene another IGC in 2004. To facilitate the debate and help prepare the IGC, the December 2001 European Council meeting issued the *Laeken Declaration on the Future of the European Union* which provided for the establishment of a Convention on the Future of Europe (European Council, 2001). (Nugent 2010). Laeken Declaration (European Council, 2001) suggested that soon-to-be enlarged EU needed to become 'more democratic, more transparent and more efficient'. The Union has also needed to resolve three basic challenges: "how to bring citizens, and primarily the young, closer to the European design and the European institutions"; "how to organise politics and European political area in an enlarged Union"; and "how to develop the Union into a stabilising factor and a model in the new, multipolar world" (European Council, *ibid.*).

The Convention was composed of 105 members; the dominant presence amongst the membership was parliamentarians rather than governmental representatives. The final text formally presented to the Italian Council Presidency on 18 July 2003, it took the form of a *Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* (European Convention, 2003). The Constitutional Treaty would have replaced the EU's existing treaties – that is, the TEU, the TEC and the EUROTAM Treaty in their post-Nice forms- with a single treaty. It consisted of 448 articles, 35 protocols, 2 annexes and 50 declarations (Treaty Establishing Constitution for Europe, 2004).

The CT could not enter into force until it had been ratified by all the member states. The treaty was signed in October 2004; all member states were obliged to ratify by October 2006. Mostly member states ratified post-accession treaties by a parliamentary vote. Referendums have been used in Ireland for all four treaties from the SEA; in Denmark for the SEA, Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties; and in France for the Maastricht Treaty. Yet, the CT was more than “just another” amending treaty (Nugent 2010:74), ratification referendums were held in France on 29 May 2005 and in the Netherlands on 1 June 2005. By 1 June 2005, ten member states ratified the treaty, only Spain via referendum. In France and Netherlands who were negative about the Treaty considered it as elite rather than a popular project, and entailing “Anglo-American” social and economic values (Nugent 2010). Political opposition to the government and projected Turkish accession to the EU were other claims that had impact on the result of the ratification process (Ibid,74). The results of the referendums negative. Two alternatives were discussed after the Treaty: First suggestion, advocated by the Luxembourg President of the Council Jean-Claude Juncker, Chirac and Schroeder, was to continue ratification in the remaining countries, since the Treaty was not necessarily lost. The Treaty itself could enable this with the statement that if the four-fifths of the member states would ratify the Treaty, but one or two failed, “the matter would be referred to the European Council” (Nugent 2010:73). The second view, supported by Blair was to put the Treaty on hold.

A Council summit was held one week after the referendums. Member states which were planning to hold referendum were cautious after the results of French and Dutch cases, in that it would be more difficult to win the public consent. The summit's resolution was to freeze the issue until the first half of 2006 for a "period of reflection [which] will be used to enable a broad debate to take place in each of our countries..." (European Council, 2005b; also see Nugent 2010:74). Member states, which planned to hold referendums, could proceed with their plans as projected; though only in Luxembourg a referendum was held, with result of ratification of the Treaty. During the "period of reflection" some initiatives were introduced to close "the gap between the citizens and the EU". Plan D, Active Citizenship, and Europe for Citizens were launched after 2006 in order to allow the EU explain "itself" to people (in EU talk to "its citizens") via presenting the benefits of the system of EU governance, telling how EU works, and allowing the citizens to take a part in EU politics. After 2006, web consultations were also opened to citizens, with the aim of creating a cyber-space for public reflection (Hueller 2010).

The reflection was, however in practice, restricted to the exchanges between EU practitioners (Nugent 2011). The constitutional aspects of the treaty were dropped out, and the more reformist aspects remain. For this purpose an IGC was convened in June 2007. Poland pressed for the use of Nice voting rules until 2017 in the Treaty with an accompanying protocol. UK pressed for opt-out from JHA and CFSP issues would be beyond the reach of the ECJ. The revised Treaty was formally agreed by the Head of State and Government at an informal meeting in 18 October, and was signed in Lisbon on 13 December 2007. Ireland was the only member state which held a referendum; yet in the first try the Treaty was rejected, in the second try it was endorsed after Irish expectations were fulfilled. First, according to the Treaty the College would be reduced to two thirds of number of the members, and this situation could result in Ireland not having a Commissioner. After the revision the structure of the College of Commissioners returned to the Nice system, one Commissioner for each country. Second, Ireland's concerns about the taxation, military neutrality, ethical issues (especially abortion) and social matters were assured for not being

effected by the Treaty (Nugent 2010). In sum, Lisbon treaty was a long and tedious period of preparation, negotiation and ratification (Nugent 2010).

The legacy of Commission's relationships with social actors: three generations

Kochler-Koch and Finke (2007) categorises the history of Commission's relationships with social actors in three stages: consultation (1960/70s); partnership (1980/90s); and participation (2000/onwards). *The first generation*, in EU decision-making processes can be traced back to the establishment of European Coal and Steel Community (Armstrong 2002). The Paris treaty (1952) enshrined the establishment of advisory committee, which would consist of the representatives of producers, workers and consumers. The Treaty of Rome institutionalised the advisory role of functional groups with the establishment of the European Economic and Social Council (EESC). This can be seen pertinent with the Monnetist "neo-functionalism" understanding which characterised the early years of the integration (Walters 2004). Yet, the attempts of fostering functional representation could not successfully be implemented: that is, EESC has been marginalised in EEC/EU institutional set up whereas.

The *second-generation*, the idea of involving social actors to EU decision-making processes have been one of the priorities of the Commission, during and after the Delors Commission. Underpinned with the motto of European social and economic space, this vision led institutionalisation of "social dialogue" – between representatives of trade unions and employers- with the Social Protocol attached in Maastricht Treaty (1992). Organisations of citizens, or also known as non-profit organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations and organised civil society- however appeared in the Commission's agenda in post-Maastricht era, though not formalised, as in social policy. Kochler-Koch and Finke (Ibid) explains this due to Commission's perception of fading permissive consensus and the failure of Maastricht referendum in Denmark. Therefore, the consultation policy of the Commission has no longer based on the epistemic quality of the external advises; but also the public consent on EU politics. Accordingly, "bringing the EU closer to the

people was propagated [by the Commission] at the 1996 Turin Summit”, and as Kochler-Koch and Finke (Ibid, 210) underlines “this became the norm to follow by all EU institutions”. Against this backdrop, ‘Civil Dialogue’, - which will be further elaborated in this chapter- was introduced in 1996 in the field of employment and social affairs.

The *third generation* in the relations between the Commission and social actors, as defined in Kochler-Koch and Finke (Ibid), commences in the early 2000s with the launching of the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001). In this era, the Commission connected its ongoing (and prospective) consultations with social actors to a broader project of an administrative reform of the EU institutions, the reform which was planned to be realised within the limits of the treaties. The motto of “bringing back the EU people” has also continued in this period; however, different from the 1990s, the Commission introduced several standards, norms, and procedures with the aim of democratising the contributions of the social actors particularly in Commission’s consultation and interest intermediation regime. These initiatives are also associated with the principles of “good governance” (Kochler-Koch 2006; Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007), which was promoted by the World Bank and United Nations (Weiss 2000).

Bouwen (2009) claims that the Commission’s powers and responsibilities have impact on the lobbying practices to the Commission. The Commission’s legislative role, as the Commission is responsible for the drafting of legislative proposals. As Bouwen (Ibid) underlines this requires a substantial amount of technical and political information; thus the commission depends on external resources. In return for access to the Commission’s policy formulation, the Commission demands resources that are crucial for its own functioning, such as expert knowledge and legitimacy. According to Bouwen (Ibid), the Commission’s executive and the guardian of the legal framework roles also have also impact on the lobbying, since “the commission’s organisation design has largely been determined by the tasks it has to fulfil.” With respect to this, he (Ibid) argues, the Commission employs various instruments to

actively shape the system of EU interest representation, including money, rule-making power and governance style.

The Commission, social policy and the strategy of involving social actors

Since the early 1970s European Commission has been trying to intervene in social sphere in the form of directives and regulations, including environmental protection, consumer rights, women's rights, and health and safety at work. Nonetheless, the power of the Commission in executing the directives have been limited, as the Community law stipulate, they are executed by member states, but not the European executives. The competences of the EU in the social sphere has comparatively increased with the Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997) treaties; however, this has not necessarily translated into transfer of competences to supranational bodies. In turn, member states disagreed on harmonisation, unification and supranational control, but concurred with coordination of social policies via new modes of governance (also known as Open Method of Coordination), which is based on voluntarism, non-sanction and soft law mechanisms. It has been seen unlikely that member states would transfer their sovereignty to supranational bodies. Yet, the Commission has endeavoured to advance supranational intervention in this field, despite the sovereignty of member states has been recognised with the introduction of principles of subsidiarity and the introduction of new modes of governance (e.g. in social policy, environment and tourism). The OMC allows the Commission proposing guidelines and frames and monitor their implementations; though, without any legal binding mechanism, because the unique responsibility of implementation rests in the member state.

As a result, the manoeuvre space of the Commission has been restricted; it has tried other strategies such as action plans (three social actions plans have so far been introduced in 1974, 1989 and 1995). Cram (2006) claims that Commission, particularly the DG Employment and Social Inclusion, uses another strategy, which is mobilising the social actors to form European NGOs and in turn involving them into the Commission's consultation regime. The main argument of Cram (Ibid) is

that the Commission has tried to foster an understanding that social policies are regulated at EU level, and democratically. Cram (Ibid), however, acknowledges that the strategy of activating social NGOs has been relatively successful. First, the DG EMPL started financing social NGOs in the early 1990s, but via illegal methods until 1999. The treaties of the EU ascribe the Commission the role of using the Union's resources, while giving the auditing responsibility to the Parliament and the Council. Based on the request of the British parliamentarians with the claims that the Commission's support to social NGOs had no legal basis, in 1998, the Parliament decided to suspend the Commission's funds. Consequently, social NGOs organised a collective protest; accordingly these funds were released in 1999 with the Council decision. Thus, the Commission's *extra-acquis* behaviour was justified after the Council's decision. The second success of the Commission, according to Cram (Ibid), is the enshrinement of the principle of "participatory democracy" into the draft Constitutional Treaty (2004), and later in Lisbon Treaty (2007).

On the other hand, the Commission has seemed to advance the resolutions of the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) about social policy, i.e. connection of the employment policy to social policy. Amsterdam Treaty for the first time recognised the employment policy as a common European concern. Consequently, at the Luxembourg Summit (1997), the Heads of States and Governments decided an employment guideline with the aim of creating an "active labour market": this entailed the four principles of *employability* of the labour, *entrepreneurship*, i.e. alleviating the conditions for the business (such as reducing the tax and contribution costs on labour, and fostering new jobs in the third- sector); *adaptability* of business and labour to the new technology and so called "changing market conditions"; and creating "equal opportunities" for man and women. The Lisbon Strategy (2000), adopted by the Heads of States and Governments, furthered these goals, by agreeing to make Europe "most competitive and knowledge-driven economy by 2010".

The Commission and Social Actors

The European Commission has shown an interest in societal organisations and civil society discourse since the early 1990s. The Commission referred to societal organisations in different contexts of EU politics. They have appeared in the following EC initiatives: (a) the regulation of “interest politics” and “interest intermediation”, (b) the restructuring of EU governance, and (c) discussions on the “democratic legitimacy crisis” of the EU. Societal organisations first emerged in the agenda of the Commission in 1992, within the interest politics regulation frame (Com 1992). In this context, they were defined as “special interest groups”, together with the economic groups and firms that were lobbying in Brussels. Afterwards, the Commission never lost sight of its appeal to societal organisations, and it tried to adapt its discourse on the societal organisations to the context of the EU politics of the day (Smismans 2003). For instance, in the second half of the 1990s, the Commission tried to increase its regulative role in social policies, such as through the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) (Mosher and Trubek 2003). In this respect, in 1997, the Commission published a discussion paper about which voluntary organisations were active in the social sector. Smismans (2003) argues that the Commission has used the civil society discourse to justify its growing intervention on social policies as a strategy to respond to the nation-states’ reaction. Besides, the Commission did not only highlight the roles played by the societal organisations in the economy, such as creating jobs, and their increasing responsibility in governance in this document. It also for the first time elaborated the political implications of the societal organisations, such as their role in the creation of European citizenship and the emergence of a European public sphere.

At the beginning of the 2000s, the Commission broadened its focus on the societal organisations, from the ones which were active in social policies to all groups of organisations. Consequently, it introduced the NGOs as a new concept. This shift provided a great advantage for the Commission so that it could use the societal groups to legitimate its policies and the EU at large. Furthermore, the limited focus

on the use of social groups in legitimising social policies shifted to the general legitimacy of EU governance (Smismans 2003; Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007). *The Commission and Non-governmental Organisations: Building a Stronger Partnership* (Com 2000, 11 final) was the second and final paper in which the Commission specifically elaborated upon the societal groups. Just one year later, the societal organisations were mentioned in the *White Paper on European Governance* (WPEG) (Com 2001), under the category of civil society organisations (CSOs). The *White Paper* repeated the Commission's previous position about the roles of societal groups in governance and EU politics. The WPEG, however, placed the CSOs within the context of the EU administrative reform and EU governance, in which CSOs were defined as partners and participants, contributing to the efficiency of European governance. In addition to this, WPEG related the CSOs to the legitimacy of EU governance and the issue of creating a European public sphere.

During the 2000s, the European Commission detailed the political roles of societal organisations under the motto of “bringing the EU back to its citizens” or “closing the gap between the EU and the citizens”. In this respect, it initiated Plan D for Democracy (2005), Debate Europe, the Communication Policy (2006), and Europe for Citizens (2007). One of the components of “bringing the EU back to its citizens” was civil dialogue—incorporating NGOs into the Commission's decision-making structures through consultations. Civil Dialogue started in 1996 after the first European Social Policy Forum convened by the Social Platform. To regulate interest politics, after 2000 the EC launched standards and principles (Com 2002), established a database for civil society organisations, prepared a code of conduct, and broadened the database for all interest groups (Com 2006).

5.1. The European Commission and the discovery of the civil society discourse

The EC tried to regulate its relations with societal organisations by a) considering them within the context of interest politics at the EU level, b) engaging them in the EU governance structure, and c) relating them to the centre of the EU legitimacy debates.

In 1992, the EC published a paper about its regulation policy for interest politics with non-governmental actors (Com 1992). In this paper, the EC also refers to societal organisations; it categorises them under the general category of special interest groups, which includes all extra-political groups, namely business groups, consultation firms and civic groups. Nevertheless, the document finds it necessary to distinguish societal groups from business groups through the practical solution of defining them as non-profit organisations. As the paper specifically focuses on interest groups which try to influence EU-level politics, this categorisation is not intended as a general criterion for the definition of non-profit organisations. The paper illustrates European and (inter)national associations/federations of societal organisations as an example of non-profit organisations, with legal advisors, public relations and public affairs firms and consultants as profit-making organisations.

Societal groups as voluntary organisations active in social policy

In the second half of the 1990s, the Commission was interested in social groups which were active in the social sector. In this respect it published “Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe” (Com 97: 241). In this document, the importance of these groups is demonstrated according to the total amount of members of EU volunteer organisations, which estimated (in 1997) at around 100 million people. This document presents the most detailed views of the EC on the political and economic roles of social groups with a specific focus on the characteristics these groups should have and the functions they should carry out in social and political life.

Economic Roles of the Societal Organisations

Compared to other EC documents which focus on the societal organisations, only “Promoting the role of the voluntary organisations and Foundations in Europe” (Com 1997) elaborates the roles of these organisations in the economy. It strongly stresses the role of the sector in the labour market, creating jobs and training and retraining the unemployed, especially those having problems entering the labour market. It is not surprising that this is reflected in this document, since employment was one of

the prevailing issues of the EC in the second half of the 1990s. In fact, the EC launched the European Employment Strategy in 1997, the same year it published this document. Interestingly, the EC did not emphasise the job-creating potential of social organisations in its later initiatives, since its focus, rather, shifted to their potential for identity creation.

In “Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe”, the EC suggests that that social organisations should be supported by the state, as these organisations create jobs. It supports its claim for the sector’s employment creation with figures, along with “the tendency of governments engaging the voluntary organisations and foundations in the delivery of services of which they were themselves formerly both designers and providers” (Com 1997: 241). The document elaborated here specifies some of these new functions that the sector has adopted, such as training and retraining the unemployed, either from their own self-initiative or as a government-led policy. These initiatives concentrate especially on people having problems participating in the labour market. The work of the voluntary organisations, then, could include all possible actions to prevent people from being marginalised in the labour market. The document even make an interesting remark in this respect, pointing out that the voluntary work provided career opportunities for people who participate in this sector. Presenting voluntary work as an intermediary stage before entering the labour market, it claims that the experience of voluntary work in social issues could open up career opportunities. Nonetheless, this approach is problematic in that it tries to justify nonpaid and non-secure work. For instance, it promises a bright future to those who participate in a voluntary organisation, claiming that a better job often results from first having worked for the community (this is parallel to Rose’s argument about the tenets of neo-liberal government). This entails the understanding that work for the community is at the same time a moral activity.

Political roles of the Societal Organisations

Although the main focus of “Promoting the role of voluntary organisations and Foundations in Europe” is the role of social organisations in the economy, it also

evaluates the possibilities for European identity building and promoting democracy through societal organisations. This is the early imprint of the EC's project of merging the idea of European citizenship project with the concept of participation. The EC would also promote participation as the panacea for both the identity and legitimacy crises of the EU. These political roles will be discussed in detail along with the EC's further initiatives of Plan D for Democracy, the Communication Policy and Active Citizenship, in order to elaborate the relationship between the normative grounds of the European citizenship and the functional role that the EC assigned to the CSOs in this process.

“Promoting the role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe” suggests that participation in an organisation is a democratic experience for people in addition to elections. It emphasises that this project does not compete with representative democracy, and is thus not a challenge to the legitimacy of the European Parliament. Furthermore, the document asserts that societal groups function as the “intermediary” between the government and citizens, so that citizens can examine the government's actions and provide advice and feedback to the public authorities. This is a Habermasian view of civil society advocated by the deliberative school, in which civil society becomes a link between society and the political public sphere.

EU funding as a disciplining technology in the creation of a transnational space for voluntary organisations

The Commission (1997) elaborates the reasons for creating a transnational space for societal organisations, starting with the diagnosis that “there were some problems for the trans-European civil society”. This is explained as resulting from the lack of trans-European joint work between national and local civic groups. Here, therefore, the Commission expects that intense joint cross-border work between organisations will create a European civil society. The EC would facilitate this process of interconnecting European civil society, providing funds to societal organisations and

imposing a legal infrastructure within the European space so that these organisations can act freely among the countries of Europe.

The EC goes on to list problems which hinder cross-border collaboration, such as cultural differences, the availability of funds, national attitudes towards the EU, and national legal conditions for the activities of a foreign organisation. Cultural and linguistic differences are the most important of these problems, while membership, organisational structure and the objectives of the organisations create further obstacles. In addition to these, not all countries granted legal recognition to voluntary organisations/civic groups. For this reason, some organisations encountered restrictions when they tried to open an office and work in another country. In order to facilitate the operations of these organisations in Europe, the EC proposes a statute for European associations which would give a legal personality to an organisation engaging in those activities (Com 97, 241 final:11). Furthermore, to overcome the problem of the countries' different systems of taxation, working methods and administrative procedures, the EC prepared training programs for organisations wishing to participate in trans-European collaboration.

The EC was serious about supporting these organisations since they were described as the disseminators of information about Europe: "The Commission recognises the importance of the role that voluntary organisations play as disseminators of information, as bodies close to ordinary citizens, and proposes to involve them more closely in its activities of disseminating information" (Com 97, 241 final:13). However, the document also details problems inherent to these organisations which could be a barrier to transnational collaboration. These issues include, for instance, the representativeness of some European networks, the scepticism of some public authorities (at either the national or European level) toward the European work which these organisations aim to do, the fact that these organisations are not governed professionally, and a lack of skills needed to establish networks.

The EC also emphasises that societal organisations face problems in terms of financial resources, as they depend on long-term funding for survival. Due to difficulties in obtaining funds at the national level, organisations sought European sources of funding; however, it was not easy to achieve EU funding either. Organisations could not follow the information on funding, and some states restricted the access of the organisations to European funding where NGOs have a decision-making role.³² Furthermore, even if they could access EU funding, any delays in payments could impact the organisations' work.

Another observation is that, implicitly or explicitly, the document applies a categorical separation of "European civil society" from civil society (organisations) within Europe. Despite the fact that this EC document examines the economic, social and political roles of societal organisations at the national level, it does not include them in its conception of European civil society. Rather, the EC's conception of European civil society here refers to the Brussels-based lobbying networks. Not all NGOs, for instance the national NGOs, can lobby European institutions, participate in the EU's decision-making committees and follow the European agenda. The umbrella organisations in Brussels, rather, engage in these activities in order to represent the claims of its constituents. Thus, we can question whether this can be interpreted as a process of emergence for representative civil society, namely a process that represents those who cannot participate through "representative participation". In the document, therefore, the EC's role is stressed as facilitating the interactions of societal organisations in Europe through EU funding. In sum, the document interprets the accelerating volume of cross-border interactions and interconnectedness between the national organisations as the "Europeanisation" of the national civil society organisations. Nevertheless, the document does not assess this process as the nucleus of the emerging of "European civil society", since it already fulfils this conceptual and ontological space with the Brussels-based organisations.

³² However, the document does not mention which states do this.

Table 1. The roles, characteristics and functions ascribed to societal groups in “Promoting the role of the voluntary organisations and Foundations in Europe” (Com 1997, 241 final)

The roles of the voluntary organisations	Characteristics a voluntary organisation has and should have	The functions of voluntary organisations
<p>Contribution to employment opportunities</p> <p>Being instrumental in the formation of active citizenship</p> <p>Promotion of democracy</p> <p>Maintaining services</p> <p>Representing the interests of the people to public authorities, and protecting human rights</p>	<p>To some degree they (should) have institutional and formal subsistence.</p> <p>They do not (should not) seek profit.</p> <p>They (should) act independently according to their own rules, being free from interference from public institutions, including the government.</p> <p>The people who govern these organisations should not seek to use the organisation to their personal advantage, including profit.</p> <p>The organisations must be present in the public arena; their actions should contribute to the public good.</p> <p>The document states that “being independent is not easy, and the notion of the public good is controversial.”</p>	<p>They deliver services for their members or the public in social services and health care. Furthermore, they function as trainers and information providers.</p> <p>They provide advocacy, which is to campaign and lobby in order to change public perceptions and enact a certain policy.</p> <p>They function as intermediary bodies that coordinate the activities of, or provide information and assistance to the organisations in a specific sector, or they work to strengthen a particular sector, e.g. social policy. In those cases, the organisations link the sector with the political authorities. To the EC’s definition, it can also be added that these organisations not only link the sector to the political authorities, but also to the governance structures.</p>

From Voluntary Organisations to NGOs, and from the Social Sector to a Broadened Definition of Civil society as a panacea for the EU Legitimacy Crisis

At beginning of the 2000s, the EC conducted a paradigm shift in its approach to civil society by implementing a broadened definition in order to legitimise EU governance at large (Smismans 2003). This was a transformation from the earlier approach, in which civil society was restricted to the voluntary sector taking an active role in the social sector. The EC started to use the discourse of civil society in the context of acceptance of its actions not just in social policy, but in all of its activities, and furthermore, in the context of the *raison d’être* of EU institutions. However, the paradigm shift was not reflected in the EC’s perception of civil society. Although the

EC broadened its scope with respect to civil society, including all sectors of civil society organisations, it carried over the roles and characteristics which it drew for voluntary organisations in 1997.

The EC, one year before the publication of the *White Paper on European Governance*, declared its intention of integrating the NGOs into its governance structure, identifying the NGOs as its “vital partners” for governance due to “the expertise and dedication of NGO staff and their willingness to work under difficult operational conditions”. It set out five aspects of the “rationale for cooperation with non-governmental organisations”: (1) fostering participatory democracy, (2) representing the views of specific groups of citizens to European Institutions, (3) contributing to policy making, (4) contributing to project management, and (5) contributing to European integration.

Having been influenced by the European Economic and Social Committee’s report in 1999, “The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe” (CES 851/99, and see also below in this chapter), the Commission for the first time linked the NGOs to participatory democracy. Emphasising that the EU’s legitimacy rested on representative democracy, the Commission stated that NGOs could contribute by fostering participatory democracy in the decision-making processes of the EU. In other words, the EC equated participatory democracy at the EU level with the involvement of civil society in the decision-making processes. The EC also related the NGOs to the context of enlargement and the EU’s relations with developing countries. Here, the EC argued that NGOs could “contribute to the development of democracy and civil society in the candidate countries” by achieving “the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.”

Though the EC linked the engagement of NGOs in politics to the consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and developing countries, it attributed an instrumental role for them with respect to EU governance. First, the EC aimed to

integrate NGOs into the EU governance mechanism; second, it aimed to “win public acceptance for the EU” through the NGOs. Regarding the role of NGOs in EU governance, contrary to “Promoting the role of Voluntary Organisations” (Com 97:241), “Building a Stronger Relationship with NGOs” (Com 2000) does not emphasise the social and economic role of the NGOs, such as the delivery of services, employment creation and training. Rather, it focuses on the specific function of the NGOs in terms of EU policies, the management of EU projects. NGOs can manage, monitor and evaluate EU-financed projects, such as the projects on “social exclusion and discrimination”, “protecting the natural environment” and “the provision of humanitarian and development aid”.

Second, according to the document, NGOs can be instrumental in winning public acceptance for the EU, since they act according to the “general interest” of the people, dealing with concerns and issues related to the people’s well-being rather than pursuing the commercial or professional interests of their members. The EC prioritises the role of European networks of NGOs as the *catalysing agents* of this process, in that they can mobilise national NGOs and “make an important contribution to the formation of a European public opinion”, which the EC recognises as the “pre-requisite to the establishment of a true European political entity”. In Gramscian terms, the EC tries to utilise the NGOs in constituting the hegemony of EU governance, in which social forces, the actors in the civil society (NGOs), contribute to the emergence of consent to political rule.

The governance turn and bringing back the citizens

The *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001) indicates the need to reform the institutional design of the EU, the structure of its policy making and techniques of policy implementation. It explains the reasons behind the reforms as the extension of the issues the EU is dealing with, especially the expansion of the EU to include new member states and responding to the globalisation process (Com 2001, 428). The White Paper, in line with “Building a Stronger Relationship with NGOs”, specifically emphasises that civil society constituted a crucial part of this process,

both in sharing governance responsibilities and legitimising EU governance. “[The EU] will no longer be judged solely by its ability to remove barriers to trade or to complete an internal market; its legitimacy today depends on involvement and participation. This means that the linear model of dispensing policies from above must be replaced by a virtuous circle, based on feedback, networks and involvement from policy creation to implementation at all levels” (Com 2001, 428 final:11).

With the White Paper, the EC introduces the discourse of involvement and participation to the agenda of the EU as a cure for its democratic legitimacy problem, which resulted from the “the gap between the people and the EU”.

Yet despite its achievements, many Europeans feel alienated from the Union’s work. This feeling is not confined to the European Institutions. It affects politics and political institutions around the globe. But for the Union, it reflects particular tensions and uncertainty about what the Union is and what it aspires to become, about its geographical boundaries, its political objectives and the ways these powers are shared with the Member States. (Com 2001 428 final:7)

In order to *close* this gap, the White Paper posits that the participation of civil society in EU politics will play a crucial role. Restricting the definition of participatory democracy as the formal involvement of civil society in policy-shaping processes and consultation, it stresses that “participation is not about institutionalising protest” (WPG 2000). In a way, this approach tries to build a European civil society conception separate from social movements and grassroots tradition. Rather, it privileges a definition of participation that is compatible with the governance approach. It rests on the definition of interest representation, and corresponds to a pluralist system of decision-making in which all interest groups compete to influence policymaking on equal terms. In sum, the participation discourse is not only related to the technologies of legitimate EU governing, in the sense that the Commission strategically used it to garner public support. It is also the constitutive element of the EU art of government, i.e. how to govern organisations, find solutions, and make a better contribution to EU governance.

5.2. The Extension of the roles of European Civil Society in the Commission's Discourse

In line with the motto of “closing the gap between the citizens and the EU”, which was coined in the mid-1990s, during the first decade of the 2000s, the EC launched new policies, namely Plan D for Democracy, Debate Europe, Communication Policy, Active Citizenship and Europe for Citizens. In the last of these, the Commission's civil society discourse extended from the “agents of governance turn” to “agents of identity and consent builders”. In the late 1990s and in the *White Paper on Governance*, the main objective of the Commission was to restructure EU governance (Jachtenfuchs 2001; Kochler Koch and Rittbergen 2006). Thereby, it associated its discourse on civil society with the governance turn. Nonetheless, in the 2000s, the EC reduced its emphasis on the relationship between civil society and governance. Since then, the EC has prioritised the discourse on civil society, which included two main aspects: the generation of a European identity and the mobilisation of the public for EU integration. The Commission's new strategies for closing the gap with citizens have focused on European NGOs as a target of this policy, while assigning them an intermediary role between EU institutions and the people, so that EU governance can be better “connected to the citizens”.

As mentioned above, the strong emphasis on the necessity to “connect Europe with its citizens” was first reflected in the *White Paper on Governance*. The White Paper identifies two reasons for the “alienation of the citizens from the EU”. The first reason, based on the governance perspective, suggests that the citizens cannot build a connection with the EU institutions since they are not “involved in the governance” of their lives. Accordingly, the argument is that if the people can participate in the problem-solving processes, they can become closer to the idea of Europe, and this would strengthen EU democracy. The second reason is the notion that citizens are alienated from the EU because they lack information about the EU and the role of EU policies play in their lives. In the 2000s, the Commission prioritised the political socialisation roles of the CSOs, which entailed their intermediary function and identity-formation roles. The “governance turn” literature has discussed the role of

EU NGOs in the first reason given by the *White Paper* (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2008; Kochler-Koch and Rittberger 2006; Finke 2009). European studies, however, have neglected to examine the second reason, which attempts to embed crucial “political socialisation” roles in societal organisations. One exception is Warleigh (2001). Having examined the European NGOs’ socialisation roles, he concludes that they will not be able to achieve these tasks due to their distance from the grassroots. Nevertheless, the analysis of Warleigh is not critical in the sense that he does not problematise the central question of why and how the Commission endeavoured to create a European civil society.

Both the governance approach and the deliberative approach have been limited in problematising the Commission’s attempts to build a European civil society. They have been “civil society” reductionist, in that they consider civil society to be an autonomous agent. The governance approach takes for granted that there is *a* European civil society waiting to be integrated into the governance mechanism, sharing the responsibility of EU institutions. The deliberative approach has proposed a rights-based identity which can be reinforced through participation, and has defended the intermediary function of the civil society; similarly, it has derived from the ontological assumption that civil society has always been there, waiting to “democratise decision-making” and linking the authentic public reason to the decision-making processes. The deliberative approach also has taken for granted the normative claim that civil society is good, and whatever comes from civil society is good per se. Consequently, both approaches share an a priori normative stance: the involvement of civil society in governance mechanisms unquestionably legitimises EU governance. The governmentality approach, on the other hand, denaturalises this a priori normative position, considering it as one style of reasoning among others. It also questions the civil society ontology of the governance and deliberative approaches. The fact is that the EC has engaged proactively in a strategy of constituting an ECS and EPS, as well as integrating the societal organisations to the consultation processes of decision-making. Considering this, I argue that civil society is not an essentially non-state phenomenon, and whatever it performs does

not necessarily democratise and legitimise a political system. What is interesting in the EC's discourse of civil society is that it is the EC itself which promotes the discourse. Therefore, the more provocative question should be why the Commission engages in that, and what the consequences of this "politically driven" process are.

The deliberative approach could regard the Commission's efforts of empowering the EU NGOs, such as financial support and incorporating them into the consultation mechanism, as democratising participatory procedures (Huller 2010). The governance approach, on the other hand, considers the Commission's civil society initiatives necessary attempts for the governance turn. However, the governmentality approach conceives of these as political technologies. It asserts that the art of government has extended beyond the territories of the nation-states. Defined as advanced liberalism (Barry et al 1996) or neo-liberal governmentality (Lemke 2002, and 2007), this art of government includes the empowerment of the self and society for their own auto-government (Cruisbank 1999; Rose 1992, 1996b). The Commission's civil society discourse first elaborates the EU NGOs in terms of the "governance debate". However, the art of government also generates the subjects of government, i.e. the population, the citizen. The governance approach ignores this (Lemke 2007), while the deliberative approach defined a rights-based European identity. I argue that the identity and consent-building role of the EU NGOs are incorporated into the Commission's civil society discourse, and merged with the technologies of European citizenship. This merges the European art of government, the expert solution to social problems (for instance Majone 1996, Jactenfuchs 2001, Kochler-Koch 2006) with the government of the self, government of the society, and the government of the society through the society.

EU NGOs as a technology of EU governing in connecting with the citizens

Plan D, Debate Europe, Communicating Europe in Partnership, Europe for Citizens and Active European Citizenship focused on connecting the EU with the citizens, informing the people about the EU and the role of the EU in their lives. The EC launched these policies due to the diagnosis that legitimate European governance was

not plausible if the people residing in the European territory lack knowledge of who governs, how it governs, why it governs, where it governs and with whom it governs. Hence, it made available funds to support projects and initiatives that would help the “dissemination of the idea of Europe (a Union)” in order to mobilise a public discussion, which was assumed to be one of the nuclei of the emerging European public sphere. In these programmes, the Commission stressed the significance of NGOs, considering them to be the interlocutor between the political power and society.

Magnette (2003) emphasises that the clarity of the political structure can enhance political participation and political interest. Hence, the Commission’s aim of informing the people about EU governing could contribute to its legitimate governing. Nonetheless, the Commission’s strategies are problematic; first, it considers “explaining itself” to be a matter of public relations, i.e. selling a product (Shore 2009), and second, it becomes proactively involved in fostering debates about EU governing. The Commission’s aim has gone beyond enlightening the people about the EU administrative mechanism. Rather, the Commission has been trying to build a political-ethical discursive field for EU governing, emphasising how good EU governance is, the extent to which it is an inseparable part of human life, and how the subject of EU governing is constituted.

Nevertheless, the Commission’s ambition to constitute the political ethics of EU governing faces serious problems. Despite the fact that the EC entails bold normative ambitions, such as enhancing participatory democracy, consolidating legitimacy and creating a European identity, to achieve these, it has rather adopted the technologies of public relations. It focuses on advertising the EU, and in doing so, tries to *convince* the people about its *raison d’être*. Convincing, however, is different than consent. Contract theory states that since the emergence of political society results from the a priori consent of the people, the question of whether the state ever faced the crisis of explaining itself is redundant. In other words, it is the very act of consent which itself explains the emergence of the state. On the other hand, Gramsci’s

approach to consent requires that political power constantly produce and reproduce the allegiance of the masses through shifting strategies and alliances.

Moreover, the EC's preference of the "citizens" as a concept in the motto of bridging the gap with the citizens is problematic, since it excludes non-citizens as legitimate participants in public debate. The EC could have chosen any other concept in order to emphasise the people inhabiting the European space, such as individuals, persons, humans, residents, inhabitants or the population. In sum, the EU draws the participation criteria of the EPS with citizenship at the outset and excludes non-citizens, namely the third-country nationals who number 18.5 million (3.8 %) among the EU's total population of 493 million in January 2006 (MEMO/07/351).

Plan D for Dialogue, Democracy and Debate

One of the Commission's initiatives with respect to connecting the citizens to EU governance was Plan D for Democracy (Com 2005,494 final). Plan D had the objective of reinforcing a public debate on the future of Europe, and for this task the member states and EU institutions would collaborate in mobilising "citizens, civil society, social partners, national parliaments and political parties, with the support of the EU institutions" (Com 2008, 158/4 final:3). It formulated the mottos of the mobilisation strategy as "listening better", "explaining better" and "going local". In this respect, it particularly concentrated on the role of civil society organisations, particularly EU NGOs. Six civil society projects were supported by the Commission which brought together approximately 40,000 people from different countries within Europe in a seminar-like activity. The aim of these projects was "to test the innovative consultation methods and enable people from the different national public spheres to connect with each other as European citizens and debate the future of Europe" (Com 2008, 158/4 final:3).

The innovative strategies of fostering a debate among the citizens included "virtual and face-to-face communication, deliberative consultation and polling" at "country-level, cross-border and pan-European consultations". These were experimented in

civil society projects in order to determine the extent to which knowledge of the European art of government could be translated in the European space. As a reminder, the discourse on European governance portrays deliberation as the mode of conduct among the different actors (stakeholders) (Papadoulous 2002, Eriksen 2005a). Plan D attempted to translate this politically limited definition of the mode of conduct between the “governance” actors to civil society, presenting it as a daily practice of conduct between individuals, and the conduct between the individuals and the political authority. The report prepared by the Commission on these projects concluded that “the civil society organisations managing the projects served as multipliers and disseminated the views expressed by citizens through their political and media networks, at different stages of the projects” (Com 2008, 158/4 final:3). On the basis of this statement, it suggested that “the Plan D civil society projects showed that participatory democracy can usefully supplement representative democracy” (Ibid.). At the latest stage, in December 2007, the Commission gathered the six Plan D citizens’ projects in a conference entitled “The Future of Europe: The Citizen’s Agenda”.

Plan D also introduced other “innovative ways of communication”, such as internet debates on the “Debate Europe” website³³ and the “Plan D” visits of the Commissioners to national parliaments, civil society, business and union leaders, regional and local authorities in member states. In this respect the Commission representatives in the member states organised 830 seminars, and 4,000 press statements and conferences, and the Commissioners managed in total 370 visits (Com 2007, 568 final:9). Compared to the civil society projects, the visits of the Commission’s representatives rather focused on direct interaction between the individual and EU officials.

³³http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/communicating/conference/dialogue/index_en.htm

After 2008, the Plan D proceeded under the title of “Debate Europe”, with the motto of Democracy-Dialogue-Democracy.³⁴ Debate Europe continued to employ the “innovative communication” methods initiated by Plan D in order to advertise the impact of EU governance in the daily lives of people, such as on “internal market-related success stories, roaming mobile charges, low-cost flights, closing the gap in regional development, environmental protection and the fight against climate change” (Com 2008 final:158/4).

Debate Europe is a web portal that comprises EU Tube, which includes videos about EU along with commentaries and blogs, descriptions of EU policies and benefits under the “EU at a glance” and “EU activities” page, a call centre for fielding questions about the EU with “Europe direct”, an online game called Europa Go, and activities oriented toward school children under “Spring Day for Europe”.³⁵ The last of these is worth elaborating, since the Commission’s interest in children cannot be explained as an attempt to inform citizens about EU policies to combat alienation from EU governance, or put in terms of the Commission’s optimism, to connect citizens with EU institutions. The question that arises is how the EC’s interest in children can be explained. The activities which were put into practice under the interest in schools reveal the EC’s aspirations of building a European political-ethical space, so that children are nurtured as Europeans and develop a political allegiance to EU institutions. For instance, *Spring Day for Europe* encourages such activities as “playing the role of creative figure” (for the European Year of Innovation 2009), exchanging traditional songs between countries, competitions to create a leaflet for Europe, gathering students’ best ideas for Europe, organising games in schools about European decision-making processes, European inventions and inventors, and matching euro coins with the country of origin. More interestingly, the Commission arranges role playing activities for EU decision-making simulations in schools. In 2007, moreover, 75 Commissioners visited schools in 44 regions in 18 countries, and

³⁴ http://europa.eu/debateeurope/index_en.htm

³⁵ <http://www.springday2009.net/ww/en/pub/spring2009/homepage.htm>

400 German European officials visited their former schools during the German EU presidency (Com 2007, 568 final:9).

The White Paper on Communication

The *White Paper on Communication* (WPC) was an EC policy launched in 2006 in line with the motto of “closing the gap between the citizens and EU”. The impetus for the launching the communication strategy was the communication gap with the citizens. The Commission defines this, here and elsewhere, in different ways, such as bringing the EU back to citizens, connecting with citizens, or closing the gap with the citizens. Scholars of governance and deliberation have taken the diagnosis of a gap for granted, debating whether and the extent to which this gap could be closed. However, the governmentality approach employs a different strategy. It instead problematises the Commission’s problematisation, and therefore examines the technologies used by the Commission in its “connecting with the citizens discourse”.

The WPC is remarkable as an attempt in that it introduce communication as a policy in its own right, arguing that the gap with citizens can be closed if they learn more about the EU and feel that their views matter in EU decision-making. The communication policy, in this respect, concentrates on mobilising a “European debate” in several ways. Some of these overlap with Plan D, such as the visits of the Commissioners and other EU officials to schools and supporting civil society projects. It also introduces such strategies as the Commission’s representations in member states, creating new European spaces to bring together different actors, reinforcing the EU dimension in the national educational system, using media technologies to increase the visibility of the EU, bringing together “European teachers” through a network and a special programme within the College of Europe, digitally connecting European libraries, reconsidering the EU institutions’ visitor programmes, and complementing EU websites with online forums—“virtual meeting places”—and links to external information sources. It also indicates that achieving these objectives depend on a “partnership approach”, the technology of the European art of government, which requires the collaboration of “EU institutions, the national,

regional and local authorities in the Member States, European political parties, [and] civil society” (Com 2006:35 final).³⁶

Having acknowledged that the “communication strategy” of the EC in the post-Maastricht Treaty (1992) era was based mostly on relating the EU’s activities, the WPC declares the intention of bringing change in two aspects. First, the new communication policy will reinforce mechanisms of “listening to the people”, such as support for the civil society projects, new European spaces for European debate (i.e. houses of Europe opened in Tallinn, Dublin and Madrid in 2007-2008)³⁷ and web-consultation portals for the people (i.e. *Your Voice*). Nevertheless, interestingly, the WPC does not refer to the Commission’s “civil dialogue” initiative, which aimed to involve civil society in EU decision-making. As a reminder, the Commission had presented civil dialogue in the second half of the 1990s under the motto of bringing citizens back into the EU, repeating this in the *White Paper on Governance*. In other words, even though the Commission presents “listening to the people” as the cornerstone of its communication policy, it avoids mentioning the strategy which had already been put into action on precisely the same grounds. It is difficult to explain why the Commission preferred not to mention the civil dialogue as an example in which EU NGOs participated in EU decision-making processes.

The second new aspect in the communication policy is explained in the WPC as a shift from the institutional approach to a “decentralised” one. As the WPC says, this concept was originally explained ambiguously with respect to its specific meaning and which procedures it entailed: “The European Commission is therefore proposing a fundamentally new approach—a decisive move away from one-way communication to reinforced dialogue, from an institution-centred to a citizen-centred communication, from a Brussels-based to a more decentralised approach.

³⁶ Defining the political actors and civil society as the partners in a meta-institutional set-up, the WPC defined the EU polity in a Gramscian way, in which the state was the combination of the political society and the civil society.

³⁷ *Communicating Europe in Partnership* (Com 2007, 569 final:8).

Communication should become an EU policy in its own right, at the service of the citizens” (Com 2006, 35 final: 4). Despite the fact that the EC advanced ambitious proposals—in fact, a fundamentally new approach—it could not provide solid grounds for this radical overhaul: “It should be based on genuine dialogue between the people and the policymakers and lively political discussion among citizens themselves. People from all walks of life should have the right to fair and full information about the European Union, and be confident that the views and concerns they express are heard by the EU institutions” (Ibid., 4).

The WPC indicates that by enhancing the European debate, it aims at attaining “the people’s support for the European project” (Ibid., 4) and promoting “a pan-European culture” (Ibid., 5), which would reinforce a European identity. The final goal of this project is to facilitate Europe’s penetration into the political-ethical constitution of the self. The following long quote from the WPC explicates how the Commission diagnoses the problem, and the remedies it suggests:

In today's Europe, citizens exercise their political rights mainly at the national and local level. Political rights linked to the European dimension have been introduced, such as the right to participate in the elections of the European Parliament. However, people learn about politics and political issues largely through their national education systems and via their national, regional and local media. They consider the manifestos of political parties dealing with national, regional and local issues, and they discuss these issues mostly in their own communities. In short, the “public sphere” within which political life takes place in Europe is largely a national sphere. To the extent that European issues appear on the agenda at all, they are seen by most citizens from a national perspective. The media remain largely national, partly due to language barriers; there are few meeting places where Europeans from different Member States can get to know each other and address issues of common interest. Yet many of the policy decisions that affect daily life for people in the EU are taken at the European level. People feel remote from these decisions, the decision-making process and EU institutions. There is a sense of alienation from “Brussels”, which partly mirrors the disenchantment with politics in general. One reason for this is the inadequate development of a “European public sphere” where the European debate can unfold. Despite exercising the right to elect members of the European Parliament, citizens often feel that they themselves have little opportunity to make their voices heard on European issues, and there is no obvious forum within which they can discuss these issues together. A pan-European political culture—with pan-European

political groups and foundations—is still developing. Europe also needs to find its place in the existing national, regional and local “public spheres” and the public discussion across Member States must be deepened. This is first and foremost the responsibility of the public authorities in the Member States. It is the responsibility of government, at national, regional and local level, to consult and inform citizens about public policy—including European policies and their impact on people’s daily lives—and to put in place the forums to give this debate life. There is also a real interest in building the European dimension into the national debate. Citizens sense that there is something missing from a national debate which ignores aspects of public policy that are of direct relevance to them. Far from being in competition, a stronger recognition of the European dimension in national political exchange can only add to its credibility. That is why national public authorities, civil society, and the European Union institutions need to work together to develop Europe’s place in the public sphere. (Ibid., 5)

The Commission, as the above statements reveal, had the objective of increasing turnouts in the European Parliament elections as the concrete example for the realisation of democracy at the European level. Nevertheless, the Commission’s proposals included strong political ambitions which went beyond increasing the amount of voters in European Parliament elections, such as requiring the national authorities to integrate the EU dimension into school curricula and enlightening citizens about the impact of European policies in their daily lives. To enhance Europeans’ engagement in EU governance, the Commission attempted to create a political-ethical space for EU governing within and beyond the nation-state. Therefore, although the WPC claims that listening to the citizens will be the basis of the Commission’s communication policy, it rather concentrates on “empowering citizens”. This focus entails, first, the education of the citizen, second, citizens’ relations with other citizens, and finally citizens’ relations with the public and the public institutions.

Improving civic education: The WPC evaluates the role of education in the communication policy in five aspects. First, it connects education to active citizenship, which will be elaborated in the following section. Second, it suggests that political socialisation with respect to the EU “should not [only] be confined to teaching school pupils about EU institutions and policies”, but also “should help

people of all ages to use tools such as the internet to access information on public policy and to join in the debate”. Third, it emphasises that education policy should give attention to migrants and the disabled, who might otherwise “find themselves excluded from the public sphere” (Ibid., 7). Fourth, it asserts that the “EU programmes can be of direct support in fostering the European dimension. Programmes like Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates, Erasmus, Youth in Action etc. provide educational and training opportunities for thousands of students and young people across Europe.” Fifth, it emphasises the benefits of the information technology programmes that tackle exclusion from the public spheres (Ibid., 7). Hence, education becomes not merely a focus on describing the EU and changing people’s minds about the virtues of involvement in the EU’s consultations. It aims at enhancing the skills of the people, such as their ability to use the Internet. In other words, EU governing requires not only enlightened citizens, but also capable citizens.

Connecting citizens with each other: The WPC supports the creation of physical arenas for the discussion of European issues in order to connect citizens to each other. Houses of Europe, which were opened in Tallinn, Dublin, and Madrid in 2007-2008, were examples of this. The previous EU initiatives of Plan D, Youth in Action and Culture, and Citizens for Europe also supported trans-European projects for civil society in this respect. Furthermore, the WPC suggests using the “existing and planned EU programmes to connect and mobilise European citizens”, noting that an example of this, Erasmus, developed “a network that connects 150000 students from all Member States”, so that “their websites [could] serve as a hub for posting activities, organising face-to-face meetings and engaging in wide-ranging debates on European issues” (Ibid., 7). On the one hand, the Commission here refers to previous technologies; on the other, it creates new ones.

Connecting the citizens and public institutions: The WPC asserts that “bridging the gap between Europe and citizens means creating and maintaining links between citizens and public authorities all the way from the local to the European level”

(Ibid., 7). To illustrate this, it points to the transparency of EU decision making and the consultation procedures with interest groups.

Connecting with citizens via media: One of the points the WPC highlights is that the emergence of the European public sphere has been hindered by the poor coverage provided by the national media of EU-related news: “Regular major events such as European Council meetings do attract coverage in national newspapers, but during the intervening periods there is no comprehensive coverage of EU affairs” (Ibid., 9). The WPC advances three action plans to close the information gap (Ibid., 9). The first one involves giving Europe a human face, resulting from the diagnosis that people cannot clearly identify the impact of the EU in their lives: “The European Union is often perceived as ‘faceless’: it has no clear public identity. Citizens need help to connect with Europe, and political information has greater impact when put in a ‘human interest’ frame that allows citizens to understand why it is relevant to them personally. EU institutions and all levels of government can do more to ‘give a human face’ to the information they provide” (Ibid., 9). The second target stresses the use of the national, regional and local dimension in order to disperse the common information about EU issues. The third dimension, on the other hand, emphasises the internet as a new channel for communication on European issues. Nevertheless, the WPC reiterates the steering role of the political institutions: “However, political leadership is needed if Europe is to fully exploit the Internet’s potential and ensure that it does not create new divisions in society” (Ibid., 9).

As we can see, rather than focusing on the media as an independent actor, the WPC locates the origin of the problem and its cure in the political institutions in prescribing the need for a human face for the information they provide. This however is a problematic understanding of the “publicisation of the political information and knowledge” via media, since it entails an understanding that manipulation of political news is carried out by the political authority itself. The WPC’s proposals to increase its visibility in the media also show how the Commission uses similar symbols and styles of reasoning in different contexts. For instance, the Commission previously

used the metaphor of giving Europe a human face in relation to the Commissioner's visits to the member states. In fact, these two instances complement each other. While the visits give a human face to European governing through the agency of bodily representation of a European bureaucrat, the news media on the other locates the human face in a mental frame of human interest. In other words, the Commission tried to de-mystify European governing bodily and discursively by relating it to the human. Secondly, the WPC repeats its language on different levels, nationally, regionally, and locally, when it refers to the "spatial dimension". In doing so, it discursively constitutes the spatial frames.

Europe for Citizens and Active European Citizenship³⁸

In relation to its previous initiatives for connecting with the citizens, the Commission launched another programme in 2007, Europe for Citizens.³⁹ It previously linked citizens' lack of interest in EU politics to European citizenship and European identity. In this respect, it initially referred to the "key competences" (delineated by Plan D) that every citizen should acquire (Com 2005,548 final). Elaborating on Plan D, it underlined that these competences cover "all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary" (Ibid.). Furthermore, it emphasised the need for empowering citizens to "fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation."⁴⁰ Here, the Europe for Citizens programme located the volunteering that was central to active European Citizenship. It explicated the reasons for promoting volunteering as follows: "By giving one's time for the benefit of others, volunteers service their community and play an active role in society. They develop a sense of belonging to a community, thereby also gaining ownership. Volunteering is therefore a particularly powerful means to develop citizens' commitment to their society and to its political

³⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/annexes-citizenship/doc135_en.htm#2.

³⁹ It has a budget of 215 million euro.

⁴⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/annexes-citizenship/doc135_en.htm#2

life. Civil society organisations, associations of a European general interest, town twinning associations and other participating organisations often rely on volunteer work to carry out and to develop their activities.”⁴¹

Putting active European citizenship into practice: The Europe for Citizens Programme includes four different categories of actions: 1) Active Citizens for Europe, 2) Active Civil Society in Europe, 3) Together in Europe, and 4) Active European Remembrance. The first one entails town twinning and support for citizen projects. The second one, on the other hand, concentrates on support for think tanks and civil society organisations, and the projects developed by these civil society organisations. Defining this as “pondering Europe”, the second action plan explains what it expects to achieve through the support of this strategy:

This collaboration can take a variety of forms of actions, such as seminars, thematic workshops, training seminars, the production and dissemination of publications, information campaigns, artistic workshops, amateur sporting events, exhibitions, grassroots initiatives etc. Partners interested in organising debates should focus on stimulating discussions related to the priorities of the programme which involve a broad range of stakeholders from different countries, including other civil society organisations, citizens and policymakers. As their name suggests, reflection exercises should nourish and structure the collective consideration of such issues as European values, identity and democracy. These exercises should involve civil society organisations of all kinds, experts, decision-makers and ordinary citizens. Special attention should be given to reflecting the cultural and spiritual diversity of Europe. Networking activities should seek to establish the foundation for, or encourage the development of, long-lasting and enduring networks between civil society organisations from different countries which are active in a particular field.⁴²

While the third action plan, Together in Europe, focuses on high-visibility events, studies, surveys and opinion tools, and information and dissemination tools, the fourth one concentrates on building a common identity through remembrance (Delanty 2005): “Decades of peace, stability and prosperity separate Europe from the devastation of World War II. But to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not

⁴¹ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/objectives_en.php

⁴² http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc46_en.htm

repeated, to appreciate the present and plot a course for the future, it is important to keep the memory of that period alive.”⁴³ Nevertheless, the stress on remembrance does not only cover memories of war, but also includes a condemnation of Nazism and Stalinism as the dark side of European history: “The legacy of Nazism and Stalinism underscore just how important and valuable our current democratic values are. By commemorating the victims, as well as preserving the sites and archives associated with deportations and myriad other actions, Europeans, particularly younger generations, can draw lessons for the present and the future from these dark chapters in history.”⁴⁴

Having devised a fourfold strategy for developing a European citizenship, the Europe for Citizens programme places great emphasis on European values, history, culture and cultural diversity as the basis of European identity.⁴⁵ Despite the fact that the programme defines active European citizenship as the “involvement of the citizens and civil society organisations in the process of European integration”, it does not elaborate an understanding of citizenship and identity as phenomena which would emerge from within the very act of “involvement” or participation of strangers in solving society’s common problems, as suggested for instance by Putnam, Barber and Habermas. Though at the outset it indicates its stance that “active European citizenship” should be the full participation in social political life, Europe for Citizens cannot elaborate this view. Rather, it approaches a communitarian understanding of identity, stressing the importance of values and history. Ultimately, instead of treating participation as a normative value in itself, a medium of political integration, it rather delineates participation as a means, a catalyst, for discovering the already-existing values, culture and history of the Europeans.

In other words, Europe for Citizens opted to define European identity as a social reality, as if it were already there, so that through the activities initiated by the active

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc46_en.htm

⁴⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme-actions/doc48_en.htm.

⁴⁵ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/objectives_en.php

European citizenship programme, Europeans would discover the identity they had been unaware of. In other words, the Commission proposed Europe for Citizens as a method for discovering a European identity that was already there. This approach defines Europeans as the people who do not know who they are, so that through the very act of cross-country mingling and “intercultural dialogue”, they access, or recall, the knowledge of their common identity based on a shared culture, history and values. In this way, it characterises active citizenship, participation, as an epistemology of finding out the ontology of the self. The following statement from the Europe for Citizens website illustrates the way the EC portrays the core of European identity, and its ultimate goal of promoting it: “For citizens to give their full support to European integration and to develop their sense of belonging to the European Union, it is important to bring common European values, history and culture to the fore.” Nevertheless, in stressing the importance of a shared culture and history as the basis of community building, the Commission excludes those who do not share the same culture, history and values.

In sum, the Commission’s discourse on connecting with the citizens started with a goal of “explaining itself”, then was revised as “listening to the people”, before ultimately being linked to European citizenship and European identity. In this process, the roles of EU NGOs were portrayed as the interlocutors of EU governing that explained EU governing to its members, linking public demands to the decision-making in the consultations, and reinforcing active European citizenship. The governance approach neglected the fact that the EC’s discourse on the involvement of civil society also embodied elements of creating a European identity on the basis of participation. Some scholars suggest that EU governance cannot evolve into a democratic system, since there is no European *demos* (Cederman 2001; Schore 2006; Weiler 1999; Habermas 2001). The proponents of the deliberative school in European studies (Eriksen et al 2005), on the other hand, argue that strangers can develop a sense of commonness in their common activities which aim to govern their own lives. Regarding European integration, it has not been possible to follow the path of nation-building, for instance in building a common language, common

culture and even common history. Therefore, the idea of building identity—and reinforcing legitimacy—on the grounds of participation, in line with the writings of Tocqueville, Putnam and Habermas, became very attractive for the Commission. Hence it tried to integrate the participation discourse into its legitimacy crisis diagnosis, which suggested that the legitimacy crisis of the EU governance stemmed from the “alienation” of the citizens from EU politics. Consequently, during the 2000s, the Commission focused on closing this gap with Plan D for Democracy, Debate Europe, the Communication Policy, Active Citizenship and Europe for Citizens. These all referred to the EU NGOs as partners in the Commission’s project of creating a European public, European public sphere and European *demos*. In other words, the EU political rationality supported EU NGOs as the interlocutors of the art of government which could translate the political rationalities to the margins.

Table 2. The shifting characteristics and roles of societal organisations in EC civil society discourse

Com (1997)	Politics, economy and society: social groups
Com (2000)	Legitimacy, governance: all groups as NGOs
WPEG, Com (2000)	Governance, legitimacy; creating a public sphere
Plan D, Com (2005)	Linking the citizens through the public sphere;
Communication Policy (2006)	Linking the citizens through the public sphere

Table 3. Development of civil society discourse in the EC

	<i>The discourse</i>	<i>Conceptualisation</i>	<i>Regulation</i>	<i>Approach</i>
Com (1992)	No discourse yet.	Early attempt at stressing the societal groups’ involvement in society; Elaborates the SOs as an interest group, but defines them as non-profit.	It introduces its willingness to regulate interest politics; hence it presents examples of interest regulation in some states, and in the UN. It adopts an open and non-accreditation approach for regulation.	It develops a pragmatic definition as non-profit organisations, and focuses on transnational organisations.
Com (1997)	It uses societal organisations in legitimising EU policies in the social economy It adopts the third sector and governance approach to define the roles of societal organisations.	It identifies the roles, characteristics, and functions of the social groups.	Involving social actors in the governance of the society.	It limits the groups which are active in social politics.

Table 3 continued

Com (2000)	It links the CSOs to discourse on the legitimacy of EU governance at large.	It draws common features and the rationales for integrating NGOs (the term the document uses) to EU politics.	It relates to interest regulation policy.	It does not limit its focus on SOs active in the social field, and it embraces the comprehensive approach.
Com (2002)	It tries to develop a regulated interest politics, where each interest group is treated in equal terms.	The use of the CSO disappears, so that consultation and interest representation prevail as the concepts the EC uses to explain the EC's relationship with SOs.	It launches "standards and principles of conduct" for interest regulation.	SOs are interpreted as mere interest representatives.
Com (2006)	It repeats its position of 2002.	It repeats its position of 2002.	It initiates a common database of registry for the interest groups.	It repeats its position of 2002.

5.3. Civil dialogue and Participatory Consultation

In order to develop systematic relations with the EU NGOs, the Commission started civil dialogue following to the European Social Policy Forum in March 1996, which was organised by the Social Platform, including 100 participants mostly from the NGOs.⁴⁶ At the outset, the Commission indicated two goals for the "civil dialogue": "[1] to ensure that the views and grassroots experience of the voluntary sector can be systematically taken into account by policy makers at European level so that policies can be tailored more to real needs, and [2] to disseminate information from the European level down to the local level so that citizens are aware of developments, can feel part of the construction of Europe and can see the relevance of it to their own situation, thus increasing transparency and promoting citizenship" (Com97, 241 final:7).

Here the scope and form of civil dialogue has changed, in parallel with the shifts in civil society conceptualisation and interest regulation policy of the EC. In the 2000s, the EC began defining civil dialogue as a consultation practice in policy- and lawmaking. "The EU at a glance: Eurojargon",⁴⁷ an online glossary of the terminology used in EU politics, reveals the paradigm shift in the EC in the definition of civil dialogue: "[Civil dialogue] means consulting civil society when the

⁴⁶ As a note, this should not be confused with the European Social Forum, which started in 2002 as a consequence of the anti-neoliberalism movement.

⁴⁷ http://europa.eu/abc/eurojargon/index_en.htm

European Commission is drawing up its policies and proposals for legislation.” It should be noted that civil society in this definition does not necessarily connote societal organisations, since the EC broadened the definition of the civil society in such a way to include all non-state actors, including trade unions and business groups.

The EU NGOs, the actors of the civil dialogue, on the other hand, developed their own definition of civil dialogue (see Civil Society Contact Group⁴⁸ [CSCG], *Civil Dialogue: Making it Work Better* [2006]). This definition is a reaction to the Commission’s definition, which portrays “civil dialogue as a consultation practice covering a wide range of interactions between civil society organisations and institutions” (Ibid., 22). It illustrates these with bullet points:

- Civil dialogue covers various degrees of formalisation, ranging from informal to legally recognised structures, from ad hoc to continuous exchange;
- Civil dialogue also covers different degrees of involvement from the civil society organisations, ranging from information to consultation and active participation;
- Civil dialogue takes place alongside the whole policymaking process which includes the following phases: Agenda setting, Policy definition/decision-making, Implementation, Evaluation, [and] Feedback;
- It involves civil society organisations acting in the public interest (Ibid., 22).

Here, civil society organisations connote the NGOs, in contrast with the Commission’s usage of the term. This definition could disappoint those who perceive—or would prefer to conceptualise—civil dialogue as a form of participation designated for the societal interests. Nevertheless, its definition on the “EU at a Glance” site and the EC’s official website for “Civil Society” mentions neither civil dialogue nor participation. The EC’s “Civil Society page,⁴⁹ instead of elaborating the EC’s relationship with the societal groups, rather explicates its relations with all

⁴⁸ For details, see Chapter 4.

⁴⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/index_fr.htm

“external parties” as consultation practices, which include non-state actors, along with the two Committees within the EU institutional set-up: the European Economic and Social Committee, which represents various socio-economic organisations in Member States, and the Committee of the Regions, which made up of representatives of local and regional authorities. Moreover, on its official website, the Commission refers to the Amsterdam Treaty, instead of the Lisbon Treaty's Article 11 on participatory democracy, as the legal basis of the consultation practices with civil society. Protocol no. 7 on the application of subsidiarity and proportionality, annexed to the Amsterdam treaty, stipulates that “the Commission should consult widely before proposing legislation, and, wherever appropriate, publish consultation documents.”⁵⁰

The Commission outlined the objective of consultation “with stakeholders” to improve the policy outcome at an early stage of policy shaping.⁵¹ For this objective, the EC faces no normative quandary over whether the decision-making process becomes more democratic though involvement of non-state actors in the policy-making process, as the proponents of deliberative democracy in EU studies argue (Eriksen et al 2005; Joerges and Neyer 1997). Rather, it emphasises the role of non-state actors in the policy-making process as improving the policy outcome; hence, it is more compatible with the argument which evaluates the “involvement of the civil society” as “participatory governance”, and the “output legitimacy” orientation (Finke 2007).

EU NGOs, the agents of this process, on the other hand, refute the EC’s position with respect to its relations with non-state actors. While the Commission insists on its approach to EU NGOs as “consultation”, “lobbying”, and interest “representation”, EU NGOs identify its presence in EU politics strictly as “participatory democracy”. For instance, the members of European NGOs stress the structural differences between other interest groups, especially economic lobbying groups, and they refuse

⁵⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/apgen_en.htm

⁵¹ http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/apgen_en.htm

to be treated under the same “conceptual frame” (as interest groups) and to be subject to the same standards the EU institutions employ with other lobbying groups.⁵² The Commission’s attempt to leave no distinction between the interest groups and the EU NGOs creates a tension, which can be observed in the recent reaction of the NGO sector to the European transparency initiative (CSCG 2008).

The regulation of interest intermediation

To regulate its relations with interest groups, the Commission showed its willingness to prepare a code of conduct in the early 1990s, due to the misuse of lobbying activities by some groups, such as using the Commission’s symbols while presenting themselves to the public and distributing the official documents of the EU (Com 1992). In this respect, the Commission examined the situation of lobbying regulations in other countries, as well as the UN. The conclusion was that many states and organisations had no formal rules for lobbying, except Germany, the United States, Canada and the United Nations. Their procedures for regulating interest politics included rules on accreditation, registration, and codes of conduct. Among these measures, the EC avoided an accreditation system; however, it launched a registration system and a code of conduct.

In 2002, the Commission set its minimum principles and standards in accordance with its aims of regulating the consultation with external groups. The five principles of the consultation process were participation, openness, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. The five minimum standards were as follows: first, formulating clear contents for the consultations; second, ensuring that the relevant parties have an opportunity to express their opinions; third, publishing the results of the

⁵² The President of the Social Platform, interview, 2009; and from the civil society group Berger, Nicolas (2004), “Participatory Democracy”, The Federal Trust for Education & Research, Online Paper 09/04. Berger elaborates on participatory democracy and civil dialogue. In this paper, he does not refer to concepts such as interest representation and the Amsterdam Treaty, or to the recent European Transparency Initiative, in which the EC develops its relations with the interest groups and also outlines its relations with civil society organisations within this frame. Nevertheless, European CSOs refer to the Lisbon treaty in order to depict their presence in the EU politics in terms of participatory democracy. They do not refer to other EC initiatives which develop civil dialogue in terms of interest representation, such as the Minimum Principles and ETI. However, this does not mean they ignore or resent it. CSOs register in the registration database. However, they have some critiques of this which are raised by the Civil Society Contact Group and ALTER-EU.

consultations for the general public on the Commission's web portal, “Your Voice in Europe”; fourth, allowing a sufficient time for responses to the consultations; and finally, providing acknowledgement and feedback to those engaging in the consultations.

In the same document, the EC also expressed the aim of establishing a registration system for civil society actors which would lay out the interests they represented, along with the extent of their inclusiveness and representativeness (Com2002:704 17). Indeed, CONNECCS (Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society) was put into practice as a database for civil organisations which involved, or aimed to involve, consultation between the EC and two European committees (the European Economic and Social Committee [EESC] and the Committee of the Regions [CoR]). Registration in the database was voluntary, and the Commission stressed that CONNECCS was not an attempt to create an accreditation system of interest representation. For this reason, registration was not a prerequisite for a civil society organisation to be involved in consultation. Furthermore, the EC stressed that there were no negative consequences for the civil society in terms of their relations with the EU institutions that did not register. Rather, it specified the role of CONNECCS as an “information source for Commission departments and the general public” (Com 2006) 194:7). CONNECCS has become inactive after the launch of the registration system for all interest groups in 2008.

The Commission consulted the *Minimum Standards and Principles* with the Brussels-based NGO networks, and its aim to establish a registration system. Despite the fact that the Commission declared openness and non-accreditation as the tenets of its interest regulation policy, some European organisations indicated that only those who registered in the database should be involved in consultation (Com 2002 704:11). Nevertheless, the Commission rejected the claims of these groups and made clear that it would continue to have an inclusive approach that would enable each individual and association to provide input. Doing this, EC tried to escape from a situation in which “Brussels only talks to Brussels” (Com2002 704:12). In sum, it

was the NGO networks which proposed a restricted consultation mechanism in which their privileges were preserved, while the Commission insisted on an open consultation mechanism. In other words, on the one hand, the European NGO community was pressing for a neo-corporatist arrangement through formalised mechanisms; on the other, the Commission insisted on keeping the NGO community in a neo-pluralist arrangement of the free competition of various interests.

Extending the registration system to all interest groups: the Transparency Initiative

In the second half of the first decade of the 2000s, EC did not change its position on either the accreditation or the idea of a compulsory registration system (Com 2006:7). The EC's interest regulation policy continued to be based on two aspects: a common e-database for all interest groups and a code of conduct. The European Transparency Initiative (Com 2006) instituted the "voluntary register of interest representatives" for all interest groups. This was put into practice in 2007, and the interest groups were required to provide information about their organisational objectives, their sources of funding and the interests they represented. In turn, the EC would automatically send alerts about the consultations for those groups which registered the necessary information in the database. According to the figures of March 2010, there were 2179 interest representatives registered in the EC's voluntary database system.⁵³

Furthermore, it was not only the Commission which employed a register system to regulate interest politics. The EP also devised an e-database for interest groups, and according to the figures accessed at the beginning of March 2010, there were 1778 registered organisations and 2859 accredited lobbyists at the list of EP⁵⁴. However, it was not possible to track the amount of lobbying organisations registered as a certain type in the EP database, since the EP did not follow the same structure of the EC.

⁵³ The address for the "voluntary register of interest representatives" is <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do?locale=en#en>.

⁵⁴ The list of lobbyists accredited by the EP can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/expert/lobbyAlphaOrderByOrg.do?language=EN>.

Nonetheless, the EP and the Commission decided to abandon these differences through establishing a common register of interest representatives in the EU institutions.⁵⁵ While the preparations were continuing, they launched the pragmatic solution of a website which would enable access to the register system of the two institutions.⁵⁶

Table 4. Interest representatives in the voluntary database of the EC: types of interest groups

Professional consultants / law firms involved in lobbying EU institutions	135
law firm	11
public affairs consultant	71
independent public affairs consultant	35
other (similar) organisation	18
“in-house” lobbyists and trade associations active in lobbying	1,201
company	293
professional association	700
trade union	60
other (similar) organisation	148
NGO/think-tank	610
non-governmental organisation/association of NGOs	472
think-tank	59
other (similar) organisation	79
other organisations	233
academic organisation/association of academic organisations	52
representative of religions, churches and communities of conviction	10
association of public authorities	37
other (similar) organisation	134

⁵⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/kallas/doc/joint_statement_register.pdf

⁵⁶ http://europa.eu/lobbyists/interest_representative_registers/index_en.html

Along with the database for the interest groups, the Code of Conduct⁵⁷ constituted an important component of the EC's interest regulation. The Commission first formulated a code of conduct in 1992, which was further improved in the Minimum Principles (Com2002) and ETI (Com2006). In 2008, the EC and EP agreed upon a common Code of Conduct for the regulation of interest politics.⁵⁸

Green Paper on the European Transparency Initiative

The EC launched the European Transparency Initiative (ETI) in relation to the reform of the decision-making structure of the EU. As the ETI puts it: “The commitment to widen opportunities for stakeholders to participate actively in EU policy-shaping is one of the ‘Strategic Objectives 2005-2009’”⁵⁹ Apart from bringing the e-database for the interest groups to the fore of the EC interest regulation policy, most importantly, the ETI introduces lobbying as a new concept, claiming that it is a legitimate activity in a democracy: “Lobbying is a legitimate part of the democratic system, regardless of whether it is carried out by individual citizens or companies, civil society organisations and other interest groups or firms working on behalf of third parties (public affairs professionals, think tanks and lawyers).” While it defines lobbying as “all activities carried out with the objective of influencing the policy formulation and decision-making processes of the European-institutions”, it describes lobbyists “as persons carrying out such activities, working in a variety of organisations such as public affairs consultancies, law firms, NGOs, think tanks,

⁵⁷ Code of Conduct (High-Level Working Group on a common register and code of conduct for lobbyists) accessed at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/transparency/regrin/welcome.do?locale=en#en>.

⁵⁸ The Code of Conduct established that interest representatives should comply with the following principles: always identifying themselves by name and the entity or entities they work for or represent; declaring their interests and, where applicable, the clients or members they represent; never obtaining or trying to obtain information, or any decision, dishonestly; never claiming any formal relationship with the Parliament or the Commission in their dealings with third parties, nor misrepresenting themselves as to the effect of registration to mislead third parties and/or EU staff; ensuring that, to the best of their knowledge, information which they provide is complete, up-to-date and not misleading; not selling to third parties copies of documents obtained from the Parliament or Commission; not inducing the EU staff, or Members' assistants or trainees, to contravene rules and standards of behaviour applicable to them; if employing former EU staff or Members' assistants or trainees, respecting their obligation to abide by the rules and confidentiality requirements which apply to them; observing any rules laid down on the rights and responsibilities of former Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission; and informing their clients of their obligations as lobbyists towards the Commission and the Parliament.

⁵⁹ Partnership for European Renewal.

corporate lobby units ('in house representatives') or trade associations" (Com2006:5). Moreover, it reiterates the Commission's traditional approach of treating all groups under the same category.

However, lobbying is not free from shortfalls that could damage the legitimate representation of interests, such as "unlawful lobbying practices—fraud and corruption—abusing the openness policy, and misleading the decision-making process". The quality of the information is also a concern, since insufficient information provided by the lobbyists could have negative consequences. Furthermore, the ETI refers to the debates on legitimacy of European NGOs' lobbying, since some NGOs are funded by the EC, and questions their representativeness and transparency. Nevertheless, NGOs are critical towards the current system of representation; little room to manoeuvre is left in lobbying due to the financial dominance of the corporate sector with which they have to compete.

Moreover, the presentation of the lobbying, "regardless of whether it is carried out by individual citizens or companies, civil society organisations and other interest groups or firms working on behalf of third parties (public affairs professionals, think tanks and lawyers)", reveals the change in the EC's policy on legitimacy. Traditionally, the consensus among the EU institutions asserted that the legitimacy of the EU rested on territorial representation, as the EP stresses: "the decision-making process in the EU is legitimised by the elected representatives of the European peoples."⁶⁰ When the indirect legitimacy of EU governance began to be criticised, society's participation in EU decision-making and EU governance was presented as a remedy. The Commission posits three ways of interaction between the EU institutions and the society: participation in EP elections, the institutionalised advisory bodies of the EESC and Committee of the Regions, and less formalised direct contacts of the societal organisations (Com2002, 704:4-5). Consequently, the scholars explore the question of whether the will of the people is reflected in EU decision-making through the aforementioned channels. While one camp examines this with the input-oriented

⁶⁰ A5-0399/2001: [original reference]

perspectives (the authentic participation of the deliberative school: Neyer, Eriksen, and Armstrong), the second camp concentrates on the output aspect of legitimacy, such as the solutions to the common problems of society. Though they differ in their approach towards conceptualising legitimacy, they merge in their analysis of the consequences of society's involvement in European politics. Nevertheless, with the ETI, the EC proposes a new understanding of legitimacy which abandons the normative necessity of the people's participation in politics. It inaugurates a new debate over whether the lobbying activities, regardless of the actors carrying it out, legitimise EU politics.

Clarifying the boundaries of interest representation and interest representativeness

The EC opened up the transparency initiative and the system of registration for interest representation to the discussion of the "stakeholders". The feedback proved that there was a need to clarify the activities which did not fall under the category of *interest representation* (COM 2008:323). Accordingly, the EC emphasises that the following will not be considered to be interest representation: "legal and other professional advice which was related to the right to a fair trial of a client; the activities of the social partners within the scope of social dialogue; and the Commission's direct request for factual information, data or expertise, and participation in the consultative committees by the request of the Commission to provide expert knowledge" (Com 2008 323). Furthermore, the individuals and public authorities cannot be claim to be interest representatives, and the social partners can only fall into the category of interest representation when they want to promote an interest outside the scope of the social dialogue. In the end, the Commission also tries to solve the confusion it created in introducing the concept of lobbying: "All interest representatives should register, including such entities that do not consider themselves 'lobbyists'. Registration shows that an organisation represents interests. It does not mean that those registering can be labelled 'lobbyists.'⁶¹ The lobbying activities are described as "contacting members or officials of the EU institutions, preparing, circulating and communicating letters, information material or

⁶¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/docs/reg/FAQ_en.pdf: European Transparency Initiative (ETI) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Commission's Register for interest representatives.

argumentation and position papers, organising events, meetings or promotional activities (in the offices or in other venues) in support of an objective of interest representation” (Com 2007 :127; Com 2008 323).

One of the aims of this dissertation is to examine whether the practices of civil dialogue and participatory democracy discourse at the EU level correspond to the normative understanding of democracy, in such a way that the civil society participation contributes to EU democracy. In this respect, the EC interest regulation policy has been elaborated, since the non-state actors try to influence the EU policy-making on this basis, and the societal actors are no exception. Scholars of deliberative democracy who concentrate on the participation of civil society have neglected this dimension, focusing on such ad hoc deliberation mechanisms as the Convention on the Constitution of Europe. Instead, scholars of public policy and law (Obradovic 2006; Curtin 1999; Armstrong 2002; Greenwood 2007; and Smismans 2003) attempt to establish the link between interest regulation and democracy. Nevertheless, these scholars fall short of developing a critique of the EC’s interest regulation policies by, for instance, missing the crucial point that the EC tried to conceptualise civil society in its broadest sense to entail all non-state actors, and moreover, lobbying as civil dialogue, if not participation. The more serious question is, then, the extent to which the Commission’s approach entails an understanding of politics which excludes the politics, trying to constitute a system of decision-making open to experts and expert knowledge.

5.4. The neglected role of the EESC in European Civil Society Discourse

The EESC is a consultative body in the EU institutional setup, along with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). It was established in 1957 as a corporatist arrangement, with the idea that the representatives of capital and labour could take part in the European integration process (Jeffery 2002).⁶² Currently, the EESC is composed of three groups, the representatives of employers (group I), employees

⁶² Jeffery, Charlie (2002) “Social and Regional Interests: ESC and the Committee of the Regions” in John Peterson and Michael Schackleton (eds.) *The Institutions of the European Union*, Oxford.

(group II) and the other various interests (group III, which includes farmers, professional associations and consumer groups). The members of the EESC are nominated by the national governments, and the number of members is shaped by the population of the states.

Although the EESC was established as a consultative body, which would enable channelling capital and labour interests in decision-making, it has recently redefined its institutional identity as the bridge between “Europe and organised civil society” (EESC 2009).⁶³ Smismans (2003) explains this as the EESC’s strategy to avoid being marginalised in the EU institutional setup. It is debateable whether the EESC could manage to strengthen its position with this move. Acknowledgement of this new identity has not come from the EU institutions, civil society organisations or academia. Nevertheless, it can be argued that it has had an impact on the civil society discourse of the EC in two aspects. First, it brings to the fore the argument that civil society can contribute to the legitimacy of the EU governance at large, and this argument has indeed been adopted by the EC. Second, the EC also fulfils the content of this discourse in borrowing the civil society (organisation) definition and the criteria for the legitimate CSO from the EESC’s work.

The EESC suggests that “ensuring the participation of grassroots-level players, through their representative organisations, in policy-shaping and decision-making processes is therefore a key instrument to reinforce the democratic legitimacy of public institutions and their work and activities.”⁶⁴ Nevertheless, instead of elaborating this through the deliberative approach, it moves to a more instrumental approach, concentrating on the functional roles of the CSOs, namely, advertising EU governance and creating a European identity. It argues that these will enhance the people’s acceptance of the EU project. First, in this respect, the EESC posits that CSOs play important roles as the agents of democracy and mobilising of the public for European integration (EESC 1999). Second, it suggests that a pan-European

⁶³ EESC (2009), *The EESC: a Bridge Between Europe and Organised Civil Society*.

⁶⁴ Taken from http://www.eesc.europa.eu/sco/intro/index_en.asp.

identity, in addition to and beyond national identity, could emerge through participation:

...additional identity criteria are required to create a European identity. If European citizenship is defined simply as the sum of all national citizenships, then a “European” must be the sum (or synthesis) of several national identity criteria, which all derive from a common tradition and the values of democracy and human rights...This means, however, that the democratic process at European level—even more so than at national level—must provide a range of participatory structures in which all citizens, with their different identities and in accordance with their different identity criteria, can be represented and which reflect the heterogeneous nature of European identity...The European Parliament is elected by Europe’s citizens in their capacity as national citizens (residing in a particular Member State), i.e. exercising their democratic rights as part of their national (territorial) identity...But people’s identity is also defined by membership of interest groups in the diverse shape of civil society organisations. These identity criteria, relating to people’s role in civil society organisations, are not covered by representation in the EP. It is precisely these identity criteria, however, which are taken into account by the Committee as the representative of civil society organisations; this enables the Committee to promote democratisation at the European level, and to show Parliament that it provides genuine added value in the democratic European decision-making process. The Committee cannot compete with European Parliament, in power terms alone, but it complements Parliament’s legitimacy in a way that makes sense. (EESC 1999:6)

The EESC’s definition of civil society, civil society organisations, participatory democracy and civil dialogue

The EESC suggests a negative definition of civil society, resting on the explanation of what the civil society is not instead of what it is: “Civil society is a collective term for all types of social action, by individuals or groups that do not emanate from the state and are not run by it.” In other words, the EESC suggests that ontologically, civil society covers the space in which the state is absent. Moreover, it depicts the CSOs in abstract terms as the sum of “all organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens” (EESC 1999). What merits attention in these definitions is that even though CSOs are illustrated as all forms of non-state organisations, they are assigned a mediator role between society and the public authorities, considering that they operate on the basis of general interest. In

other words, despite the fact that the EESC defines the civil society in Lockean terms, as a social ontology able to organise and function external to and (more importantly) without the existence of the state, it distances itself from this liberal approach in its CSO definition in favour of a Hegelian definition. In it, the civil society takes public roles in mediating the public institutions with the citizens, and acts on the basis of the public interest.

Although the EC provides a definition of civil dialogue which entails the “consultation” practices in terms of the interest regulation policy of the EC, the EESC tries to elaborate a more detailed definition of civil dialogue, emphasising the difference between “participation” and “consultation”. The EC has had a tendency to equate civil dialogue with consultation practices, for which it uses “participation”, “consultation” and “interest mediation” interchangeably, and in some cases as synonyms. For instance, the EC website for civil society does not include any references or explanations for participation and participatory democracy; however, it illustrates the history of interest representation in EU politics as the form of interactions with civil society. On the other hand, while the EESC defines “consultation” as “open to all the organisations having expertise” in their field, it describes “participation” as an “opportunity for an organisation to intervene formally and actively in the collective decision-making process, in the general interest of the Union and its citizens” (SC/023 2006:5). To the EESC, both the consultation and the participation practice can “enable civil society organisations to be part and parcel of policy framing and preparing decisions on the development and future of the Union and its policies” (SC/023 2006:5).

The conclusion is that while the Commission adopted the civil society and civil society organisation definition developed by the EESC, it was hesitant to adopt its civil dialogue definition. The reason for this is that the Commission was against the CSOs’ formal involvement in the EU decision-making process. The EESC was suggesting a structured mechanism for functional representation, a neo-corporatist interest representation regime, which would also require accreditation for some of

the groups. Nevertheless, this contradicted the EC's traditional policy on interest regulation, which is based on the principles of openness and non-accreditation, a neo-pluralist interest representation regime.

Nonetheless, the involvement of CSOs in decision-making was not free from any problems. Within the EU institutions and academic milieu, two main challenges to the legitimacy of CSOs' involvement in EU politics were addressed (Smismans 2003; EESC 1999). The first questioned the transparency and internal governance of the CSOs, and the second problematised the representativeness of any CSO claiming the title of European civil society organisation. Having noticed the problems in the "civil dialogue", the EESC formulated another strategy to strengthen its institutional position, since the Commission did not have a clear criterion of representativeness, a tool and an authorised institution which would determine whether any organisations met the criterion. The EESC authorised itself as the institution for this task, so that it could "give the dialogue with OCS greater credibility by enhancing the legitimacy of these organisations and networks" (SC/023 2006:7). Nevertheless, the question remained what the legitimacy of the EESC would have to be to have discretion in determining the legitimacy of the organisations, even though the EESC presented its new institutional identity as the bridge between Europe and the citizens, referring to the Nice Treaty.

To the EESC, only those cases where the civil society organisations engaged formally in the decision-making representativeness became a condition. On the other hand, consultation practices did not require representativeness criteria since the consultation focused on "hearing the points of view and collecting the expertise of civil society players" (SC/023 2006:5). Argued in this way, therefore, there should be no representativeness problem for the CSOs in civil dialogue, since the civil society "participation", as the EESC suggested, still does not exist in the EU decision-making structure.

The EESC emphasised that the representativeness of the civil society organisations was problematised in three aspects: whether they represented the individual interests of their members instead of the general interest; whether they had transparent internal governance; and whether they could exert a real influence on the process of formulating policies and decisions (SC/023 2006:4).

In its 2002 *Opinion on the White Paper on Governance*, the EESC identified nine criteria for a European organisation. According to this paper, a European organisation “should exist permanently at Community level; provide direct access to expertise; represent general interests that tally with the interests of European society; comprise bodies that are recognised at Member State level as representative of particular interests; have member organisations in most of the EU member states; provide for accountability of its members; have authority to represent and act at European level; be independent, not bound by instructions from outside bodies; be transparent, especially financially and in its decision-making structures” (SC/023, 2006:5).

In 2006, the EESC reconsidered the criteria of representativeness it formulated in the *Opinion on the White Paper on Governance*, proposing three main criteria: the provisions in the organisation’s statute and their implementation; the organisation’s support base in the Member States; and qualitative criteria. (SC/023 2006).

a) *The statute and its implementation*: Although the EESC introduced having a statute as one of the criteria for the representativeness of the CSOs,⁶⁵ it did not justify this argument that “European civil society” should have a statute in order to prove its representativeness. This related to a “normative variant” of the conceptualisation of European civil society which imagined a “certain form of civil society”; hence, it was exclusionary. For instance, not all the European NGO networks had statutes.

⁶⁵ According to EESC, the statute for a European Organisation should contain the following: “the association’s areas of activity and purpose; membership criteria; the operating procedures, which must be democratic, transparent, and include the accountability of the Board vis-a-vis its member organisations; the financial obligations of the member organisations; that an economic audit and an activity report must be submitted annually and be available to the public” (SC/023 2006:10).

While the Social Platform and Concord (the network development NGOs) had statutes, Green 10, Human Rights Networks did not attempt to initiate a statute until 2010. Moreover, in addition to the exclusionary potential, the statute requirement also entailed a threat to the polymorphic character of civil society, harmonising the organisational frames through unification of their bureaucratic structures.

b. The organisations' support base in the Member States: The EESC's second main criterion for a European civil society organisation was the scope of the organisation's membership. According to the EESC, a European organisation must have had "member organisations in the vast majority of Member States", and "it must be represented in more than half of EU Member States" (SC/023 2006:12). This was further elaborated in the following problematic way: "The guiding principle should be that, whether it be national or transnational, an organisation's membership in a European organisation should not only meet the membership criteria provided for in that European organisation's statute, but should also meet the criteria stipulated in the member organisation's statute" (Ibid., 12). Therefore, the EESC did not only harmonise a "European associational structure"; it also aimed to create a similar structure in the national organisations. "A national member organisation should adopt the same practice as the European organisation to which it belongs, making public its statute and activity report, which mirrors the organisation's structure and operating methods. It would be desirable, as required by the Council of Europe, to know the number of individual members who are directly and indirectly connected with the organisation."

c. Qualitative Criteria: The qualitative criteria were the most problematic in that they excluded "new-comers" to the system, and aimed to create a "Europeanised civil society" in which groups that do not follow the rules of the game could never be integrated. The qualitative criteria, as EESC elaborated them, "referred to an organisation's experience and ability to represent citizens' interest in its dealings with the European institutions, and the confidence and reputation it enjoys with these institutions on the one hand, and with other sections of European organised civil

society on the other” (SC/023 200612). Hence, to the EESC, a European CSO should prove capable of providing input to the system, and furthermore, this should not be questioned within the CSO community.

In sum, the EESC tried to legitimise the CSOs’ practice of involvement in EU decision-making, which in turn could empower itself as the “bridge between Europe and the citizens”. The representativeness of the EP was not questioned since the MPs were elected, and were thus held to represent the “people” and the general will. The corporate representation was not a problem, since it was clear which companies were represented, even if that meant representing the interests of their shareholders. Nevertheless, the civil society organisations were not elected bodies, and not all the people which the sector claimed to represent could be shown to be members. For instance, an organisation which claimed to stand for the rights of the elderly could not present evidence that all elderly people supported its activities. This, then, became the question posed by the political authority: Why should the political system take CSOs seriously?

Nevertheless, the EESC’s ambition of becoming a gateway to the legitimacy of civil society organisations and civil dialogue has not found support from academic circles, EU institutions and European civil society organisations. Smismans (2003) argued that the EESC had the objective of not marginalising the institutional setup, due to the fact that interest groups abandoned the EESC, attempting to instead directly influence the Commission and Parliament. On the other hand, the EP criticised the EESC’s existence; for instance, some MEPs proposed its abolition, claiming that the EESC functions “without a democratic mandate” and “helps to strengthen corporatism at the expense of democracy”.⁶⁶ Some NGOs (e.g. human rights organisations) in the Human Rights and Democracy Network, along with environmental organisations in Green 10, decided not to participate in the Liaison Group, which was established by the EESC in 2004 to formalise the civil dialogue

⁶⁶ *European Voice*, 11.10.2007: <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/imported/eesc-abolition-/58460.aspx>

(CCCG 2006:9). The NGO networks that participated in the Liaison Group tried to gain “political and symbolic” benefit from the situation of engaging a formal relation with a EU institution (Ibid., 9), especially the NGO families that prioritised the sectoral dialogue.

5.5. European Parliament and Civil Society

Smismans (2003) argues that since the civil society discourse comprises elements which could challenge the territorial representation, the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions were critical of it. Nonetheless, the EP could not remain silent with respect to the discourse of “connecting with the citizens”. Instead of adopting the EC and the EESC’s approach, since it posed a threat to its institutional power, it reproduced its own discourse on civil society, based on the premises of representative democracy:

Because it is directly elected, Parliament is the European Union institution best qualified to take up the challenge of keeping open the channels of communication with European Union citizens. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are in regular contact with citizens and are directly accountable to voters...All European Union institutions of course understand the importance of dialogue with citizens as part of the European Union project. Nevertheless, their responses were essentially to do with the debate on Europe’s institutional architecture. Although this issue is vital, it is also important to focus on the day-to-day concerns of ordinary people...The European Parliament therefore now proposes involving citizens in a permanent dialogue on the European Union's future.⁶⁷

The EP developed its challenge to the EC on the civil dialogue and civil society discourse in two aspects. The first one concerns the different approaches of the respective institutions on interest regulation policy. The EP and EC have different approaches on the structured and formalised dialogue with civil society. The EC prefers to regulate relations with civil society on the basis of the principles of openness and transparency, and rejects having an accredited mechanism with the interest groups. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that the EC’s attempts (e.g. preparing an internet-based registration system and a code of conduct) have been

⁶⁷<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/staticDisplay.do?language=EN&id=189&pageRank=1>

regarded as de facto accreditation (Balme and Charney 2008) or a system that lies somewhere on the continuum between structured and open (Conny Reuter 2009, interview). Contrary to the EC's strong rejection of the accreditation of interest intermediation, the EP adopts an accreditation system, which includes the mere access to EP buildings (five or more days per year). Moreover, the EP publishes the names of accredited lobbyists on its website; however, this list only includes the names of badge holders and their institutions. Compared with the Commission's interest representation system, it too does not include any information about the lobbyists' interests, or the organisational features the lobbyist represents.

Second, the EP advocates a different ontology of civil society, criticising the neo-pluralist arrangement of the EC, and the neo-corporatist suggestions of the EESC. The EP claims that it also favours an open "dialogue"; however, it interprets openness as something other than interest intermediation. It challenges the conceptualisation of the sector-based civil society approach: "Furthermore, Parliament aims to transcend the traditional sector-specific structures of civil society (social affairs, the environment, development, education, and so on), so as to enable different points of view to be heard and a broad range of options to emerge."⁶⁸ Instead, the EP launched two AGORAs, as an alternative way of "combining the voices of European citizens with their elected representatives",⁶⁹ which aimed to present an alternative to the sector-wise civil dialogue implemented by the Commission. The first AGORA was held on the Future of Europe (8-9 November 2007), and the second on climate change (12-13 June 2008), both of them in Brussels with the participation of around 500 NGOs.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the institutional power struggle over the "civil society discourse" led to the emergence of different and competing conceptualisations of European civil society. The Commission's discourse has been to some extent influenced by the marginal institution in the EU setup, the EESC. The

⁶⁸ www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/staticDisplay.do?id=189&pageRank=3&language=EN

⁶⁹ www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/staticDisplay.do?language=EN&id=189&pageRank=2

EP, however, has transformed the discourse in terms of its institutional interests. For instance, the AGORAs introduced a different definition of European civil society, transcending the sector-specific Brussels based pan-European civil society focus. The irony is that on the one hand, the EP emphasises that representative democracy is the unique source of EU legitimacy, and therefore it presents the AGORAs with respect to representative democracy, in which the elected representatives “listen” to the citizens without necessarily giving them a vote. However, on the other hand, EP borrows a spatial term—AGORA—from ancient Greece, where it was used to denote “direct democracy”. With the AGORA initiative, the EP proved that it was not indifferent to civil society’s discourse of involvement in EP politics. The question is the extent to which the strengthened role of the EP, in the Lisbon treaty, can impact the ontological evolution of civil society and the discourse of connecting with the citizens.

5.6. Translating the (European) Civil Society Discourse to Eastern Europe

The previous sections elaborated the Commission’s attempts at promoting a European civil society. It revealed that the discourse of civil society appeared first in the EC’s interest regulation policy and governance turn, where all non-state actors are involved in the EU decision-making consultation process, and second, in the Commission’s initiatives for “connecting with the people”, i.e. Plan D, communication policy, Debate Europe and the Europe for Citizens Programme. While the Commission envisioned a pan-European civil society, i.e. networks of NGOs, in the first case, in the second, it concentrated on mingling and mobilising the trans-European society, namely the horizontal actions among the national civil societies with the aim of establishing a European public sphere, which would lead the emergence of a European identity. Hence, in both cases the Commission conceptualised the European civil society as a phenomenon which was explained by cross-border or border-transcending actions. Nonetheless, evaluated in this way, the European civil society conception excludes the state-society relations at the national level. For instance, the liberal intergovernmentalism of Moravcsik (1993) and the social movements perspective of Della Porta (2007) and Imig and Tarrow (2001)

show some similarities; in both, societal groups address the national governments in order to impact European policies.

Moreover, there is a further option through which the civil society in Europe is Europeanised: it is the emergence of the hegemony of an understanding of a certain format of state-society relations in the European space, as an ideal type. Particularly in the enlargement policy, the Commission promotes the development of civil society as a part of the preparation for membership, i.e. a part of the implementation of accession reforms. It also aims to attain the consent of the people for membership and the implementation of these reforms. Nevertheless, it is quite interesting that the Commission avoids focusing on this policy of developing “civil society” in the latest members and the candidate countries in its general conceptualisation of the ECS. This could have been one of the crucial components of the EC’s civil society discourse, so that it could transcend the limited European Civil Society (ECS) definition, for instance, which is restricted to the “Brussels-based” NGOs and the cross-border interaction between the national civil societies. Nonetheless, it neglected the fact that its strategy of supporting the CSOs at the national level aims to shape the state-society relations in the new member states; hence, it can be argued that the EU tries to foster a common understanding of the state and society relations within Europe.

The civil society discourse holds an important place in the Enlargement Strategy. For instance, regarding Croatia, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as in Kosovo, the role of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the enlargement policy are defined as “crucial in determining the pace and quality of the accession process, as well as generating public support for accession.”⁷⁰ Though the Commission stressed that the task of “strengthening the role and influence of civil society in the enlargement countries...primarily lies with the countries themselves”, it set out a strategy of

⁷⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/civil-society-development/index_en.htm

support for civil society development in these countries. In this respect, first, it has assisted the civil society projects under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). This entailed “improving consultations with civil society representatives and continuing work towards other measures to bolster civil society, for example by improving donor coordination and continuing work towards visa-free travel for citizens of the candidates and potential candidates.”⁷¹ Second, the Commission decided to establish a “permanent dialogue” between CSOs and the new and possible member countries. This conclusion was taken at the conference *"Civil Society Development in Southeast Europe: Building Europe Together"* in Brussels on 17-18 April 2008, which gathered representatives from the “candidate” and “potential candidate” countries. The other conclusion from this conference was to “establish a virtual platform for CSOs from the candidates and potential candidates and the EU, to enhance dialogue, exchange good practices, search for partners and eventually develop specific projects.”

⁷¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/civil-society-development/index_en.htm

5.7. Concluding Remarks

This chapter elaborated the Commission's discourse on European civil society and connecting with the citizens. It endeavoured to discuss these two in relation to each other. In this respect, it examined the Commission's following initiatives: Plan D, Europe for Citizens, Communication Policy, civil dialogue with non-state actors, and the Commission's interest intermediation policy. It elaborated the historical background of integration of societal organisations in EU politics, as well as EU institutions' attempts to establish (European) civil society (organisations). It particularly drew attention to those concepts used by the EU institutions in their approach to ECS, such as participatory democracy and active citizenship. Three conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the Commission's civil society discourse: (1) the definition, role and constituents of the ECS is contextual and contingent on the Commission's use; (2) while developing policies about incorporating the societal actors to EU decision-making processes, the Commission has been under the impact of its interest intermediation and neo-corporatist policies (social dialogue); and (3) the discourse transformed and adapted to different contexts, along with the technologies and strategies it developed and transmitted to other locales.

ECS as a contextually constructed concept: Although the Commission held a normative ambition to promote participatory democracy as an additional source of legitimacy to representative democracy, it has not developed a solid definition of "civil society" and has never explained why the involvement of civil society would enhance the legitimacy of EU governance. Three different understandings of the conceptualisation of civil society have been outlined above, namely the socialising impacts of civil society, civil society as a domain of different rationality. The Commission has not referred to any of these understandings in order to justify its discourse on civil society. It has instead, first, defined civil society on the basis of the nature and composition of the actors: "This is the collective name for all kinds of organisations and associations that are not part of government but that represent

professions, interest groups or sections of society. It includes (for example) trade unions, employers' associations, environmental lobbies and groups representing women, farmers, people with disabilities and so on" (Com, 2000). In the early 1990s, when "civil society" as a category did not even appear in EU jargon, these organisations were described as "non-profit making organisations". In the second half of the 1990s, they were called "voluntary organisations" due to the Commission's interest in organisations operating in social policy. The term NGO appeared in Commission terminology in 2000; however, by this time the Commission had a broader perspective and tended to cover all sectors of civic organisations. It was in 2001, with the *White Paper on Governance*, that the Commission started to use the concept of civil society. The *White Paper* tried to cover all non-state actors under the pragmatic category of "civil society organisation", a category which it borrowed from the 1999 EESC document. However, it introduced several ambiguities. For instance, on the one hand the EU NGOs were regarded as a synonym for European civil society; on the other, the trade unions and employer's associations, and even churches and communities, were identified as civil society organisations. Furthermore, in 1992, the Commission continued to collect these groups under the overarching category of "interest groups", when it comes to regulation of interest politics.

Second, the Commission's civil society discourse rests on a negative definition of "civil society", in that it describes civil society in terms of what it is not; it is the non-state space. Third, defining the civil society in accordance with the mentality of its constituents, i.e. the institutions, it excludes the non-organisational and un-institutionalised space of "civil society", such as social movements and media. Despite the fact that non-institutionalised social movements are not considered constituent of European civil society, they fit into the Commission's negative definition of civil society as "non-state" space. Though they could also be institutionalised, they use different strategies of collective action and societal mobilisation, such as protest and contention (Della Porta and Diani 1999; Imig and Tarrow 2001). Fourth, this definition avoids defining civil society as a space where a

different form of rationality could evolve (Cohen and Arato 1992; Habermas 1996). Fifth, the Commission's civil society discourse leads to confusion, in that it equates civic organisations with business-oriented organisations. Although some conceptions of civil society draw a clear demarcation between the state and non-state actors (Jensen 2006; Cohen and Arato 1992; Habermas 1996), the Commission mingles societal groups and economic interest groups.

In sum, European civil society is a politically constructed discourse; and the context and process through which it has evolved is also integral to its constitution. In other words, the Commission's approach to civil society, its shifting terminology for the civil society actors, its shifting strategy for the actors to be included within civil society, and its attempts to fit the discourse into the changing context, are all intrinsic to the evolution of its discourse on European civil society.

Repercussions of the established practices: The second conclusion is that while developing policies about incorporating the societal actors to EU decision-making processes, the Commission has been under the impact of its interest intermediation and neo-corporatist policies (social dialogue). In other words, the Commission has tried to adapt prior knowledge into the newly-emerged context; however, this has caused some problems. Initially, the implications of this can be seen in the Commission's inconsistent and shifting terminology in naming this process. Though the Commission termed the interactions with the societal groups as *civil dialogue*, the same procedures have been also considered *interest representation* and *lobbying*. Consequently, EU NGOs' contact with EU institutions has gone under different names, such as *consultation*, *participation* and *interest articulation*.

The involvement of extra-political and/or non-political entities in the EU's political mechanism is not new. For instance, the trade unions and the employer's take part in the decision and law-making processes in social policy as "social partners" under social dialogue. On the other hand, representatives of businesses, law firms and consultation firms have a lobbying presence in EU politics. Furthermore, they join

the expert advisory committees by participating in policy- and law-making. Nevertheless, these existing practices of involving extra-political and/or non-political entities as social partners and interest groups hinge upon the development of civil dialogue as an independent practice of civil society's participation in EU politics. "Civil dialogue" is not developing as an independent initiative with its own dynamics. It has, however, started under the influence of the interest intermediation policies with the trade unions and employers' associations, and with the lobbying activities of the business groups.

There are significant differences with the civil society organisations and the "social partners" and corporate interest groups. For instance, social dialogue has a quasi-legal base, and the representativeness of the trade unions and the business associations are not questioned by the Commission. Nevertheless, one of the central critiques of the EU NGOs is that it is not obvious whom they represent. Though the Lisbon treaty provided a constitutional basis for civil dialogue under the participatory democracy clause (Article 11), it does not guarantee the right of a societal organisation to participate in EU politics with no qualifications. To prove their legitimacy as a civil society entrepreneur, each organisation should prove its "representativeness" and "transparency". On the one hand, the Commission is under the irresistible temptation to use the discourse of civil dialogue and civil society as a cure for the democratic legitimacy problem, while expecting that participation through the EU NGOs would create a sort of European identity. On the other, it questions the legitimacy of organisations which aim to influence EU politics. In other words, the medicine for the legitimacy crisis—a strengthened role for EU NGOs—seems to be used as a mere placebo cure: to hide the symptoms, or to create an illusion, but not to cure the sickness.

Furthermore, it would be problematic to define the relations between the EU institutions and EU NGOs as a "lobbying" activity. The initial implication of this view is that EU NGOs are considered mere lobbyists. Recent research has shown that Brussels-based lobbying activities have been carried out mostly by the corporate

sector until very recently, and the corporate sector still has an unarguable asymmetrical influence in lobbying activity (Greenwood 2007). Lobbying entails all kinds of activities which aim to influence policy-making processes, and this is the motivation of both EU NGOs and the corporate sector. Nevertheless, the problem starts when all activities of extra-political political actors are reduced to the categorical definition of “interest articulation” (the partners of social dialogue are not considered interest groups by EU institutions, since social dialogue has a quasi-legal basis). Furthermore, this approach considers both the corporate sector and EU NGOs as categorically equivalent entities, treating them as interest articulators. The question is whether the corporate sector and EU NGOs defend the same kind of interest (i.e. profit maximisation vs. welfare maximisation), so that they can compete in the same league of interest competition. When it comes to the comparison of EU NGOs with trade unions, they share similar views and it is largely possible to draw parallels between them. However, compared with trade unions, EU NGOs represent a greater diversity of groups and claims, and several EU NGOs engage in issues beyond the scope of social policy and labour rights. For this reason, they too cannot be defined as “social partners”.

Transformation and adaptation of the discourse to different contexts:: Drawing a historical inquiry into the development of the Commission’s ECS discourse, this chapter, third, shows how the discourse transformed and adapted to different contexts, along with the technologies and strategies it developed and transmitted to other locales (given the intense motivation of EU institutions to transfer the discourse to new, prospective, and neighbour states of the EU). The incorporation of the EU NGOs was first considered in the context of the interest intermediation in the early 1990s; then, it was related to the Commission’s ambition to advance its power in social policies (in this case the Commission’s interest in the voluntary sector). At the beginning of the 2000s, the Commission integrated the discourse of two parallel issues: the governance turn and connecting with the citizens. Developed by the World Bank, the governance turn presented a new style of governing, a more plural and inclusive system, in that it was open to the contribution of multi-level actors and

stakeholders in the decision-making (Shore 2009:3). I argue that this discourse was translated to EU governing while the EU was experiencing a legitimacy problem, the problem of attaining consent for EU governing. I further argue that the Commission not only translated the discourse on governance from the World Bank, but also implemented the discourse of participation as a strategy of winning the consent of the people.

Moreover, the Commission's discourse has been shaped, developed and transformed in terms of the conflicting strategies of the EU institutions. Whereas the EESC has been successful at influencing the Commission's discourse, the European Parliament preferred to be indifferent—if not hostile—at the beginning, later challenging the content and procedures of the discourse. As a result, first, the institutional power game between the Commission and Parliament was extended to the ECS discourse. Second, challenging the Commission's Brussels-oriented and sector-based conception, the Parliament brought in an alternative perspective. For instance, the EESC has played an active role in inscribing the norms and procedures which would be applied to CSOs, which would include involvement in the Commission-level consultations. It formulated the representative criteria for NGOs, their mode of conduct. Furthermore, the civil society definition of the Commission is borrowed from the EESC's communication to the Commission. Since both the EESC and the Commission do not derive legitimacy from territorial representation, it can be argued that the two institutions were aligned. Nonetheless, this alignment contradicted the interests of the European Parliament and Committee of the Regions. These two institutions did not support the Commission's civil society discourse at the outset; however, they also developed their own approach to civil society, refuting a sectoral approach. For instance, the Parliament initiated two citizens' AGORAs: the AGORAs were designed as meetings of collective deliberation, though one that did not orient decision-making.

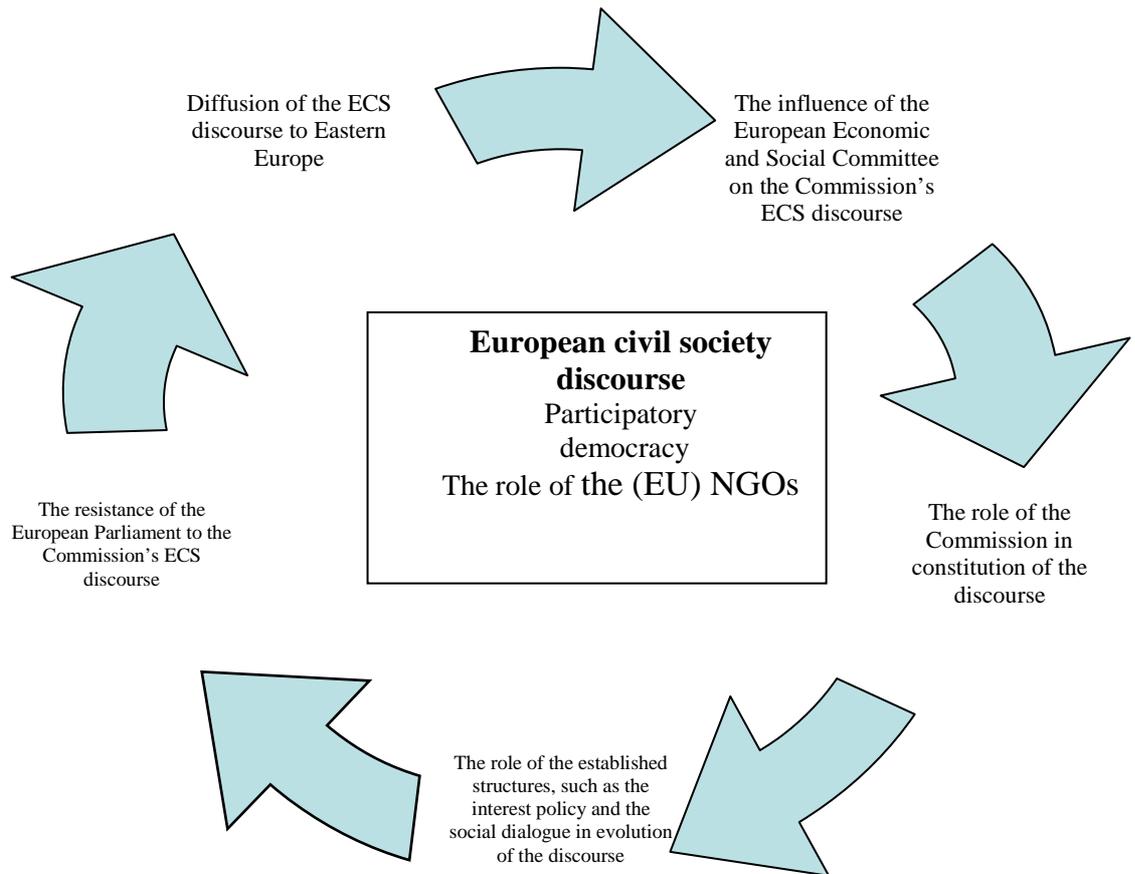


Figure 1. Transmission of the ECS discourse within Europe

Before continuing with the analysis of the Social Platform, we should evaluate whether the Commission's discourse aims at entrenching the procedures of democracy, or reproducing the technologies of European governing. The following table depicts this question. It assesses four different interpretations (deliberative participation, participatory governance, hegemony and governmentality) of the Commission's discourse.

Table 6. Assessments on the European Commission’s Discourse and European Civil Society

		Deliberative Participation	Governance participation	Hegemony	Governmentality
<p>-Connecting with the citizens</p> <p>- Plan D - Europe for Citizens - European Commission’s Communication policy</p> <p>Consent and identity building</p> <p>Legitimising through consent and identity</p>	<p>EU NGOs as technologies of EU governing</p>	<p>Introduces participation as a mode of conduct—conduct of conduct (how one relates to others to solve social problems). This conceives of deliberation not as a democratising category but as a political rationality.</p>	<p>The attempts of EU governing with the citizens; the attempts to empower the citizens.</p> <p>It shows that “governance” is not merely about problem solving.</p>	<p>Convincing the masses; EU NGOs are used to mobilise common opinion.</p> <p>The role of the EU NGOs is the symbolic production of participation in EU legitimacy, i.e. self-governing society.</p> <p>The EU is a politically constituted project; however, Europeans do not accept its governing yet.</p>	<p>Technologies: art of government beyond the national territories.</p> <p>Production of a political discourse and its translation a) within the institutions; b) to other locales.</p> <p>The use of the participation discourse as an ethical constitutive element: a) the self; b) the organisation; c) the state/society relations.</p> <p>The use of participation as a method to discover European identity.</p> <p>EU funding as a disciplining technology.</p> <p>The institutional power game and the reproduction of the discourse, including the role of the EESC and the EP. The former is marginalised, whereas it has a strong impact on the EC. Regarded as the only accountable institution, the latter proved that it could revise the ECS discourse.</p>
<p>Governance turn</p> <p>- <i>civil dialogue</i> - <i>interest intermediation</i> - <i>minimum standards</i> - <i>CONECCS</i> - <i>ETI</i></p> <p>legitimising through governance – i.e. self-governing society</p>		<p>No connection with the grassroots; legitimate partners are the EU NGOs.</p> <p>The power imbalance in the consultation game, considering the co-existence of businesses vs. EU NGOs.</p> <p>Rights-based identity</p>	<p>Policy changes are compatible with the governance approach: stakeholder</p> <p><i>White Paper on Governance</i></p> <p>Utilitarian principles; sharing the common space of problem solving.</p>	<p>Clearly defines the EU NGOs as interest groups; but EU NGOs react against this.</p> <p>Though the discourse is compatible with the tenets of neo-liberalism, it has succeeded in presenting itself with the positive associations of the participation discourse.</p>	<p>The Commission’s project of inventing a European Public, EPS, and European identity through the EU NGOs as carriers and translators of the political power and knowledge.</p> <p>Interest intermediation politics employs symbolic power in the process of transitioning from the governance turn to identity and consent builders.</p> <p>Translation of the governance discourse from the World Bank, and adapting the discourse of participation. In this sense the discourse on participation is symbolic.</p>

CHAPTER 6

EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY DISCOURSE AND THE SOCIAL PALTFORM OF EUROPEAN NGOs

This dissertation has started from the argument that the project of governance, when it is considered as a new form of governmentality, might have implications on the subject (and subjectivity) formations, with the latter having the capacity and willingness to participate in the new governance settings. According to this reading, governance is not, necessarily, an improvement in our understanding of democracy, but reconfiguration of power relations. The idea of empowering civil society actors in order to legitimise governance (Weiss 2000; Schmitter 2003b; De Schutter 2003; Smismans 2003; see also Bohman 2005, Cohen and Rogers 1998) does not necessarily promote democracy and create public spheres. I have, instead, proposed studying the constitutive impacts of this political project—constitutive in the sense of how power creates certain type of subjects and makes them amenable to governance.

Chapter one concludes that democracy theory does not necessarily assign a “democratizing function and a central role” of involving social actors to decision-making processes in strong publics, as Habermas would define it (1996; see also Eriksen 2005b). This was rather advocated by associational democracy; though it is criticised for resting on the functionalist assumptions (i.e. inclusion of more groups into governance of society promotes an efficient and effective democracy) (Russteucher 2000; Baccaro 2006). Considering that the main premise of governance is transcending the parliamentary basis of decision-making, the conclusion to be drawn from this debate is the pertinence of functionalist approach and associative democracy to governance. Chapter two applies this discussion to European level and discussed the limits of envisioning democracy at EU level. The third chapter critiques the discourse of participation, one that has been developed within the context of economic development by the World Bank and United Nations. With a particular focus on the Foucaultian interpretation of Europeanisation, this chapter endeavours to deconstruct the symbiotic relationship between the NGOs and

democracy that is far too often taken for granted. Based on the previous research, it illustrates how the discourse on NGOs might relate to the consolidation of political power, as well as how power constitutes subjects. Chapter four investigates how the European Commission has engaged in developing the participation and European Civil society discourse to the context of EU level decision-making, and European democracy at large, in a similar vein that has been developed by the World Bank. Fourth chapter traces the role and the impact of the Commission in flourishing of social actors, as well as in establishing the norms (including a code of conduct, transparency initiative and enshrinement of an article in Lisbon Treaty) about which these actors would involve in the Commission's consultation regime. Chapter four shows that the Commission's relevant policy programmes and projects, which aim to cultivate legitimacy through the ECS discourse, have been developed in accordance with the motto of connecting with the citizens, and within the context of Commission's motivation to enhance its power in social policy, and the perceived legitimacy crisis of EU integration due to citizen's apathy.

This chapter discusses the implications of the theoretical debate, elaborated in chapter one and two, and the implications of the Commission's initiatives by examining the Social Platform of European NGOs. First, it describes the administrative structure of the Social Platform; examines its reflection to major developments with respect to European integration during 2000, such as the introduction of new modes of governance, attempts to prepare a constitution for the EU; enlargement, and the motto on bridging the gap with the citizens; elaborates upon the Platform's position on the social policy of the EU; and portrays its relations with the EU institutions. Second, this chapter inquires into the Platform's administrative structure, working strategies and communication instruments. As governmentality implies shaping the conduct of conduct, and acts upon action; the survey finds it necessary to examine the implication of the rationalities of government on the Platform's daily practices. By analysing the Platform's administrative structure and working methods, therefore, we will trace the instruments and the knowledge of which it implements in its daily functioning. In

addition, it should also be noted that how the Platform represents its objectives and inscribes its performances could expose the extent to which it receives the rationalities of government.

Third, this chapter depicts the Platform's training initiatives – which are also called as capacity building to NGO community, both at EU and national level. Capacity building programs have been seen as empowerment programmes which intent to involve actors to new forms of governance (Phillips and Ilcan 2004). This survey suggests that unconscious normalisation of the political rule can also be detected on the administrative culture and working strategies: that implies, harmonisation of the *way of doing and perception of things* in accordance with the tenets of political rationalities. A similar argument has been developed by Laura Cram (2004), who argues *banal Europeanism*, with reference to Billig's banal nationalism concept (1995), an implicit and unconscious normalisation of the EU can be observed in such instances of daily practices, including carrying EU flags in national passports and identity cards, conforming with EU legislation, and walking past EU flags (such as at customs) (see also Walters and Haahr 2005). Yet, our survey is limited with demonstrating the presence of such activities; as delimitation, we can neither analyse the process of capacity building activities of the Platform, nor observe their impacts on the NGO community. Fourth, this chapter discusses the Platform's position about participation discourse. It ends with an evaluation of the relationship between the Platform and the Commission from different theoretical positions.

This chapter tracks the implications of “(good) governance” (i.e. the idea of opening the governance structures to social actors in order to foster legitimacy as well as the administrative reform known as the New Public Management) and the Commission's ECS discourse on the Social Platform. The empirical material entails the Social Platform's annual reports; working strategies; its reflection papers on social policy, participatory democracy and governance; interviews with the president and communication officer of Platform, the coordinator of the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG), and three persons from European Network Against Racism (ENAR);

and the observations on the Platform's conference about the "civil dialogue", one that social NGOs operating both at European and national level) participated.

Social Platform and Governmentality

To recapitulate, governmentality (or art of government) involves a project (and/or assemblage of different projects), which constitutes a mentality, morality, style of reasoning and an epistemology. As shown, Foucault and his followers argue that the art of government has the goal of explicating the link between the state-formations and constitution of the subjects (e.g. Lemke 2002). Constitution, in this case, is explained due to the implications of an action upon action, one that shapes, forms and manipulates the conduct and the conduct of conduct. The analytics of government, thus, examines the rationalities and the techniques through which the political programmes are exerted. Governmentality research has stressed that the recent rationalities involve the domination of market rationalities over the political; liberalisation of the markets are explained in relation to the concerns like autonomisation and responsabilisation of the actors, and their orientation to (better) performance. Devolution of the responsibilities of the state to private actors, particularly through contractual relations, is considered as related with this process.

As has been mentioned in the introduction and chapter 3, Dean (1999) draws four parameters for analysing the art of government: fields of visibility, technical aspects, knowledge, and the impact on the formation of identities. An analysis of the Platform through these four parameters will guide our investigation, i.e. what kind of a subject the Platform has become. With respect to the aspect of visibility, the Platform's documents, including its yearly reports and working strategies, may help investigate how and which fields it aims to govern. Further, the methods of inscription and representation which are used by the Platform can also be discussed in relation to the rationalities of governance and subjection of the Platform to the Commission's civil society discourse. This concerns the inquiry of how the Platform receives the general trend on the management techniques (e.g. NPM) and which issues it visualises.

With regards to Dean's second parameter, the technical aspects of government, in our analysis, we have delved into these questions as they relate to the Platform in the previous chapter. It has been demonstrated how the concepts of civil society and participatory democracy have been related to the changing contexts by the Commission (such as to social policy competences, legitimacy crisis, the motto of bringing the EU back to its citizens, and the project on governance). It has also been shown that the Commission has fostered civil society discourse through green, white and discussion papers; supported NGOs, though sometimes illegally, with funding mechanisms; introduced certain norms and principles about consultation; and a common database. As a final point, "participatory democracy" has been legalised, since it has been enshrined into the Lisbon Treaty. This chapter, then, examines how the Platform perceives this vocabulary that has been so far fostered by the Commission.

To continue with Dean (Ibid), third, the *episteme* of government, to trace the Platform's *episteme*, the survey in this case examines its working logic and how it relates this logic to the theme of participation. Finally, with respect to power's impact of formation of identities, this chapter inquiries into the process of subjectification (i.e. how power constitutes, creates, forms, and re-forms subjects) and (subjectivation) the practices and the processes through which the individual makes herself a subject. This final aspect of the analysis of government examines the implications of a political project on the persons, self and identity, including the "statuses, capacities, attributes and orientations" which are devised and imposed on the subject (Ibid, 31; and see also the introduction and chapter 3 for a broader explanation for the theoretical foundations).

This analytical frame can be applied to examination of the relationship between the Social Platform's activities and the notions of governance, including "good governance" and new modes of governance, from several aspects of governmentality. First, this might be thought of being pertinent with the moral and ethical aspects of governmentality (Rose 1996), e.g. with its implicit premise that the

involving of the Platform to the Commission's decision-making processes is intrinsic to a "good" and appropriate way of doing politics and mobilisation of collective action. Second, the analysis of the Platform should entail the power/subject and power/knowledge relations, as governmentality leads to examine the ways in which political power subjectifies, the agencies through which power is exerted, and how the agency is empowered and made responsible for its own life. Yet, the previous chapters evaluate the theoretical and contextual background of participatory governance discourse; this chapter tests how the Platform has received this process. Third, the governmentality approach portrays what kinds of subjects are constituted. As it relates to our concerns, this chapter concentrates on the symbiotic relationship between technologies of performance and managerialist organisational structures of the Platform. The guiding ethos behind recent governmental rationalities is explained to include goal-orientation and outcome achievement. These rationalities would likely project *performance machine*-like subjects, which in turn would be subjugated to the control, guidance and surveillance – even though advanced forms of liberal government promise liberty and autonomy to the subjects. Therefore, the survey of the Platform would expect it to act like a performance machine while exerting its double role of being object and subject of governance. This anticipation entails the fulfilment of the requirement of conforming to a set of goals, which are planned, carefully calculated, and inscribed into documents. The overall activities of the Platform, its reports, and its tools of communication can be seen as constituents of its technologies of performance. The evaluation of the performance would then determine the success (and probably the survival) of the Platform. Considering the Platform functions, organises and tries to achieve its ends via the methods of managerialism, the latter would be seen as both the technique and the means of performance in achieving contractual obligations. The managerial-bureaucratic features of the Platform are examined through its decision-making structures, working methods and techniques of communication. Along these lines, the research also focuses on how the Platform represents and conveys its message (in its reports and other communication tools, e.g. its website, newsletter etc.).

Fourth, governmentality research can help us detect the underlying mechanisms through which power relations are exerted, authority is built and political obedience enforced. With respect to the Platform, an analysis of its power relations can be sought in the Commission's sponsorship. It can be expected that the Platform would require to fulfil certain obligations of the Commission's funding, meeting certain yearly objectives. The donor and benefiter relationship between the Commission and the Platform, thus, can be thought of one of the mechanisms through which the Platform is subjectified and made an object of governing. Yet, this has been pointed out as a major critique to the Platform, and to similar EU NGO networks, considering it would threaten the autonomy of civil society.

The fifth aspect of governmentality research concerns interrogation of the audit, or postmodern patterns of surveillance. Related with the fourth aspect, as a condition of funding the Platform is required to perform certain activities and in turn report them to the Commission. The question in this case concerns whether reports as well as the very system of reporting and evaluation create both a mechanism of surveillance and discipline (i.e. a state of order based on submission to authority). Argued from a Foucauldian perspective, reporting is not a mere practice of documenting set of outcomes; but, it might result in shaping actions and creating a certain cognitive frame to relate to the social phenomenon (i.e. leading the actors to interpret social phenomena as calculable *things*). Therefore, a certain form of inscribing the methods for meeting objectives and the representation of end results may structure actors' relations to social reality. With respect to this, it should cautiously be noted that this process does not naturally lead to colonisation: some can treat reporting as a mere act of satisfying the donors. Nevertheless, the reports make the performance visible; thus enable the audit and surveillance possible.

Up to this point, the analysis has taken the Platform as its object of inquiry; it has suggested interrogation of the Platform as a new form of NGO category. In contrast, the sixth aspect proposes studying the implications of the Platform's capacity building and training activities on the NGO community, both at EU and national

level. This implies considering the Platform acting as an interlocutor of the Commission (i.e. transmitting the Commission's messages) and helping shape its members and the local NGO community via technologies of capacity building. The Commission's governance discourse – as inscribed in the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001) - proposes integrating civil society as a stakeholder in the EU decision-making processes and participating in the new modes of governance (such as the OMC). EU governance defined in this way, nevertheless, as the previous research show (Obradovic 2005; Smismans 2006) in practice their impact on the EU decisions and in the implementation of the EU regulations are trivial. On the other hand, the focus on the Platform's training activities towards the NGO community might reveal that it has more substantive effects in this field; yet, this subject matter has been so far neglected. Therefore, the Platform's training activities can be studied on the one hand intrinsic to political socialisation of the EU (i.e. representing the EU as a legitimate ruling entity); and, on the other, an endeavour to constitute a certain NGO type, a collective action style. At the final stage, the Platform can then be seen as an actor which is *constituted* and in the meantime *constituting*: *the nuclei* of a new NGO categorisation, one that *directs* the growth of this categorisation and *transmits* its generic characteristics. In other words, this role can be seen an attempt create Platform-like entities within civil society.

6.1. The Social Platform and European Governance

6.1.1 The Social Platform of European non-governmental organisations

The Social Platform emerged on an informal basis in 1994 after the publication of the Green Paper on European Social Policy in 1993 (Com(93), 551). The Green Paper had the goal of establishing structured communication channels with the NGOs which were active in social policy. In April 1994, therefore, European NGOs came together to discuss the Green Paper in terms of what it could bring to social policy and what they could do within its framework. This initial attempt at coordination then continued on the informal basis. In 1995, the DG Employment and Social Inclusion encouraged European social NGOs to form the Social Platform in order to consolidate communication among the NGOs, with the expectation that they

would be able to act more efficiently with the EU institutions (Cullen 2005; Salgado-Sanchez 1997; Cram 2006; Greenwood 2007). Next, the Platform became a formal legal entity under the Belgian law (Ibid, 80). This change was prompted by critiques concerning representativeness and accountability of the European civil society. In the late 1990s, as shown in the previous chapter, the EESC asserted that EU NGOs should adopt a statute in order to prove their legitimacy (EESC, CES 851/99, 1999). The EESC's proposal was accepted by the Commission (Com 2002, 704 final; Com 2006, 194 final). In turn, the leaders of the Platform started to debate concerning whether EU support would be suspended if the Platform did not adopt a legal statute. Since the Social Platform depended on EU funding, it adapted a statute in 2001 and became an independent legal entity under Belgian law.

In its internal governance statute, which was adopted in 2006, the Social Platform introduces itself as the “*Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform)*”, the alliance of representative European federations and networks of non-governmental organisations active in the social sector.⁷² Cullen stresses that “the platform marked the first attempt to gather a group of NGOs characterised by diverse organisational cultures, sectoral interests and ideological orientations within such a collaborative context” (Cullen 2005: 72). Forty European social NGOs in social policy (see Table 1) compose the members of the Platform, and they can be organised as a federation or a network at the EU level. They claim to represent thousands of organisations, associations and voluntary groups at local, regional, and national levels, including organisations of women, older people, the disabled, the unemployed, people affected by poverty, homosexuals, young people, children and families, and organisations addressing such issues as social justice, homelessness, health and reproductive rights and racism.⁷³

⁷² (N.15844[75084]) article 3

⁷³ www.socialplatform.org

Table1. Members of the Social Platform

<p>Full Members of the Social Platform</p> <p>AGE - The European Older People's Platform ATD Fourth World International Movement Autism Europe Caritas Europa Combined European Bureau for Social Development (CEBSD) Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU (COFACE) Eurochild Eurodiaconia European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) European Blind Union (EBU) European Children's Network (Euronet) European Confederation of Workers' Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Participative Enterprises (CECOP) European Consumer Debt Network (ECDN) European Council for Non-Profit Organisations (CEDAG) European Disability Forum (EDF) European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) European Federation of Older Persons (EURAG) European Federation of Unpaid Parents and Carers at Home (FEFAF) European Liaison Committee for Social Housing (CECODHAS) European Network Against Racism (ENAR) European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR) European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) European Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) European Social Action Network (ESAN) European Women's Lobby (EWL) European Youth Forum (YFJ) International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) Mental Health Europe (MHE) Solidar The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families (Inclusion Europe) The European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA-Europe) The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) The International Federation of the Christian Associations of Italian Workers (FAI) Workability Europe World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)</p> <p>Associate Members</p> <p>Association des Femmes de l'Europe Méridionale (AFEM) European Roma Information Office (ERIO) International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) Red Cross EU Office Youth and European Social Work (YES Forum)</p>

Source: www.socialplatform.org

The goals of the Platform are twofold, if not contradictory. The Platform asserts its aims in the internal statute as follows: “the eradication of poverty and the elimination of social exclusion; the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and the promotion of equality for all; equality between women and men in all areas of life;

the promotion of participatory democracy; the engagement of social NGOs in an enhanced, structured civil dialogue at the EU level; and the involvement of people experiencing or at risk of poverty, exclusion and discrimination in decision-making processes affecting them.”⁷⁴ The Platform, on the other hand, reports its objectives in EU governance to the Commission in different terms, e.g. instituting regular input on EU policy formulation, engaging network actions with multiple stake-holders (including EU institutions, other NGOs, and trade unions), promoting “exchange and practices” for enabling mutual exchange of information, and creating more democratic, open and accountable systems (SP, *AR*, 2001⁷⁵). These aims presented by the Platform in its different communication tools can help us understand what the Platform is, the purposes it works to achieve and its ambitions, desires and motivations. It is a NGO network which endeavours to solve social problems and maintain equality by engaging in EU decision-making settings.

To attain its goals, the Social Platform, in the broadest terms, deals with the following issues: corporate social responsibility; demographic and social change; employment; equality and anti-discrimination; fundamental rights; the future of Europe; the integration of migrants; the Lisbon Strategy for "growth and jobs"; participatory democracy and good governance; public procurement; services of general interest and social and health services; social protection and social inclusion; and sustainable development (SP 2005, *WP*; see also www.socialplatform.org). The following chart demonstrates the amount of the policy papers produced by the Platform over the past decade; it may reflect the Platform’s allocation of focus between different policies and themes.

⁷⁴ Adopted by the Social Platform General Assembly, 23 April 2004.

⁷⁵ Hereafter, in my citations, SP stands for Social Platform, *AR* for Annual Report and *WP* for work programme.

Table 2. The policy papers of the Social Platform during the 2000s

Policy field	Policy Papers									
	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	Total
Corporate social responsibility									1	1
Demographic and Social Change		3								3
Employment	5		2							7
Equality & Anti-Discrimination	3	1	1			1		1		7
Fundamental Rights	1	1		1		1				4
Future of Europe		1	2	1						4
Integration of migrants	1				1					2
Lisbon Strategy for "growth and jobs"	4	4	1	2	3	1				15
Participatory Democracy & Good Governance	2	4		2	1			1	1	11
Public Procurement	3	3				1	2	1		10
Services of General Interest & Social and Health Services	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	1		12
Social Protection and Social Inclusion	5	2	1	1	2	3			1	15
Sustainable Development	2	4	1	2	1					10
<i>Total</i>	27	26	9	10	10	8	4	4	3	101
<i>Grand total</i>	101									

Source: The Social Platform’s website (www.socialplatform.org)⁷⁶; table based on author’s own count.

Membership and the Social Platform

The Social Platform applies two types of membership, full membership and associate membership. It also allows some organisations to participate in the Platform’s work as observers. Full membership is restricted to European NGOs; international NGOs can engage with the Platform only as associate members. National NGOs, on the other hand, are generally accredited as observers. As stated in the statute and internal rules⁷⁷ of the Social Platform, the criteria for being a full member of the Platform

⁷⁶ This table is devised by manually counting the amount of the policy papers in a given policy field on Platform’s web-site. The web-page is organised in such a way that some policy papers are listed under different policy fields. That is to say, there are indeed less than 101 policy papers. This table, therefore, cannot not show the exact amount of the papers produced in a given policy field during 2000s. However, it still helps to get a picture of Platform’s annual topical focus. Not as a surprising finding, it is seen that Platform concentrates on the issues related to the social sector. However, it is also seen that the Social Platform is quite active in the ‘Participatory Democracy and Governance’ and ‘Public Procurement fields’. On the other hand, the Platform prefers not to be interested in ‘Integration of immigrants’; future of Europe and the corporate social responsibility

⁷⁷ Internal Rules, article 5.1, 2006

include being a network or federation which is composed by organisations, not individuals. Further criteria include establishment as non-profit and non-governmental, an active role in the social sector, working to promote the general interest and social cohesion and having separate legal personality. Further, according to the Platform's internal rules, prospective members should prove that they are structured and managed in a democratic way. The Platform officially states that democratic NGOs are run by an elected body whose decisions and membership are not subject to approval by any external entity. As shown in the previous chapter, these criteria show a strong parallel with the criteria for EU NGOs' representativeness, which were drawn up by the EESC. We can conclude that the Platform determines which organisations can be its members according to the moral imperatives of political rationality, i.e. a certain form of organisation, which suggests a good and appropriate way of organising. This implies only those organisations which adapt to these requirements can take part in the Platform (and thus in the new forms of governance), consider the rationalities of governance project new forms of subjects, subjects which are constituted, motivated, directed and guided in order to become an actor in European governance. We will further elaborate on what the Platform understands by democratic management and how this is performed in subsection 2.

There are two main differences between full members and the associates. Firstly, although both have to pay membership fees, the Platform reimburses the expenses of the full members when they attend meetings of the General Assembly and the Steering Group. The associate members are responsible for their own expenses when they take part in the Platform's meetings. Secondly, associate members have no right to vote or fill administrative positions. The voting rights of both can be suspended membership fees are not paid. Observers can attend meetings of the General Assembly, but have no speaking or voting rights. They are kept informed of the Platform's activities and invited to its seminars and conferences⁷⁸. With respect to

⁷⁸ It might be argued that the Platform uses the membership fee as an instrument to consolidate its power vis-à-vis its members. It is a key of securing power in the network; the member can participate

the members' perceptions of Platform membership, the secretariats of the ENAR and Solidar consider the Platform to be a good example of the collaboration of civil society at the "European level" (C. Reuter and P. Charhon, personal communication, May 2009). Since the Platform is one of the main umbrellas for the EU NGO networks⁷⁹ and it is entitled to participate in the Commission consultation regime, it can be further argued that Platform membership enhances credibility within the NGO community and the EU institutional milieu.⁸⁰

Platform Funding

The funding of the Platform is one of the most controversial issues which have hindered its positive reception. The Social Platform is funded under the *Community Action Programme to promote active European citizenship* grant program. Critics claim that this threatens the autonomy of the Platform. Some have defended EU funding by comparing it with state financial support for political parties (Fazi and Smith 2006; and see Salgado 2007). Commission support constitutes eighty percent of Platform's total budget. Thirteen percent of the budget comes from funds for specific projects, and the remaining percentage comes from membership fees and other contributions from members (SP 2007, AR). The Platform indicates that this fund is used in "providing information to its members on relevant EU developments, organising forums for them to exchange experiences and share knowledge, and arranging meetings between representatives of the EU Institutions and social NGOs."⁸¹ However, the budget that is assessed in the annual report 2007 shows that administrative costs, including the salaries of the Secretariat, constitute 70 percent of

and vote as long it pays its fees. The power of the member can greatly be reduced if the fee is not paid. The membership fee is thus a key for the Platform in the sense that it is one of the Platform's integrative elements, elements which attach different constituents together and help the central authority maintain its power over the network.

⁷⁹ Other EU NGO umbrella networks are: **CONCORD**, the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development; **Culture Action Europe**, the Forum for the Arts and Heritage; **EPHA**, the European Public Health Alliance; **EUCIS-LLL**, the European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning; **EWL**, the European Women's Lobby; **GREEN 10**, a group of leading environmental NGOs active at the EU level, and **HRDN**, the Human Rights and Democracy Network.

⁸⁰ It should be remembered that with respect to the representativeness issue of European Civil Society, the EESC asserted having a reputation as a criterion.

⁸¹ www.socialplatform.org

total costs. In detail, the costs of Platform in 2007 were distributed respectively: staff 50 percent, travel and accommodation 10 percent, services 12 percent, administration 20 percent and specific projects 8 percent.

The Social Platform and EU institutions

The Social Platform is primarily a lobbying organisation that aims to influence EU institutions. Table 3 shows which EU institutions and sub-departments the Platform has contact with. As this table shows, it can access most EU institutions, whereas it has more strained relations with the European Commission. The Social Platform is financed by the Commission, meeting with it twice a year, and is together with its members registered as an “interest group” in the Commission’s online database for taking part in online consultations. The Platform is also in contact with several DGs which are relevant to the Platform’s policy focus. It has, however, recently developed relations with the European Parliament (EP), particularly following EU NGOs have been recognised by the EP (in e.g. the Gabrowska report (2009) and two citizen AGORAs [NGO meetings in the Parliament]). The Platform (and some other EU NGOs) and now try to “reach” the European Council (P. Charhon, C. Reuter, L. Sedou, and G. Siklossy, personal communication, May 2009).

The Parliament did not support the Commission’s project of incorporating non-elected entities into EU decision-making processes, and it thus ignored the EU NGOs for some time—up until the time it organised the first AGORA in 2007 (see the previous chapter). As has been shown, by launching the AGORAs as an alternative to the Commission’s online consultations, the EP challenged the Commission’s functional and Brussels-based approach to civil society. Although this approach could have had negative impacts on the privileged position of the Social Platform in the Commission’s approach, the Platform approached the Parliament’s challenge positively, arguably due to two aspects (C. Reuter, P. Charhon, G. Siklossy, personal communication, May 2009; and Social Platform 2008⁸²). First, with the AGORAs,

⁸² The letter to the head of Parliament, European Parliament Agora, *A first step towards a structured civil dialogue with the European Parliament*, Platform, 2008. Here, the Platform also praised the procedures of the AGORAs in that all participants could receive equal opportunity to co-chair

civil society organisations were officially recognised by the EP. As this means that the EP has accepted EU NGOs as legitimate actors of governance, it was an important step for the EU NGOs in that the EP confirmed their relevance to EU politics. Second, in contrast to the Commission’s approach that defined the EU NGOs as “mere lobbyists and consultants”, the Parliament officially recognised (EU) NGOs as actors of civil society (Social Platform 2008). In sum, it can be argued that in order to not leave the championship of the ECS discourse to the Commission, the EP strategically contacted the EU NGOs in the Brussels power game.

Table 3: The Social Platform’s contacts with European institutions and other actors (Annual report 2007)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION Directorate Generals:	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Committees:	COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS OF EU MEMBER STATES:	OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES:	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:
*DG SANCO (Health and Consumer Protection) *DG COM (Competition) *DG ECFIN (Economic and Financial Affairs) *DG EMP (Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) *DG EAC (Education and Culture) *DG INT (Internal Market and Services) *DG JLS (Justice, Freedom and Security) *DG ELARG (Enlargement) DG Research DG Budget SG	LIBE (Citizens’ Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs) EMPL (Employment and Social Affairs) JURI (Legal Affairs and the Internal Market) ENVI (Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy) AFCO (Constitutional Affairs) FEMM (Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities)	EPSCO Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) JLS Council (Justice and Home Affairs) European Council	EESC (European Economic and Social Committee) CoR (Committee of the Regions) FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) Eurofound (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions)	ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) EEB (European Environmental Bureau) CSCG (Civil Society Contact Group) Think Tanks

workshops and plenary sessions, as well as report on the different workshops. However, according to the Platform, AGORAs had a major flaw: not making explicit how the conclusions of the AGORAs would be incorporated into decision-making processes, so that participants could not receive feedback about their recommendations and contributions. The Platform further proposed that the EP should consider the AGORAs “as a form of consultation when working on a report” (Ibid.), and continue this on a formal basis.

6.1.2 EU Politics, Governance Turn and Platform

Starting from the early 1990s the Commission has played a direct role in establishment of the European NGOs through financial support, mostly in the social field, including the European Women Lobby (EWL), European Youth Forum (EYF) and the Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the EU (CLONG) (Tarasenko 2010); European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Disability Forum (Cram 2006). These organisations, in turn, became members of the Social Platform, when it was established in 1995 by the encouragement and financial support of the European Commission. Following to the Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Commission issued *a Green Paper on Social Policy* (1993), which entailed developing mechanisms for co-operation with the Commission and NGOs. In order to put this claim into practice, the Commission, DG Employment and Social Inclusion (EMPL), decided launching *the European Social Forums*, the first of which would be convened in 1996. Cram (1995) states that “in 1995, the Social Platform was created, and funded by the Commission, to act as interlocutor for the social actors with the Commission at the Social Forum”. Starting from the first *European Social Policy Forum*, the Commission’s interactions with the NGOs have been labelled as “civil dialogue”. Yet, the UK and Germany questioned the legal competence of the Commission to finance social NGOs, including the Platform. The European Court of Justice in 1998, accordingly, found the Commission’s act illegal; hence led the Commission to suspend these funds. Nonetheless, these funds were released with a Council decision. In other words, the roots for the idea of involving the NGOs to European decision-making stemmed from the Maastricht Treaty, inscribed into the Green Paper on Social Policy and put into practice with *the European Social Forums*. This project can be considered as part of Delor’s project to create “European social and economic space”; and, it continued under Santer Commission (1995-1999).

The Santer Commission had to resign in 1999 due a corruption scandal about the mismanagement of EU funding and nepotism in recruitment. The Prodi Commission (1999-2004) started working under such condition in which instructional prestige of

the Commission was significantly damaged. Prodi Commission, on the one hand, engaged in a decisive administrative reform of the Commission, based on the Kinnock Report, which suggested an activity-based management strategy, as well as including a proposal for a new staff policy (Kassim 2008)⁸³. On the other hand, the Commission proposed a new administrative-mentality for the EU institutions with the *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001), including opening the decision-making processes to civil society. *White Paper* was reflected by academic community critically (see Joerges et al 2001), considering it as a political intervention into EU structure.

In the early 2000s, the Commission placed special emphasis on creating a European civil society (ECS) discourse: it incorporated ECS into European governance by granting stakeholder status. The Commission's ex-president, Romano Prodi, explained the role of ECS in (the new) Europe as follows: "It is time to realise that Europe is not just run by European institutions but by national, regional and local authorities too—and by civil society" (Romano Prodi, SP, Annual Report 2004). As Prodi declared, the representatives of ECS, the EU NGOs, started engaging in EU politics during the 2000s. For instance, the Platform took part in three important incidents, governance reform (European Commission, *White Paper on Governance* (WPG, 2001), drafting a Constitution for Europe (2002-2004) and enlargement (2002-2004).

The *White Paper on Governance* was a key Commission initiative for an administrative reform of EU governance (see the previous chapter for details). Despite the Parliament's critical stance toward civil society's engagement in the decision-making process due to their accountability and representation problems, the WPG defined civil society as the constituents and stakeholders of governance. The WPG was the continuation of a governance turn fostered by the Commission with the introduction of new modes of governance, such as the Open Method of Coordination

⁸³ The Prodi Commission also launched a new post of Commissioner responsible from the public communications of the Communication; Margot Wallstrom appointed for this task.

(OMC) (Mosher and Trubek 2004; Eberlein and Kluwer 2004; and Haahr 2005). The Platform's annual report shows that the Platform participated in preparations of the WPG. In this respect, "it has widely circulated its *Democracy, Governance and European NGOs Position Paper* [published in 1999], was an active participant in the hearings held by the Commission ahead of the release of the Paper, organised meetings with various members of the Governance team, spoke at numerous conferences, and wrote many articles on this issue." In addition, "members of the Governance team spoke at various events held by the Platform" (SP, AR, 2001).

Following the WPG, the Platform concentrated on putting the promises of the WPG into practice: "The Platform will make proposals to the Commission regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission's 2001 *White Paper on Governance*, which proposes more structured and consistent forms of consultation with society, including the establishment of 'partnership agreements' with NGOs in certain sectoral areas" (SP, AR, 2003). Furthermore, it tried to secure a legal basis for consultations: "a legal basis for civil dialogue between decision-makers and NGOs is crucial in building a socially just Europe that is able and willing to take the needs of all into account. Promoting this view has been one of the spear points in the Platform's work" (SP, AR, 2001; this position has not been altered during the 2000s). In others words, the Platform declared its willingness to participate in new power configurations, emphasising that it was capable of fulfilling its roles.

However, the Commission has not been willing to formalise its relations with the Platform. These relations have rather been set up in a somewhat nebulous way (i.e. biannual meetings and internet consultations, especially during pre-policy formulation processes), so that the Platform's engagement in formal decision-making processes has been kept at a minimum level (Fazi and Smith 2006). In the meantime, multi-stakeholder forums, which were presented in the WPG as an indicator of partnership governance, were not commonly implemented. The Platform participated in only one forum in which it formally enjoyed stakeholder status: the "Multi-stakeholder Forum" between 2002 and 2004 which dealt with Corporate Social

Responsibility, a policy initiative published by the Commission in 2002. Other stakeholders in this initiative were business representatives, such as UNICE and the European Roundtable of Industrialists, and the ETUC (SP, AR, 2002-2004).

Convention on the Future of Europe, Constitution Turn and the Platform

Against this backdrop, the Convention on the Future on Europe was set in 2001 by the European Council, which prepared the *Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* in 2003. The Convention concerned EU NGOs in the sense that they were included in the discussions; yet, one of the vice-presidents of the Convention, Guliano Amato, emphasized the importance of the “support of civil society in legitimising the final outcome of the Convention’s work” (*Economist* 2004). In turn, some scholars also considered this as a democratising promise (De Schutter 2002; Magnette 2003). During the Convention period the Social Platform played an important role. It mobilised the largest NGO networks working in the fields of human rights, environment, and development in order to take part in the debate. With respect to this, during the early 2000s, the Platform initiated several campaigns about the *Future of Europe*. These campaigns, such as the Future of Europe, Citizens’ Assembly and act4Europe, aimed at mobilising the NGO community for EU issues.

The Platform launched the Future of Europe initiative in 2001. The Platform’s 2001 annual report states that this initiative “in a way marked the broadening of the Governance debate”. The Platform once again in this report emphasised that “it plays a leading role in bringing together the various European NGO sectors”. For instance, the Citizens’ Assembly project was introduced within the context of the Future of Europe initiative. It was held in Brussels in December 2001 and continued until 2004. The Platform claimed that Citizens’ Assembly mobilised over 700 NGO delegates, government representatives and members of civil society from all over Europe (SP, AR, 2000). It focused on different topics related to the future of Europe, including globalisation, migration, the eradication of poverty, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the European Constitution (Ibid.). In 2001, many of the participating NGOs joined in drafting the declaration, “Europe is our Future”. This

declaration suggested extending EU authority in several areas: “We call for the extension of authority of the European Union in the fields of employment, poverty, social exclusion, equality between men and women, sustainable development, services of general interest, food safety, cultural diversity and the fight against discrimination in order to guarantee an upward convergence of policies and national legislation, notably from the point of view of fundamental rights.”

The Platform’s own perceptions about the Future of Europe initiative and the Citizens’ Assembly project can help us draw an initial conclusion: “[This] was the first time such a broad coalition of organisations had united to organise an event of this nature, showing that civil society is ready to talk with leaders in a peaceful and constructive manner...The organisation of the ‘Citizens’ Assembly’ in Brussels (December 2001) demonstrated the Platform’s ability to mobilise European civil society organisations, and to provide an effective, peaceful, and high-profile civil society presence at EU Summits” (Ibid.). The Platform revealed that it is, itself, along with the other EU NGOs, is the right agent and partner in the process of European political restructuring. NGOs presented their consent and willingness to be agents in this process; thus, they declared that they were ready for formalised deliberations with the political power. In the meantime, they carefully drew a line between the protesting and deliberating actors of civil society, and thus in a way confirmed that they would not challenge the new constellation (see Young 2001 for the discussion between protest and deliberation as two different modes of civic action). The second conclusion is that the Platform was willing to circulate the ideas of European governance; the members of the Platform believed in the idea of deepening European integration (i.e. the interviews with the NGO staff and the leaders also confirmed this). In other words, the staff of the Platform acted like pan-European intellectuals who had shifted their interests to the EU, as neo-functionalists predicted.

By the leadership of the Social Platform, a group of NGO network coalitions formed the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG), which initiated a campaign about the *Future of Europe* (act4europe) – i.e. the Convention’s work- aimed at mobilising the

national level NGOs⁸⁴. The CSCG started as a loose network, with its organisational work and management initially handled by the Platform. For instance, the Platform hosted and co-funded its coordinator person. The Platform declared the objectives of the *act4europe* project as follows: “Citizens have grown dangerously disillusioned with the European project. The Convention on the Future of Europe is thus a vital opportunity to reverse this trend” (SP, AR, 2002). With respect to this, *act4europe* published a toolkit for NGO in order to inform them about the ongoing debate on the *Future of Europe* and activate them in participating in it⁸⁵. The Campaign’s second toolkit about the work of the Convention was distributed at the *Social Policy Forum* in 2002. At the end, the *Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* contained an article about “participatory democracy, Article I-46; this article, then, took place with a minor change replacing the use of constitution with the treaties in the ratified Lisbon Treaty, and appearing this time as the Article-11. Participatory democracy, the norm of which was enshrined in the Lisbon treaty, involves not only the involvement of “civil society” in EU decision-making processes, but also allow the citizens submitting any legal proposal, with no less than one million signature.

The Platform also took an active role in the Constitution ratification process. It was invited to the Convention on drafting a European Constitution with other stakeholders and played a role in mobilising NGOs, trying to orient their interests towards the EU. It tried “to facilitate the engagement of social NGOs at national level to engage with the debates around the ratification of the Treaty” (SP, WP, 2005:17). In this respect, it provided legal expertise and analysis about the Constitution and prepared a toolkit for NGOs together with the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG), a coalition of European NGO networks. Furthermore, it organised a conference on the Constitution with the Contact Group and a seminar for Platform members on activating NGOs in ratification debates.

⁸⁴ See the Social Platform, *Annual Report*, 2003, p. 22.

⁸⁵ This toolkit was downloaded 5000 times in ten days after it was published (see footnote 3).

Enlargement and network visits

The political rationalities of the “governance turn” imply governing society through the dynamics and resources of society (Kochler-Koch and Rittberger 2006; Jachtenfuchs 2001). Thus, it meant empowering citizens’ associations, so that they would be capable of managing the complex requirements of bureaucracy. The Platform, with this regard, not only fulfilled a stakeholder role in joining the Brussels consultation regime, but also took on the role of conveying the knowledge of EU governance to the NGO community. It initiated several conferences and seminars to circulate the imperatives of new modes of governance among its members to inform them about the existence of these policies and train them for the new era. During the 2000s, the Platform had a special focus on NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe, organising the following network visits to new member states: Poland (2002), Czech Republic (2003), Cyprus (2004), Hungary (2004) and Latvia (2004). It organised conferences and seminars to train these NGOs in political advocacy, fundraising, communication techniques and skills, and NGO management. It published toolkits about state-NGO relations, such as “Civil dialogue in the candidate countries: Building bridges across a wider Europe” (SP, AR, 2002). The Platform’s training activities can be considered on the one hand intrinsic to political socialisation of the EU (i.e. representing the EU as a legitimate ruling entity); and, on the other, an endeavour to constitute a certain NGO type, a collective action style.

The Platform and the discourse on bridging the gap with citizens

The Turin IGC summit in 1996 diagnosed the legitimacy crisis of EU governance in a lack of citizens’ interest; since then the motto of bridging the gap with the citizens has been recognised as norm by the EU institutions (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2007). Accordingly, *White Paper on Governance* (Com 2001; see also previous chapter) suggested overcoming this by relating its proposals about governance reforms to re-conceptualisation of democracy. This new type of democracy would integrate social groups into decision-making processes and implementation of policies, linking citizens’ interests to governance. The Platform, on behalf of its member EU NGOs, volunteered for this task: “NGOs stimulate democratic renewal by providing a

channel for citizens to engage in dialogue with policy-makers ... We believe that creating this kind of ongoing dialogue with politicians and policy-makers will help bring about a European Union which is more in touch with its citizens, and is more focused on improving their lives” (SP, AR, 2005).

During the early 2000s, the Platform claimed about its own activity that it was “an important way of helping bridge the gap between citizens and the EU institutions and therefore reflecting the views of citizens” (Ibid.). Conny Reuter (personal communication, May 2009), the president of the Platform, explains the role of the Platform in this process: “We must defend the interests of all our member organisations; on the other hand, we must connect to citizens [to advance the interests of EU]. The most important challenge is to understand, this kind of lobby, what we are doing, is not only for one or two topics. We have connected with the citizens and given them the idea that through us they are involved in EU politics, so that they participate.” Nonetheless, as the chapters one and second have argued, participation of in such way the president of the Platform describes – and has been advocated by the Platform since its emergence (see the section four a detailed discussion of the Platform’s position)- does not find any ground in normative democracy. As also shown in the respective chapters, this functional interpretation to democracy has been found problematic; among other problems (such as neglecting the institutions of representative democracy and collective will formation processes), this view assumes that citizens are represented by the NGO networks like the Platform *per se* (e.g. Smismans 2006).

The Platform’s participation in EU governance – as by the Commission- on the other hand can be seen insignificant. Based on the Commission’s definition, the roles of the Platform in EU governance can be defined, first, with its epistemic contribution, particularly to the Commission in its proposal preparation process; second, coordination of policies, such as of Open Method of Coordination, in the EU (see also Obradovic 2005). The previous research, however, shows that the Platform and other NGOs alike are not well integrated into the implementation and coordination of

EU policies, if not totally excluded; though a few successful practices have been observed, such as in Finland (see Smismans 2006). Further, the Commission's consultation regime with the Platform, which is also named as "civil dialogue" since 1996, has several shortcomings, which encumbering the significance of the Platform's "participation". Namely, the consultations does not go beyond "right to be heard" – since there is no legal ground for this practice-; the Platform does not receive appropriate feedback, and its is are not informed whether and how its opinions had an impact on policy proposals (Obradovic 2005; and also see SP 2008, 2006). In sum, considering also the findings of the earlier research, it can be argued that the Commission's discourse on "participatory governance", involving civil society actors into EU governance, does not necessarily result in effective and actual contribution of the Platform, at least for now. Moreover, the most important function of "civil dialogue" is considered to legitimise the decision-making-processes within the EU institutional set-up (Kochler-Koch and Finke 2006). As a critique of this, it is, however argued, having participated in "civil dialogue", the Platform not necessarily legitimise EU at large, but help in advancing the Commission's institutional power and its consultation regime (e.g. Smismans 2007; Cram 2006), as well as helping normalise the Commission's ruling in the respective policy fields (Cram, Ibid).

6.1.3 Social Platform and Social Europe

The Social Platform is primarily a network of NGO networks working on social policy. As indicated, it emerged as a consequence of the *Green Paper on Social Policy* published in 1993. This paper marked the Commission's early attempts at expanding its room to manoeuvre with respect to social policies, a policy domain for which the Community method did not apply. The Commission, then, chose a strategy of mobilising NGOs, in 1997 detailing the roles of voluntary organisations in social policy (see previous chapter). Following the Lisbon treaty in 2000, NGOs were not only related to social policy, but also to the new modes of governance (e.g. open method coordination) and the democratic deficit of EU governance. Therefore, we examine both the Social Platform's position on social policies and the democratic deficit. The following focuses on social policies; we will detail the Platform's views

towards the Commission's policies for legitimising EU governance at the end of the chapter.

I will be interrogating what the Platform thinks and does in terms of EU social policies. I will try to show how a Foucaultian interpretation of Europeanisation enables us to understand their thoughts and actions. To be clear, the central question that motivates this analysis is how EU social policies and the Platform's perception of these policies may relate to the creation of a new form of subjectivity and a new form of governmentality—defined as an ethics and ethos (Larner 2000). Posed in this way, this inquiry makes it necessary to think about social policies developed at the EU level from the perspective of governmentality. Nonetheless, this attempt has significant limitations, as governmentality approach to EU social policy is still rudimentary (see below) and its improvement is far beyond the confines of this dissertation, as this dissertation particularly focuses on the Commission's civil society discourse and its implications on the Platform. Within these considerations, when applied this elaboration considers the EU's interests (particularly those of the Commission) in social policies with respect to the following questions: Which aspects does the European social policy entail? On which aspects of human life and through which instruments does it plan to intervene—in other words, what is the *ethical substance* upon which it acts? And finally, what does it hope to achieve—what is its *telos*? The exploration of these questions can enable us to locate the Social Platform in this project.

Governmentality differs from other interpretations of European social policy. Two such options for studying social policy are the allocation of governing responsibilities between many different actors (Mosher and Trubek 2004, Eberlein and Kluwer 2004) and policy framework analysis (Ferrera et al 2002; Begg and Berthman). Daly (2006) states that, the former, favoured by the political scientists, is the most common approach to European social policies. This view suggests social dimension of the EU is “hollow and, over time, halting and limited” thus “the EU is harshly for not having achieved systemic change in national social policy and

convergence towards a supranational model of social policy” (Daly, *ibid*:463). The second view, suggested mostly by social policy specialists, argues “the EU has an articulated social policy in number of key domains (for example, worker protection, health and safety in employment, equal opportunities between men and women)” (Daly, *ibid*). As Daly (*Ibid*) outlines, a newly emerging sociological literature (e.g. Carmel 2003; Savio and Palola 2004) on the other suggests “to understand EU social policy, one must look beyond it, to the EU’s engagement with, if not European society, then a European social realm. In this, the smallest and generally newest literature, the EU is represented as carving out a social space for itself which allows it to fashion key aspects of social identity, institutions and social relations in the Member States, as well as a social sphere that transcends national boundaries. Social policy, then, is not an end itself (Daly *Ibid* 463)”. Pertinent with the latter, the governmentality approach, then, tries to grasp the underlying ethics and morality of these policies: it implies an ontology, ascetics, deontology and telos of government. It concerns the relations between power and subjectivity. For instance, it examines what has been promoted by the European Employment Strategy (EES, 1997) and Lisbon Strategy (2000) as an appropriate and good way of handling social protection, health care, employment, and social integration in that political programming target the individual as an object of manipulation, and an area of intervention.

Yet, the discussion on the EU social policy is beyond the limits of this dissertation, it relates work to social protection; it entails an understanding which can be summarised as making work pay for welfare provisions. The tenets of these policies were depicted in the European Employment Strategy (1997) as activation, adaptability, flexibility and the entrepreneurial spirit. The Lisbon Strategy integrated life-long learning, skill development and constant mobilisation into the very heart of the new social security paradigm. In other words, European social policies relate social policies to employment and concentrate on nourishing individuals’ skills so that they can take part in the labour market. Begg and Berghman (2002:186) assess this turn as “redirecting attention from employment to employability and from job security to lifelong learning”. However, I argue that this redirection is not a mere

policy change; but it can also be studied intrinsic to an ethos of constituting a new subjectivity, a subjectivity of which takes on the responsibility of its own risk and self-development (e.g. Barry et al 1996; Simons 1995; Rose 1996; Lemke 2002; Cruikshank 1999).

EU social policies which address social exclusion, with this regard, show certain parallels with the doctrines of Third Way. Dean (2006) elaborates the shift with respect to the conceptualisation of equality and inclusion: “Third Way has redefined ‘equality as *inclusion* and inequality as *exclusion*’. Objectives of equality and social justice are no longer concerned with material outcomes, but with opportunity structures” (Dean 2006:5). Dean, then, concludes that “the primary role of social policies is not the distribution of resources to provide for people’s needs, but to mitigate risk and to *enable* people individually to manage risk” (Ibid.). In a similar vein, the EES and Lisbon strategy concentrated on developing (activating) the skills of the individual as the major policy of the new social policy paradigm. In our work, it is argued that this paradigm has further consequences for subject, market and state relations.

The EU social policy, thus, can be thought of pertaining to the following aspects of our survey. First, the proposed method of social policy governance, Open Method of Coordination ascribes NGOs the task of monitoring the *National Action Plans* (NAP)– though, as mentioned, this has not been put into practice well (Obradovic 2005). With respect to this, the Platform, then, organised training seminars for the national organisations about their (latent) role in the OMC and concentrated on mobilising them to force their governments to be included in the .NAPs. The OMC is also pertinent with the conceptual concerns of this dissertation in terms of its relationship with the advanced forms of liberal art of government. According to Haahr (2005), the OMC on the one hand recognises the autonomy of the states; but, on the other restrains them “as they are subjected to a certain calculative and disciplinary regime”. This implies it gives liberty to the member states to comply with a pre-set of indicators (e.g. in the fields of social inclusion and employment)

and benchmarks; however, also entails mechanisms of surveillance through peer reviews and non-binding monitoring of the implementation of these policies. The evaluation of the success of the OMC is not within the scope of this study. However, it can be pointed out that the peer reviews of the country reports, which are discussed at the Council meetings, proved to be inefficient in disciplining the poor performers – and replacing the public pressure; since diplomatic courtesy, mostly, prevented their public embarrassments (Wyplosz 2010). Second, the EU social policy can be studied in relation to the governmentality approach, the theoretical focus of this study. Foucault suggests that neoliberalism (referring to German *ordo* liberalism and Chicago School) differs from classical liberalism (e.g. of Smith and Ferguson), as it abandons the very premise of the latter, the distinction between the politics and economy.⁸⁶ Therefore, neoliberalism – as Foucault defines- is based on an anti-naturalist claim which suggests that markets can be constituted and kept alive and capitalist rationality can be re-defined, considering particularly the failure of liberalism during the Nazism (Lemke 2001). This allows different forms of state intervention to bolster market competition, such as through legal measures. Moreover, this new form of liberalism, as Chicago school maintained; “embraces the entirety of human action to the extent that this is characterised by the allocation of scant resources for competing goals (Ibid, 197)”. With respect to this reading, social domain is defined as an extension of the economic domain, which implies market rationalities, such as cost-benefit calculations, can be applied to decision-making processes in social life (Ibid, 200). In articulating the Foucault’s lecture on neoliberal governmentality, Lemke (Ibid, 200) posits how rationalities of neo-liberalism differ from the one that classical liberalism envisaged:

Now, neo-liberalism admittedly ties the rationality of the government to the rational action of individuals; however, its point of reference is no longer some pre-given human nature, but an artificially created form of behaviour. Neo-liberalism no longer locates the rational principle

⁸⁶ It should be noted neoliberalism, as Foucault uses it, does not have aim to replace – if not complementing- the common use of the concept, which concerns the market-driven economy and social policies, relatively open markets, and strengthening the role of private sector in setting the priorities of the state. Central to Foucault’s concern was to elaborate upon the shift in the philosophical (and practical) grounds of classical liberalism; therefore, he investigates the origins of this turn within German *ordo* liberalism and Chicago school. Yet, this leads to conceptual confusion Dean (1999) offers using advanced liberalism.

for regulating and limiting the action of government in a natural freedom that we should all respect, but instead it posits an artificially arranged liberty: in the entrepreneurial and competitive behaviour of economic-rational individuals. Whereas in the classic liberal conception, *homo oeconomicus* forms an external limit and the inviolable core of governmental action, in the neo-liberal thought of the Chicago School he becomes a behaviouristically manipulable being and the correlative of a governmentality which systematically changes the variables of the ‘environment’ and can count on the ‘rational choice’ of the individuals.

Having interpreted liberalism in this way, Foucault was associated with the French regulation school of political economy (Powell 2011). The social policies, then, according to this frame “were not limited to transferring and redistributing monies but stands out for its active creation of the historical and social conditions of the market (Ibid, 195)”.

The norms of the EU social policy strategy which aims to upgrade the skills of individuals, such as the activation, adaptability, entrepreneurial spirit, then can be assessed from this perspective. Then, they may well be conceived as attempts of intervention into the conduct of humans⁸⁷. Third, the EU social policy can be studied in terms of the transformation from welfare to workfare (Jessop 2002, 2004, 2007) and from employment to employability. This does not necessarily contradict with the arguments of Foucault, with its stress on the recommodification policies and targeting the abilities of the humans as an object of political intervention for an economic purpose. When it comes to the Platform, the central questions are where it stands regarding this process and how it receives and perceives the EU social policy discourse.

Platform, social protection and empowering of citizen’s associations

In 1998, the Platform presented its position on Europeanising social policies in a policy paper, *Adopting to Social Changes*. In this document the Platform set out the principles of social protection, the responsibilities of EU institutions and member states in new governance methods, and the role of NGOs, while making suggestions

⁸⁷ The Commission’s education policies was also analysed from a similar perspective (Mitchell 2006).

of its own. The Platform defended two principles of social protection: the recognition of social protection as a fundamental right and recognition of social protection within the scope of a general interest at the European level. The latter underpins the social democratic sources of the Platform's position. Accordingly, the document emphasised the values of social protection as solidarity, redistribution and social responsibility. These values, in fact, are different from what neo-liberal forms of governmentality (or advanced liberalism) suggest. Contrary to advanced liberalism's notion of empowering the individual to take responsibility for his or her own risks, the Platform defends the notion of collective risk taking. The Platform's redistribution proposal aims to correct market inequalities. Furthermore, the Platform recommends empowering citizens' associations in terms of sharing responsibility collectively. The conclusion to be drawn from these principles is that the Platform tries to generate a notion of "universal" from within a discourse which puts a great emphasis on "particularisation". The reflection of this particularistic discourse can be observed within the contemporary ethos of the art of government—advanced liberalism (an ethics of individualism). The Platform's suggestion, in that sense, grasps both the shortcomings of neo-liberal discourse and European governance in formulating a link between particular and universal. Neo-Foucaultian scholars have emphasised that the tenets of current forms of power stress technologies of agency (e.g. the notion that there is no society as such, only the individual). For instance, governmentality as a form of power defined by Foucault involves both individualising and totalising aspects (Foucault 1991). The Platform's stance on social policy as suggested in *Adopting to Social Changes* is a suggestion ethically entrenching this link by conceptualising a European general will by reallocating risk and any repercussions of market failures. However, one crucial point addressed, in this respect, by the Platform requires special attention: the empowerment of citizens' associations. Associations, according to the proposal, carry the burden of risk while involving a process of general will formation. In other words, the Platform suggests a kind of associational democracy which would embody the ethical burden of general interest formation (through a republican interpretation) and the functional encumbrances of problem solving (e.g. the associational democracy of Cohen and

Rogers 1994). Of these new roles, the document explains, “identifying new roles needs bringing out new forms of solidarity, participating in dialogue on national and European social policies, organising and managing services, and undertaking any social protection assignments given to them by public authorities”. The Platform’s assessments here can be interpreted as a new form of state, society and market relations; they denote a project of not leaving the space to market dynamics which are left beyond the control of the state. On the one hand, it specifies strengthening supranational governance institutions (and rescaling governance), while on the other, it requires strengthening extra-governmental associations of citizens:

[T]he place of the non-profit sector, whose organisation is more flexible and responsive than the state, must be maintained and recognised. Close to citizens and their needs, non-profit organisations manage social services in accordance with the values that they hold as their own: taking the person into consideration as a whole, and not just as a consumer or a user, the provision of specific guidance and mediation for people in difficulty, and the availability of voluntary work. When delegating services to the non-profit sector, the state should provide adequate resources for it to fulfil its role: clear conditions of co-operation, and sufficient and sustainable finances (SP, *Adapting to social changes*, 1998).

Sharing responsibilities through subsidiarity

Concerning the distribution of responsibilities in social policies, the Platform supports the subsidiarity principle. *Adapting to Social Changes* (SP, 1998) asserts on which levels the EU should take on responsibility: it “should assert and guarantee social principles and standards”, such as by “including core obligatory rights in the treaties”, conducting “systematic impact studies on the social effects of legislation” and “adapting structural funds”. The states, according to this formulation, “should remain the guarantors of compulsory social protection systems”. This suggestion is in fact in line with the principles of the OMC; nevertheless, it suggests some different dimensions to the administration of social policies at the EU level. The first concerns the “inclusion of a core of obligatory rights in the treaties”. Having defined the EU level as a sort of constitutional guarantee for social rights, the Platform next suggests the “implementation of social standards”. Furthermore, the Platform suggests examining the effects of EU level legislation; it therefore defines the EU as

an authorised auditor, whereas it perceives the national social policy regimes as amenable to EU surveillance. The last recommendation of the Platform, on the other hand, entails the adoption of European Structural Funds to be used particularly in the field of social policy.

Protection beyond employment and protection of employability

The Platform further argues in this document that the social protection policies should not be limited to employment, but should also extend to housing, education and the environment. It defends “cash benefits and service provisions for dependent persons, including children and older people”. Furthermore, it argues that flexibility measures should not hinder the stability and security of workers, particularly those who work under temporary and part-time contracts. In this document, the Platform recognises the neo-liberal discourse on transformation from employment to employability by suggesting the conversion of unemployment insurance into employability insurance. The following quotation refers to this situation while relating to collective risk sharing:

Workers, and even the unemployed, cannot be asked to pay for their careers and employability on their own; it must be an overall, collective responsibility shared between workers, companies, social partners, initial and life-long training organisations and the education system, while providing compensation for career breaks and interruptions, both financially and in terms of social protection.

The Critique of workfare

In 2000, the Platform asserted its five key priorities in social policy in a position paper, *Social Platform: Meeting the Challenges of the Century*: social inclusion, employment, universal standards on health care, equality between men and women and adequate pension systems. Although the Platform had presented its reservations on the EU’s workfare-oriented social policy measures during the early 2000s, it concretised this critique in its response to the Commission’s communication in *Making Work Pay*, 2004. The position paper stressed that the Commission’s approach was “determined by the funding of social protection regimes rather than social inclusion objectives”. It was furthermore “leading to cuts in benefits, or

compulsory work, creating further poverty and social exclusion and undermining the very of essence European Social Model”. Activation discourse was the second point the Platform critiqued: “The language of ‘activation’ and ‘incentives’ is indicative of the underlying assumption that the key reason for unemployment is that most of those who don’t work are unwilling to do so, and therefore that employment can be stimulated by encouraging, even forcing, people to work.” The Platform hence criticised the *re-commodification* of social policies, a process in which individuals would be left to their own devices in struggling with market forces. The Platform’s proposal, therefore, was to (re)strengthen public services—just like in the golden days of the Keynesian welfare system. Accordingly, it suggested investing in public services to create more jobs, and it particularly recommended investing in the public sector. On the other hand, the Platform was content with the Commission’s “non-financial measures to help people work”, including childcare facilities, training opportunities and lifelong learning.

Post-modern paternalism

The European social policy tradition, particularly throughout continental Europe, has been identified with embedded liberalism where the state became actively involved in the governance of the economy. In the current economic restructuring (defined as the workfare era), the state’s role as an entrepreneur providing full employment for all is being de-emphasised. However, its paternalistic features—to take care of the population—have been redefined. The postmodern paternalistic role of political power has now been defined as determining guidelines, frameworks and manuals for doing things and empowering the self as the master of its own care. The discourse of activation and lifelong learning are a reflection of this process. When it comes to EU governance, it can be argued that EU social policy has been developed as an art of government—guiding the actions of actors. One of the main reasons for this can be the EU’s lack of control over the national labour market, industrial relations, social protection regimes and taxing. Hence, conducting the conduct of others (e.g. the member states, and also European citizens) seemed to be a viable option of EU social policy. Having sketched this trend, I argue that while the Platform is relatively

critical of the workfare elements of this project, it recognises the idea of intervention into human realm through European instruments. In other words, the Platform has provided criticism of the transition from welfare to workfare, while supporting measures taken in the name of the employment to employability. Furthermore, with respect to a critique of workfare elements, it has limited this critique to persons which cannot participate in the labour market (both temporarily and permanently). It has, thus, provided a limited criticism for the *re-commodification* and *individualisation* processes, orienting to market-correcting instruments. Further, we should add that the Platform's criticism does not necessarily point out a contradiction within the rationalities of capitalism, but suggest solutions within its confines.

A rights-based approach to European social policy

Throughout the 2000s, the Social Platform has advocated a rights-based approach for the governance of social policies in the fields of social inclusion, pensions and health. In other words, it has debated these social policies from the vantage point of fundamental rights. An illustration of this can be seen in its contribution to the *Evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Inclusion* (2005): "At the core of the OMC must be a fundamental-rights approach to the policy areas covered, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights ... Fundamental rights are violated not only when people do not have access to basic means for survival, but when they are unable to live in dignity due to poverty and social exclusion." The question then becomes: what kind of rights does this approach correspond to, i.e. positive or negative rights? It is difficult answer this only by looking at these lines; yet, it can be deduced that the Platform would affirm the state regulations fighting against the aspects that threaten the dignity of the humans, considering that The Platform conceives of the states as the guarantors of compulsory protection (SP, *Adoption to Social Change*, 1998). When its emphasis on the state's role in empowering the individual through techniques of training and ensuring an adequate minimum income also taken into account, it can be argued that the Platform advocates a positive-rights approach. Thus, it addresses rights as an instrument for improving living conditions vis-à-vis the classical liberal notion of rights which aim

to protect the individual from external intervention. Defined in this way, this approach differs from the traditional liberal interpretation which ascribes a minimal role to the state, strictly restricting the state intervention to economic and social realm. In other words, the Social Platform interprets these policies from the positive rights tradition. Nonetheless, a certain right in *itself* does not of necessity bring equality and wellbeing, but needs to be translated into policies and backed by enforcement measures. The competencies of the EU with this regard are, however, still limited.

Upgrading skills and lifelong learning

At this point, we should further focus on the Platform's ideas about lifelong learning and activation. In a position paper, *Social Investment: more quality jobs and solidarity* (2009), the Platform proposes some ideas for upgrading skills according to the needs of the new labour market. At the EU level, it suggested "establish[ing] a European system of early identification of skill needs, ensur[ing] that the European social fund targets initiatives for the most vulnerable and groups at risk, [the] establish[ment of] a % on the unemployment in training, and expand[ing] the youth mobility programmes involving vocational training, volunteers, entrepreneurs or trainees". The Platform's proposals for upgrading skills at the national level, on the other hand, concern "develop[ing] employability strategies for the most excluded, combin[ing] vocational training with basic skills training (especially for lower-skilled people), and invest[ing] in social and health services". The Platform suggests further training strategies for the most excluded: "In order to address early school leavers, non-formal education, vocational education and voluntary activities should be promoted as they often are more useful than formal education in developing social/interpersonal skills and self-esteem among vulnerable groups of children/youth" (Ibid.).

The Platform has affirmed lifelong learning (LLL) as a central tenet of social policies; however, it has proposed a wider definition that is not restricted to labour market integration. According to the Platform, "lifelong learning and basic education

can play a key role in combating social exclusion and promoting social cohesion. For example, “active aging can mean that older adults remain engaged with their community and contribute in a voluntary capacity to their neighbourhood” (SP, *Contribution to Troika preceding the Informal Employment and Social Affairs Council*, 2004). In this way, the Platform relates lifelong learning to civic education, and thus to the enhancement of social capital. The Platform, however, could have been more critical toward LLL discourse, just as it endeavoured to be with respect to flexibility discourse. Mitchell highlights how one can approach LLL discourse from a further critical point of view in her examination of EU education policies: “[EU education] program priorities focus on individual pragmatism and on the skills and mobility needed for economic success rather than on the formation of a democratic person operating on within the framework of ‘ethical liberalism’ ... instead of a concept emphasising democratic tools, personal development and critical thinking, lifelong learning has transmogrified into a concept primarily affirming the constant formation of work skills” (Mitchell 2006).

It can thus be concluded that the Platform’s reactions to EU social policy reforms, on the one hand, recognise a new paradigm change due to a transformation entailed by economic restructuring; however, on the other, these reactions lead to several points of criticism. The Platform principally supports the Europeanisation of social policies, advocating the social inclusion discourse and the empowerment of the individual through techniques of lifelong learning and training. Suggested in this way, the Platform’s suggestions can be seen pertinent with the tenets of third way, combining the social democratic spirit of state regulation with communitarian ideas of solidarity as well as policies of activation – which makes the human capacities amenable to political intervention and economic logic. One of the most pressing proposals of the Platform, in this respect, is the introduction of a minimum income within the EU. The Platform also supports policies of skill developing in order to adapt to changing economic conditions; this may well be regarded pertaining to the conduct of conduct via the political programme of forming a new subjectivity of an active citizenship who is empowered, but left with the responsibility of bearing the all risks. Up to this

point, I have tried to evaluate the Platform's position of the EU social policies. However, this inquiry into the relationship between the Platform and European social policy *qua* social policy should move beyond the Platform's mere thoughts and also consider the context of its emergence, as previously elaborated. To recapitulate, this concerns the relative enhancement of the EU competencies with respect to social policies at Maastricht Treaty, acceptance of the employment as a common European problem with the Amsterdam and the introduction of the Lisbon strategy. The Platform's establishment, in this context, has been explained with the Commission's aspirations of strengthening its institutional legitimacy via mobilising collective action with an explicit (and implicit) connotation that it represents the common European interests with respect to regulation of European social policy (e.g. Cram 2006). Yet, the Commission has tried to justify its sponsorship with its reliance on the external expertise for its task of proposal preparations, as recognised in EU treaties; it implies the Platform's position papers, which are elaborated above, would function to supply *epistemic* assistance. Nevertheless, as also shown, the Platform's contribution (and other social actors alike) is trivial with this regard, considering the findings of the earlier research. On the other hand, some has approached the Platform's work positively, as it allows the presence of some voices which would otherwise be absent (Cullen 2010). The latter view relates to the Platform's (and similar actors' alike) legitimating role (Kochler-Koch&Finke 2007), one that is vaguely defined and as previously discussed here based on an assumption. To sum up, the ideas of the Platform, which are assessed above, does not have any significant influence in Brussels in terms of policy-making.

6.2. Interpreting the Administrative Structure of the Social Platform from the Governmentality Perspective

6.2.1 Organisational Structure of the Social Platform

The organisational structure of the Social Platform and its working strategies can be explained in terms of managerialism. Managerialism is defined as a mentality and technology of managing anything independent from its content: “[to manage] is a verb that can be applied to the processes of ordering and controlling people and

things. It implies a separation between the actual doing of whatever is being managed (engineering or teaching) and the higher level of function of these processes. In other words, management is not about engineering or teaching, but the coordination of the doing of these things” (Ibid.). It is based on the understanding that the performance (effectiveness and efficiency) of the organisations can be maximised by applying principles of management, and developing the skills of managers. The main features of managerialism are associated with bureaucratic governance and professionalism, which may lead to autocratic leadership (Ibid).

It was Burnham (1942) who advanced the notion of a *managerial revolution* that unfolded during the nineteenth century. His assessments still may shed light on the ongoing debate. Burnham claimed that not only were businesses, enterprises and corporations governed according to the tenets of managerialism, but also other sectors of society, including parliaments: “The actual directing and administrative work of the bureaus [in the parliament] is carried on by new men, a new type of men. It is, specifically, the *managerial* type, the type we noticed also when considering the structural developments in ‘private enterprise’. The active heads of bureaus are the managers-in-government, the same, or nearly the same, in training, functions, skills, habits of thought as the managers-in-industry” (Ibid., 150).

Managerialism, then, has been widely used with respect to describe all organisational changes in the public sector since 1979 (Considine and Painter 1997). Succinctly, it referred initially to “corporate management” with its intentional focus on the unified and hierarchical decision making and knowing how rather than knowing what (Ibid). “New managerialism” was emerged to depict the changes in the 1990s with its stress on the dominance of the economic rationality within bureaucracies; contracting out responsibilities of the state to private sector; orientation to efficiency and utility maximisation; separating policy making from policy-implementation; prioritising scientism (Yeatman 1997). Yet the organisational changes in this era –the early 1980s and onwards- has also been defined as New Public Management (NPM) –

which has as well as been considered to in relation to proliferation of the notion governance and neoliberal reforms (see Rhodes 1996; and Bevir 2010).

Bevir (2010:71) describes the features of NPM as follows: “[it] encourages public sector organisations to think of themselves as more like private sector organisations, and to adopt managerial and budgetary practices from private sector organisations. It aims to shift attention from procedures and formal processes to measures of outputs”. Bevir (Ibid) continues “the advocates of NPM devise forms of measurements that they think apply to the public sector [...]. They thus support the use in the public sector of ‘best practices’ from the private sector with respect to financial management, human resources, and decision making”⁸⁸.

The Commission’s European Civil Discourse and its implications of the Social Platform can be studied against this backdrop with a particular focus on the examination of the administrative structure of the Platform⁸⁹.

Decision making processes

Focusing on the Platform’s *administrative units*, *working methods* and *decision-making procedures* should make it possible to trace and observe the extent of bureaucratisation, managerialism and professionalism.

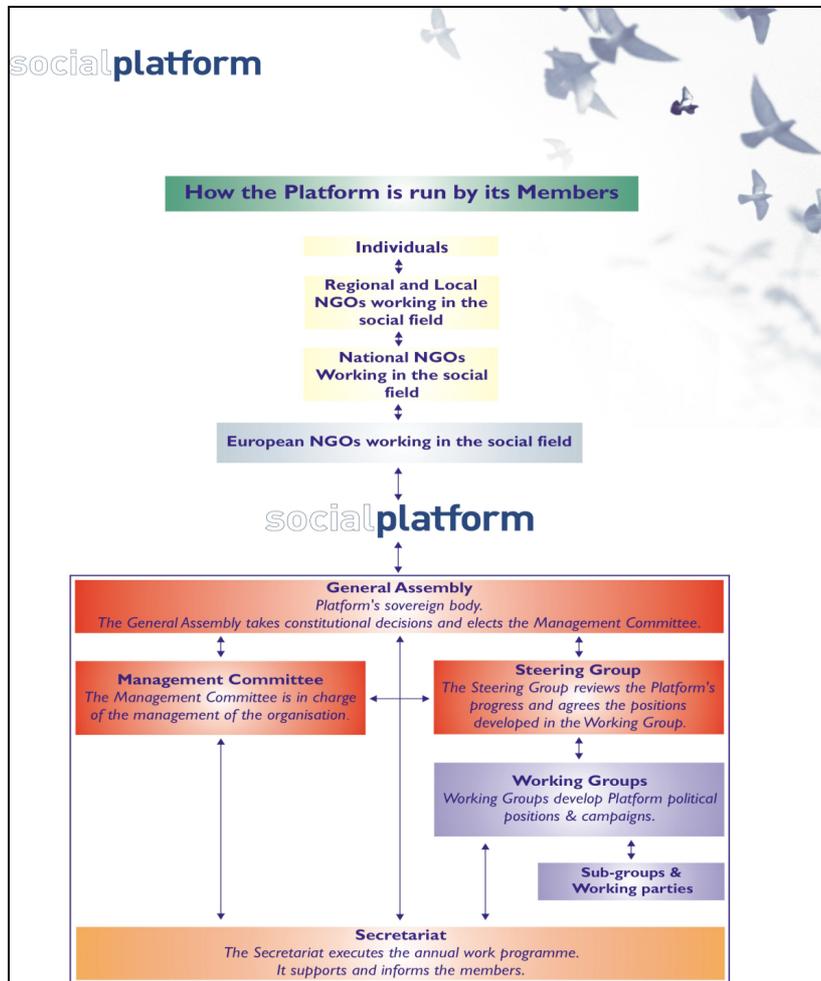
Administrative units of the Platform: The Platform is administered by a coordinator and a President. Its organisational structure comprises the General Assembly (GA), the Steering Group (SG), the Management Group (MG), the Membership Accreditation Committee (MAC), and the Secretariat. The rights and obligations of each unit and the procedures of the decision-making process are defined in the statute

⁸⁸ Some of these characteristics of NPM can also be found within the mentality of the Open Method of Coordination with it focus on the “best practices”, benchmarks and measurements of the performances. Moreover, the Platform helps circulating these norms within the NGO community with respect to capacity-building and training activities about NGO management.

⁸⁹ See also Skocpol (2003) for an account of how American civil society has become managerial.

and internal rules of the Platform. The GA is the highest level of authority in the Social Platform.⁹⁰ The chart in Figure 1 illustrates how the Platform is governed.

Figure 1: How the Platform is governed



Source: Social Platform, Annual Report 2004

Whereas the SG gives consent for the political positions developed by the working groups, the MC oversees the daily management of the Platform. The MC also controls the budget, represents the Platform at external meetings and events, and appoints and dismisses staff in the Secretariat. The Secretariat, located in Brussels, is composed of eight persons, including a Director, who specialise in European politics

⁹⁰ The first GA was convened in 2001, the same year the Platform adapted a statute.

and European-level citizens' interest representation. It is responsible for the Platform's day-to-day management,⁹¹ and the institutional identity of the Social Platform is crystallised at the Secretariat. It is the Platform's permanent paid staff which occupies the Platform's office in Brussels; it prepares the Platform's communication tools, initiates the Platform's conferences, seminars, training courses, and study visits, and coordinates the Platform's administration.⁹²

The former leaders of the Social Platform⁹³ claim that its organisational structure and interactions with constituents resemble the way EU institutions function and operate: "The Social Platform agreed internal rules in 1999 which prescribed that decisions ought to be reached by consensus, and discussions about the areas of competence of the Platform strangely resembled the disputes over subsidiarity between the member states. This balancing act between acting together and maintaining one's own specificity has been a constant feature of the process of increasing the coordination between NGOs. Although this did at times slow down progress, it created stronger sets of alliances" (Alhadeff and Wilson 2002). Both ENAR and the Solidar confirmed this statement by stressing that they preserved their autonomy in their interactions with the Social Platform (P. Charhon and C. Reuter, personal communication, May 2009). Nonetheless, the relatively short history of the Platform shows that power has not been shared equally between the members—even though member's obligations and rights are enacted in the Social Platform's statute and the

⁹¹ One limitation for our work was that it was not possible to observe how the decision-making processes in each different unit differ.

⁹² The administrative units of the Platform can only comprise the members of the Platform. In other words, official affiliation with one of the Platform's member networks is a prerequisite for assuming responsibility in these bodies. My field work experience proved that some members of the Management Committee do not associate themselves with the Social Platform. During the arrangement of interviews, I contacted five members of the MC; only one person responded to my request, and that person, moreover, turned it down. After the failure to access members of the MC, I had the opportunity to meeting one person who initially did not reply to my emails during my field work in Brussels in December 2008. Taking this opportunity, I tried once again to arrange an interview with that person. Surprisingly, however, he denied affiliation with the Platform, instead insisting that he was working for another organisation (the European Volunteer Centre). When reminded that his name was on the Management Committee list on the Platform's website, he stated that the Management Committee has a supervisory function, and addressed the Secretariat in order to get information about the Platform.

⁹³ Alhadeff, Giampiero (2002) and Wilson, Simon (2002).

internal rules in order to provide procedural rights for the members to participate in the Platform's decision-making processes (i.e. general assembly and working groups). As Cullen's research (2005) reveals, some members, such as the gender- and leftist-oriented solidarity movements, youth and elderly groups, dominate the Platform's work at the expense of e.g. the elderly, antiracism, disability, public health and anti-poverty groups. For instance, the president of the Platform between 1998 and 2003, Giamperio Alhadef, the current president, Conny Reuter, and the director of the Secretariat, Rochan Di Puppo, were all recruited from Solidar. Cullen (Ibid.) explains this situation with the asymmetry of human and financial resources between the members.

The Platform's advocacy instruments

The Platform produces different materials about its administration and advocacy work, such as position papers, resolutions, policy briefings and advocacy letters. The quotation below, from the Social Platform Annual Report 2006, defines the content and the aim of these materials, along with how they are produced and officially adopted by the Platform:

Position papers: Social Platform position papers are developed by the Working Groups, assisted by the Secretariat. Position papers are detailed policy proposals made by European social NGOs on themes relevant to the Social Platform's mandate. They are proposed by Working Groups for adoption by the membership as a whole. All Social Platform position papers are subject to full consultation, with comments and amendments submitted by members, and subsequent re-drafting by Working Groups and the Secretariat. The draft documents are then adopted by the Steering Group. Position papers almost invariably adopted by consensus, although the statutes and internal rules do allow for voting where consensus cannot be reached. *Resolutions* are also adopted by the Steering Group, after consultation of all members. Resolutions are shorter joint statements, often drawing upon previously agreed position papers to deliver a contribution from social NGOs at key political moments. They are proposed by Working Groups or by the Management Committee in collaboration with the Secretariat. *Policy briefings* are prepared by the Secretariat. They provide analysis of policy developments for Social Platform members and other actors (including political decision-makers). They may often later serve as the preparatory documents for further common positions. *Advocacy letters* are prepared by the Management Committee, Secretariat, or Working Groups, and are signed by the President, Director, and/or member of the Management Committee. They provide a

mechanism for the Social Platform to produce quick responses to political developments when a full position paper cannot be produced in time. Whilst they are not adopted by the Social Platform members, they are often the subject of consultation amongst the membership, and are usually based upon existing position papers. (SP, Working Plan, 2004)

This quotation also carries the imprints of bureaucratisation and formalism; it concerns the allocation of the power within several units and reflects the formal (and strongly bureaucratic) language usage in descriptions.

Communication tools of the Platform

Among the Platform's different communication tools are the monthly newsletter and weekly mailing, which are sent to all EU institutions and social partners. Subscription is free and open to the public. While the newsletter mainly includes information about the Platform's activities and EU policies, the weekly mailing also presents the activities of the Platform's members. Another communication tool is the Platform's website, which has been redesigned several times during the 2000s in order "to improve the communication" of the Social Platform (Annual Reports, 2001-7). The Platform's websites include a short description of all its members, along with the Platform's publications, press releases and monthly newsletter. The members-only section contains internal and draft documents.

Communication (i.e. the tools for conveying the message) has been a central issue for the Platform's work. The Platform claims that its communication tools raise its profile and command a high level of recognition within EU institutions, social partners and the NGO sector. It has therefore been trying to develop its tools for communication, explaining its communication strategy as follows: "to restructure and simplify the Social Platform website; publish several issues of ENGAGE; keep a consistent visual identity and a tone for all external communication; respond to media requests and proactively seek coverage where appropriate; and investigate 'new media' opportunities" (SP, *WP*, 2009). To these ends, it recruited a Communication Officer, a professional in the techniques of public relations. It redesigned (and redesigned) its newsletter, website, brochure, posters, and leaflets

during the first decade of the 2000s. Furthermore, as part of its techniques of communication, the Platform endeavoured to develop its writing style and formats in its reports for a better and more transparent mode of communication (SP, WP, 2001). It soon became a model for the NGO community due to its success in implementing professional communication techniques. For instance, the graphic design used by the Platform in its reports was lauded as “good ways of communicating” in the lobbying toolkit prepared by the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG 2008). The Platform, moreover, organised training seminars on communication skills for its members, in which journalists and communication consultants gave lectures.

Having emphasised which advocacy and communication tools the Platform uses and how they are developed, one can pose two interesting questions: What happens when the advocacy work of NGOs is bureaucratised, and what happens when NGOs’ communication becomes an object of management (i.e. management by the Platform)? Since the Platform declares its objective as developing its communication skills, through e.g. techniques of clear writing and quality graphic design, one can argue that this approach has significant repercussions: communication is defined as a mentality of conveying a message independent from its content – thus is associated with the *knowing how rather knowing what*. This can lead to a mechanical articulation of information which abandons a sense of the human. One can argue this can lead to *reification* of “communication” – treating the abstract concepts as if they were quantifiable things - when the techniques take over the substance. Communication as defined in this way takes a different meaning than it is used by Habermas. As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, Habermas elucidates the role of the organised civic action with its promise of “communicative power”: that is, civil society detects the issues of public concern; fosters public deliberation about these issues and in turn play a catalyst role in articulation of them into decision making publics. The Platform, rather, manages *communication in itself* as a profession and *communication for itself* akin to PR techniques. This may be thought of in relation to a managerial type of NGO: it implies skills of managing an organisation independent

of its area of work. This argument becomes more lucid when we also focus on how the Platform describes its goals and objectives.

6.2.2. Results-based management and political surveillance

The ethos of the new modes of governance suggests effective and efficient problem solving (Jactenfuchs 2001; Mosher and Trubek 2004; and Hahhr 2005). This approach entails a moral connection between the performance of the agents and the outcomes they produce. The concept of outcome legitimacy developed by the governance approach is related to this view in that it establishes a link between the accountability and quality of governance structures. The governmentality approach argues that this view presents technologies of performance as techniques of restoring trust (i.e. accountability, transparency and democratic control) (Dean 1999:169). Technologies of performance could have constitutive impacts when they are considered to be embedded within power relations, i.e. empowering or colonising the agency. Defined in this way, political rationalities project *performance machine*-like subjects which are subjugated to the power of governing rationalities. Technologies of performance transform professionals into “calculating individuals ... within calculable spaces”, subject to “calculative regimes” (Miller 1992).

For our study, the observation of the Platform can reveal the emergence of calculating agents which are governed on the grounds of results-based management within civil society. The Platform is a typical example of a performance machine-like subject: it has to perform a set of goals, which are planned, carefully calculated, and set out in reports. Its establishment and activities at large are based on a mentality of achieving outcomes and reporting to the sources of funding. Each year it determines some objectives and details how to achieve them. At the end of the year, it documents its achievements with a report to the Commission. These reports are used to measure the success of the Platform. The goals, indicators of success and the expected outcomes are set out in the Platform’s reports and other communication tools according to special techniques. These techniques are in fact not mere descriptions and presentations of the work, but should rather be considered from a

broader perspective, i.e. the Platform's governing mentality—its knowledge and techniques of getting things done.

The Platform's working methods reveal its adherence to the principles of results-based management (RBM) and a logical framework approach (LFA). From the Platform's management documents, working programmes and annual reports between 2001 and 2010, it is clear that the Platform follows the working frame of LFA and RBM almost exactly. The OECD glossary of key terms in evaluation and result-based management (2002) defines RBM as follows: "A management strategy by which an organisation ensures that its processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and impacts), RBM rests on clearly defined accountability for results, and requires monitoring and self-assessment of progress towards results, and reporting on performance." The relevant concepts of RBM—benchmarking, inputs, outcome, outputs, performance, performance indicator, and performance monitoring—are shown in the OECD glossary.

LFA was developed and implemented by several government and international agencies, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other national and international development donor organisations.⁹⁴ The Australian Agency for Development, AusAid (2005) and Swedish International Agency for Development, SIDA (2005) define LFA as an "aid to thinking". This approach "establishes a logical hierarchy of means by which the objectives will be reached, and how outputs and outcomes might be best monitored and evaluated" (AusAid 2005; see also World Bank Logframe Handbook). It also lays out an activity description (the components of the activity, roles and responsibilities of the units and management arrangements) and the activity rationale (the nature of the

⁹⁴ These include AECID (Agencia Española de Cooperación internacional para el Desarrollo), GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), DFID (Department for International Development), UNDP and EC. The World Bank has used LFA since 1997.

situation in which the activity is embedded, cause/effect logic in the activity, and expected results) (Ibid.). Table 4 outlines the logical framework matrix.

Table 4: General Structure of a Logframe Matrix

General structure and content of a Logframe Matrix Activity Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal or Impact —The long term development impact (policy goal) that the activity contributes at a national or sectoral level	How the achievement will be measured—including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Goal indicator(s)—including who will collect it and how often	
Purpose or Outcome —The medium term result(s) that the activity aims to achieve—in terms of benefits to target groups	How the achievement of the Purpose will be measured—including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Purpose indicator(s)—including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Purpose to Goal linkage
Component Objectives or Intermediate Results —This level in the objectives or results hierarchy can be used to provide a clear link between outputs and outcomes (particularly for larger multi-component activities)	How the achievement of the Component Objectives will be measured—including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Component Objectives indicator(s)—including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Component Objective to Output linkage
Outputs —The tangible products or services that the activity will deliver	How the achievement of the Outputs will be measured—including appropriate targets (quantity, quality and time)	Sources of information on the Output indicator(s)—including who will collect it and how often	Assumptions concerning the Output to Component Objective linkage

Source: Australian Agency for International Development (2005), AusGuideline for Logical Framework Approach.

This chart helps illuminate both a vertical and horizontal logic. The vertical logic (i.e. reading the columns up-and-down in the figure above) makes clear the causal relationships between different objectives. The horizontal logic, on the other hand, shows how the objectives will be measured and verified (Ibid.). The vertical way of thinking is based on a linear temporal logic, a logic of which is explained by AusAid as an *if-then* causality:

- *if* inputs are provided, *then* the work program can be undertaken;
- *if* the work program is undertaken, *then* outputs will be produced;
- *if* outputs are produced, *then* component objectives will be achieved;
- *if* the activity purpose is supported, this should then contribute to the overall goal.

How does the Platform pertain to the RBM and LFA? These approaches provide initial information about the sorts of management and working strategies the

Platform follows. It is therefore possible to observe the way the Platform thinks, i.e. relates itself to social phenomena and deals with social problems according to a set of pre-established ideas and a logical framework. This has been reflected in the Platform's yearly reports and communication tools.

Reports and communication tools as techniques of subjectification

The way the Platform disseminates its activities through its communication tools, and the way it presents its objectives in its reports, are aspects from which the implications of a professionally calculating and managerially thinking subject can be observed. Since these tools provide continuous information about what the Platform does (or what the EU does), they function as performance manifestations. They express specific objectives and break these objectives down into several components. They include the outcomes of these objectives, detail action plans and present means of measurement.

The beginning of this section mentioned the Platform's objectives up to 2006: campaigning, capacity building, civil dialogue and communication. These objectives were further divided into subcomponents. The following chart demonstrates these objectives:

Table 5: The Platform's main objectives and sub-objectives

Main goal	Sub-objectives
Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To influence EU policy formulation on a regular basis by promoting the combined views of member organisations. *To campaign on issues of common interest to its members, especially on social rights, EU social policies and programmes, and civil dialogue.
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To facilitate the exchange of experiences and practices of Social Platform members and enable the mutual exchange of information. * To help social NGOs improve their capacity to contribute to a better future for all, to influence EU policy, and to make meaningful contributions to the civil dialogue. *To build alliances with other relevant stakeholders, including other NGOs and social partners.
Civil Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To facilitate relations with EU institutions and other international organisations when there is an appropriate link with EU policies, and to facilitate the process of dialogue and consultation while taking diversity into account.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To promote awareness of relevant EU policy developments among Social Platform members. * To promote external awareness of the activities and role of the Social Platform and its members.

Source: SP (2005), *WP*. Note: The chart does not exist in the original document but is drawn here for illustrative purposes.

The Platform also categorises its activities according to its main goals, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The objectives of the Platform and its activities

Main Goal	Activities
Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lisbon Agenda Impact Assessment and Sustainable Development Public Procurement The Future of Cohesion Policies in Europe Corporate Social Responsibility Social Policy Agenda Open Method of Coordination Demographic change and the modernisation of social protection Employment and Social Protection Minimum Income (Wages) Services, Social Services, and Services of General Interest The Social Inclusion Strategy Anti-discrimination policies Gender equality Integration of Migrants Fundamental Rights The EU Constitutional Treaty Participatory democracy Funding of NGOs at local, national and EU level
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchanges of experience between social NGOs Exchanges with other stakeholders Training Member support Study visits to new Member States and candidate countries
Civil Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European Commission European Parliament Council of the European Union Other EU Institutions and International Bodies
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminating information to Social Platform members External communication activities: promoting knowledge of the Social Platform and social NGOs

Source: SP (2005), *WP*

The Platform adopted a strategic plan in 2006 which brought about a revision of the objectives, but not the logical framework. The reason behind this change, as given by the Platform, was the adoption of a more efficient and effective management. Table 7 lays out these changes.

Table 7: Main goals of the Platform in the Strategic Plan adopted in 2006

Main Goal	Sub-components, indicators
<p>Strengthening the Sector:</p> <p>- to support the development of a strong, vibrant social NGO sector.</p>	<p>Communicating the contribution of NGOs: We will develop the collective identity of social NGOs, and communicate the contribution of social NGOs to social cohesion.</p> <p>Leading on good governance: We will establish the sector as a leader in good governance practices for NGOs by developing a Charter of Governance for European NGOs.</p> <p>Capacity-building: We will support members to achieve their objectives by providing information, by developing mutual understanding and through skills training.</p> <p>Supporting development: We will support the development of links between European social NGOs and NGOs within the new Member States, Accession and Candidate Countries.</p> <p>Securing funding: We will seek to secure funding for the Social Platform to allow it to continue to function independently.</p>
<p>Reinforcing Participatory Democracy:</p> <p>- to strengthen participatory democracy by supporting a process of dialogue between NGOs and a more transparent European Union.</p>	<p>Improving the dialogue: We will develop a clearer vision of what kind of structured dialogue social NGOs want with the institutions of the EU, and seek agreement from the Institutions to implement this and to achieve a real stakeholders' approach.</p> <p>Making the EU more democratic and transparent: We will work to promote a more open, democratic European Union.</p>
<p>Shaping Social Europe:</p> <p>- to positively influence the development of the EU's social and economic model by focusing our policy work upon the relationship between economic and social policies, and by promoting our common vision for a social Europe.</p>	<p>Annual thematic focus: Each year a significant part of our work will be structured around an annual theme chosen by our General Assembly. We will use the thematic work to improve understanding of key issues by NGOs, to access views from national and European social NGOs, and to provide a focus for our policy and campaigning work, hence improving our visibility and impact.</p> <p>Prioritising our campaigning work: When establishing our policy priorities, we will evaluate how politically significant the policy is and to what extent we could influence it, as well as the level of shared interest amongst members, and the extent to which a collective input from the Social Platform could bring added value.</p> <p>Making our advocacy work more efficient and transparent: When implementing our advocacy work we will develop streamlined, transparent policy-making working methods to ensure that we are more responsive to emerging policy debates.</p> <p>Socio-economic research networking: We will establish stronger links with researchers to support the development of our campaigning agenda, particularly around the links between economic and social policy.</p>

Source: Social Platform, Strategic Plan, 2006; the texts here are direct citations.

The Platform's annual reports have followed the same framework and explained the achievements of each pre-defined objective. They present the activities behind each objective as an indicator of success. Since annual reports have also had aimed to inform other stakeholders and the general public, these achievements were presented in a different format than the working programmes, i.e. explanatory text boxes, pictures and graphic designs.

The Platform has used different techniques in its communication. It has represented its result-based performances both qualitatively and quantitatively. Most often it has verbally described its performance targets and end products; however, in some cases, it has employed numbers, pie charts and tables. Pie-charts and graphs were first used in the 2007 annual report; below is an illustration of the Platform's end-products in 2007 (see Table 8. In the same report, the Platform also quantified the intensity of contact with the EU institutions, e.g. 60 percent with the Commission and 30 percent with the Parliament, though the indicators behind this estimation were not clarified. Starting in 2007, the Platform employed a different strategy for presenting its work; since then, it has used different visualisation methods, such as timelines, graphs and logical framework-inspired advanced charts.

The relevance of examining the Platform's reports and questioning the "logic" behind such organisational structuring is twofold. First, we can trace the imprints of the rationalities and the technologies of these mentalities, thus exposing how political power creates subjects and how subjects implement this logic in their practices. This analysis examines the episteme of governmental rationalities, i.e. their way of thinking and way of performing. It shows how political power shapes, manipulates and controls the conduct and the conduct of conduct. For instance, the rationalities do not directly act upon the subjects but on their actions, mentalities and even logics. This corresponds to a form of power which does not constrain the actions of agencies and discipline by the threat or use of violence. This form of power, moreover, does not use the subject as a mere instrument for achieving political and social control. Rather, the kind of analysis conducted here, an analysis of the art of government, investigates how power creates subjects and makes them amenable to governing. Before political power incorporates agents into the governance of society, it constitutes them. For instance, the development agencies formulate frameworks, such as LFA and RBM, to shape the actions of the agents; it imposes a certain logic of management. It constitutes a certain type of subjectivity which thinks in a linear mentality and is oriented towards results.

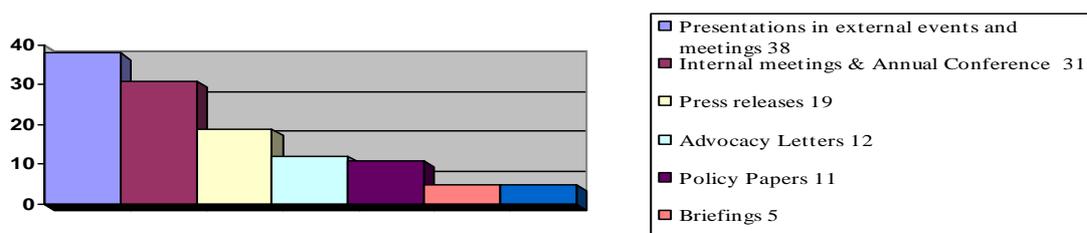
The second point of relevance of a critical approach to the Platform's management rationale and techniques concerns the relationship between the Platform's way of doing things and its redefinition of the political. Since we have started to debate the Platform in terms of the normative concepts of political theory, such as legitimacy, democracy and civil society, we should address the impact of an RBM and performance machine-like subjects acting on the abovementioned normative concepts. Furthermore, a performance-oriented approach to politics embodies a linear logic associated with things rather than people (Chambers and Petit 2004).⁹⁵ This logic renders participatory democracy, social policies and the reshaping of NGOs as the objects of performance. It defines these goals as an end goal (*telos*), and the sub-component objectives and activities as the means of achieving these goals. What is wrong with this? The 2009 work programme presents what happens when participatory democracy and civil dialogue (i.e. a policy of incorporating NGOs into EU administration) has been conceptualized from the scope of RBM. Following LFA and RBM dictates, the Platform presents "achievements, objectives, expected results and proposed actions". Hence, it states that the Platform achieves "a common position defining who we are, what we mean by civil dialogue and participatory democracy and listing principles and recommendations". The objectives (indicators) of this achievement are *then* listed as follows: 1) "Structures and procedures are in place for a more effective civil dialogue at European level; 2) Platform members and their members are equipped to assess and improve civil dialogue mechanisms; 3) the various NGO sectors at EU level have common objectives on how to enhance civil dialogue and coordinate their advocacy work." In terms of the expected results, it refers to follow-up EU regulation on civil dialogue, the preparation of guides for its members and assisting NGOs to improve their own corporate structures. Furthermore, the achievements in strengthening the sector pillar of the Platform was illustrated in the work programme 2010 as follows: "A strong collective identity of social NGOs is established; the NGO sector is established as a leader at the European level in good governance practices; members are supported by developing mutual understanding and by sharing information and skills; [and] links are developed

⁹⁵ Chambers, R. and J. Petit (2004).

between European social NGOs within the new Member States. In sum, participation is reduced to mere association with accreditation in decision-making, and an indicator represented graphically. The working methods of the Platform (work plans, annual reports, strategic action plans) have been built in such way to achieve pre-planned aims. Since this structure has emerged as a result of the Commission's requirements, the question is the extent to which the working ethos based on constant reporting, being audited and being controlled colonises the Platform's actions and the staff's behaviours. In other words, how do the Platform and its staff receive and perceive the mechanisms imposed by the contractual agreements.

This question will be further elaborated in the next section where we will examine the Platform's documents on participation and participatory democracy. In other words, whereas the reports revealed how it represented its performance, its position papers will help us see how the Platform receives and perceives these concepts. The Platform's RBM and LFA-oriented working strategies revealed the extent to which it operates as a calculating performance-oriented subject. However, it should be noted that the style of reporting and documenting bureaucratic structures should not necessarily be interpreted as colonisation of the Platform by neo-liberal governmental rationalities. The position papers will help us discuss whether the Platform thinks and acts differently in this respect. However, we should first mention the relationship between technologies of reporting and new mechanisms of social surveillance, before looking at the Platform's role in governing European civil society.

Table 8. Social Platform Activities and Publications in 2007



Source: Social Platform, Annual Report 2007

Reports as tools of surveillance

The techniques of reporting are embodied within power relations, in that political power develops a surveillance mechanism upon the agencies of governance. However, this surveillance is different than the Panopticon of penitentiaries. It is instead exerted on free agencies, and is in fact based on the idea of empowering agencies to calculate their actions, present their goals in an appropriate way, and then document their achievements. According to RBM, the agencies should perform initially in order to be audited. Whereas political rationalities render subjects via several techniques into performing subjects, auditing plays a disciplining role on both the performer and the performed. Hence, not only the content of the Platform's reports is pertinent for our inquiry, but also the very mentality of reporting which embodies an ideology of short-term performance-oriented actions. In other words, we propose an examination of the Platform's activities as an object of performance. We have mentioned that the Platform defined its objectives as promoting European society, strengthening the EU NGO sector and promoting participatory democracy. The interesting question is how one could calculate, quantify and document the objectives and achievements of these issues. Furthermore, what happens when these aspects become targets of performance? We have illustrated above how the Platform presents its goals and achievements. This illustration shows how participation has been advanced as a calculable phenomenon. One of the consequences of this is that the LFA style enables monitoring and control of the performances.

The Platform has also developed mechanisms of self-auditing for finances and an evaluation mechanism of its organisational structure and its working methods (SP, WP, 2010). It will revise its strategic plan in 2011, at the end of its five-year plan. For this task, it has temporarily recruited an expert to evaluate its previous strategy and administrative culture. This evaluator will also be required to suggest a new framework strategy for the Platform.

6.3. The Platform's endeavour to shaping (and reshaping) the NGO Community

This chapter has so far illustrated the Platform as an object of government. We now turn our attention to the ways in which the Platform endeavours to create an NGO community, a community which would think, act and conduct itself like the Platform. One of the Platform's main objectives *strengthening the sector* serves constituting new type of subjectivity and new subject. In this respect, it disseminates the knowledge and technologies of European governance and trains its members through techniques of capacity building. The Secretariat in Brussels enjoys significant power in governance and the organisation of the Platform's activities, instead of merely coordinating the activities of its members. The Secretariat, along with the Platform's network of administrators, shapes the conduct of their members in terms of the European art of government. This chapter will now explain how the secretariat disperses the rationalities of government through training its members on participatory democracy and active citizenship. It evaluates how the Platform incorporates the NGO community into European governance, empowers it, and disperses knowledge of the EU, thus rendering Europe knowable and governable.

Representing the EU and the techniques of Open Method of Coordination: benchmarking and exchange of best practices

In 2001, the Platform pointed out that it was set up to add a European value to its constituent parts (SP, WP, 2001:3). The Platform disseminates information about the EU: “[it] has always been a channel for the dissemination of information on the work of the EU which is relevant to members’ concerns” (SP, WP, 2000). However, this dissemination translates the knowledge of EU governance, such as the norms of OMC (SP, AR, 2001-10). Benchmarking, knowledge sharing and the exchange of practices are the new norms of European governance, the norms which the OMC introduced (Mosher and Trubek 2004, Eberlein and Kluwer 2004, Haahr 2005). The Social Platform aims at facilitating and promoting the exchange of best practices among its members: “The Social Platform will seek to involve a wide range of civil society actors in the Open Method of Coordination processes in the fields of social exclusion, pensions, and health-care, as well as conducting *awareness raising* amongst civil society concerning the existence of these new policy tools” (SP, WP,

2004). It also disseminates and explains EU policies through face-to-face interactions and electronically distributed publications. These practices can happen in members' meetings in the General Assembly, seminars, conferences, and Steering Group and Working Group Meetings. The Platform applies a concept to the agenda of NGOs, and presents it as a norm, thus attempting to normalise it: "We invited our members to reflect on what it means to take a rights-based approach in their work" (SP, AR, 2006).

The exchange of practices can be studied in two different ways: participatory democracy vs. a functionalist approach. The proponents of participatory democracy argue that dialogic interaction promotes civic virtues and trust. The functionalist approach, on the other hand, argues that the exchange of best practices entails the exchange of best practices of effective and efficient governance. As the latter entails, inter-subjective exchanges do not necessarily promote civic virtues and trust, but serve some pragmatic aims of governing society. When it comes to the definition of *exchange*, both approaches share some common points. Both presume that exchange happens in a power void between equal actors (socially, culturally, and economically), even though some experiences prevail over others. Observed in the example of the Platform, the Brussels headquarters play a significant role in determining what is to be exchanged by imposing a set of problematisations.

As indicated above, the members of the Social Platform can interact with each other within the infrastructure created by the Platform. For instance, they attend the conferences, lunch meetings, and seminars organised by the Platform, and follow each member's activities through the Social Platform's newsletter and webpage. Nonetheless, in these interactions, as mentioned above, the administrative unit of the Social Platform does not play a neutral role, in that it passively hosts the activities of its members. The Social Platform entrenches communicative forums, the content and the participants of which are defined by its central bureau. In addition, interestingly, its members also use similar technologies of communication in their interactions with their members. For instance, they publish guidelines, manuals or toolkits about the

institutional structure of the EU for their members, arrange training programmes, and organise conferences and seminars (see Social Platform 2006). The conclusion to be drawn is that not only do the EU NGOs interact each within the Platform's network, but also take advantage of a unique knowledge of communication that is dispersed within the NGO community, including the EU NGOs and their national members. The Platform is not necessarily the creator of these technologies of communication; it defines its role as enabling the transmission of "expert knowledge" among the actors of EU governing. Through physical spaces and a cyberspace of interaction that it established, the Platform enables carrying the rationalities of government from professionals while being actively involved in its diffusion.

Capacity building and training

One of the Platform's goals is the development of expertise among EU social NGOs; "The Social Platform will be committed to developing the professionalism and expertise of its members to operate effectively and efficiently at EU level" (SP, AR, 2003). This shows how the Platform is dedicated to dispersing a managerial-professional type of NGO. It provides expert knowledge for its constituents in three ways: a) through the exchange of ideas and practices within the constituents of Platform, b) through its training activities which aim at empowering the communication and administration skills of its members, and c) through external expertise, i.e. defining the central concepts such as participatory democracy and civil society, and setting strategies for better lobbying.

The Social Platform trains the members in forming an efficiently functioning organisation, and in communicating (SP, ARs, 2001-10); "The form of capacity building will include training and exchanges of knowledge on specific aspects of running NGO networks (office management, communication, strategic development and others) ... In particular the Platform will organise seminars with facilitators to train NGO representatives in public speaking, press relations, and communicating their message ... The Platform will also develop the exchanges between NGO administrators to exchange best practice and benefit from external expertise, and will

encourage NGO managers to share experiences and best practices with a view to strengthening the management of the social NGO sector” (SP, WP, 2005). This quotation illustrates the domains of the NGOs upon which the Platform can intervene and finds itself legitimate to intervene. To function as a good stakeholder and have a “better impact”, the technologies of the EU consultation require the European NGOs to be equipped with negotiation skills, Ruzza 2004). The Platform, therefore, confers a specific importance on training activities in lobbying techniques and communication skills.

The Platform aims to disperse a bureaucratic managerial structure to its members and local NGOs (especially within Central and Eastern Europe). In this respect, it drafted a charter of governance for European social NGOs, which remains unadopted as of the conclusion of our research (SP, WP, 2009). Thus, the Platform aims to shape the organisational structure of other organisations, mode of their appropriate conduct. Structuring the organisations in a bureaucratic way pertains to the moral dimension of the neo-liberal art of government. Moral, in this case, corresponds to the “best” way of organising, since it promotes transparency and accountability. Circulating the morals and knowledge of governance to other NGOs, the Platform normalises the moral idea that NGOs should orient their actions towards the EU, collaborate with other stakeholders, and manage their organisations professionally. For instance, the Platform dedicated its annual theme to *Civil Dialogue in Europe*; it has mobilised the national NGOs in order to promote a legal basis for NGOs in national scale consultations, i.e. a certain type of state-society relation. In this respect, it prepared a model letter and disseminated it to national NGOs in 2000.

In sum, the Platform employs certain tools and strategies to mobilise its members. It initiates campaigns, uses tools of communication, prepares certain toolkits and papers and organises conferences and study visits. The Platform, in fact, develops a set of practices that shapes a certain type of NGO, one that has an ideal administrative structure, uses professional techniques of communication, is willing to orient its actions towards the EU institutions, and moves physically across Europe.

Warleigh (2001) states that EU NGOs are not capable of handling the political socialisation of their members. Due to the limitations of this research, we cannot guess what the implications of the Platform for local NGOs will be. However, our research proposes that a further study on the Europeanisation of NGOs should not only be limited to political socialisation, but should also examine the harmonisation of the practices, motivations and modes of conduct. I argue that the Platform translates the complex concepts of EU governance (e.g. anti-discrimination, fundamental rights) for the NGO sector, making them manageable for the latter.

6.4. The Platform and Participatory Democracy Discourse

In an age where cynicism dominates the political landscape, social NGOs continue to invigorate society, providing outlets for frustrated voices, gathering-points for kindred spirits, and—through the key services which they provide—a sustaining light in the lives of millions across Europe. NGOs can also offer expert contributions to political decision-makers, as well as a means for engaging citizens directly into the political process—participative democracy in action. (Giampiero Alhadef 2001, President of Social Platform, *AR*)

The Social Platform believes that [...] a permanent renewal of democracy can only be achieved with a strong legal base to guarantee consultation of citizens' associations. (*SP, AR* 2003:12)

Below I will track how the Platform conceives of the ECS discourse and its role in the European art of government. In this respect, I will concentrate on the Platform's policy and position papers, listed by the Platform under "participatory democracy and governance". Topically these entail the Platform's reflections on the *White Paper on Governance* (the Commission's attempts to incorporate EU NGOs into European governance in the early 2000s), active citizenship, the Communication Strategy, the use of the Commission's funds, and the incorporation of non-political actors into EU decision-making through the European Transparency Initiative. The previous chapter explained the Commission's ECS discourse and its specific interest in EU NGOs. Hence, focusing on these positions, I will try to examine how the Platform receives and perceives the Commission's civil society discourse, along with

how it defines participatory democracy, civil society, and EU NGOs' incorporation into European politics.

The Platform and the White Paper on Governance

The Social Platform was content with the *White Paper's* mention of civil society as key to promoting more involvement in shaping and implementing EU policy, and in this regard suggested proposals to establish a more structured consultation of NGOs within the EU's decision-making processes. The Platform commented on the *White Paper on Governance* with respect to the EU's democratic deficit, principles of good governance, and the role of civil society (Social Platform 2001). The Platform supported the *White Paper's* diagnosis on the "widening gulf between the European Union and the people it serves", and principally accepted the role which the *WPG* assigned it, i.e. a mediating agent that connected people to the EU. Nonetheless, the Platform did not agree with the explanation given for the "disenchantment" of the people. The *WPG* diagnosed citizens' lack of interest on the basis of *communication* or *comprehension*; in other words, citizens had not yet fully understood the benefits of EU governance. The Platform rather suggested that disappointment in EU governance might stem from the EU's failure to deliver services which could improve citizens' lives.

The Platform supported the *WPG's* principles of good governance, namely *openness*, *participation*, *accountability*, *effectiveness* and *coherence*, and accepted them uncritically. As Føllesdal (2003) argues in his critique of the *WPG* the Platform could have been more critical in proposing alternative principles such as the rule of law, political equality or fairness. Had the Platform mentioned that these principles of good governance were based on the World Bank's definition and standards of "good governance" (Pierre 2000; Weiss 2000) it could have carried out a key component of its civic control, or critical gaze. Moreover, it could in this way have presented alternative values and norms about governing the public sphere. In this sense, the Platform failed to grasp the ongoing global transformation in governance and propose a "different value system" based on the "life-world of civil society", as

Habermas (1996) would put it, i.e. one not colonised by market or administrative values.

While the Platform was content with the *WPG*'s recognition of the role of "good" civil society "in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people's needs", it strictly rejected the Commission's claim on "tightening up [NGOs'] internal structure". It regarded the latter as an intervention to their independence: "the Commission had no legitimacy to direct the ways which the citizens choose to create and organise their associations which will vary according to the specificity of each NGO" (Social Platform 2001). Paradoxically, as it was shown earlier in this chapter, the very same year it accepted a 'statue' and in 2008 and also codified internal rules.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the Commission exerted its power on EU NGOs, and the Social Platform in particular, by intervening in their organisational structures. Moreover, the imperatives of this intervention have subjectifying impacts. Complying with the technologies of subjectivisation exerted by the Commission, the Platform has become a professionalised legal subject. This shows one of the aspects in which the Platform has become a subject.

The Platform and the bringing back the citizens: Active Citizenship Programme (ACP) and the Communication strategy

The Platform elucidated its position on the Commission's discourse of bringing the EU back to citizens with respect to the ACP and the Commission's communication policy. It stated that "NGOs should be at the heart of [the Active Citizenship Programme], as they play a key role in fostering active citizenship; in fact, this is their 'raison d'être'" (Social Platform, 2005). To the Platform, the ACP could be a useful instrument in "bringing the EU back to its citizens", in the context of EU governance suffering from a "democratic deficit", "growing Euroscepticism", and even "Eurapathy". In this respect, the Platform contrasted two different types of Commission strategies which could bring the EU back to its citizens. The first concerned information campaigns, which aimed to explain the role of the EU in

people's lives. The second strategy, on the other hand, rested on the idea that citizens could be involved in the construction of the EU polity. According to the Platform, the first of these strategies was a top-down strategy, and it warned that if it was not carefully implemented it could be considered "EU propaganda". Hence, this strategy would be unlikely to bring the EU to the citizens. Nonetheless, the second strategy, a bottom-up approach, could "help promoting a greater sense of ownership with the EU project among citizens by promoting their direct involvement in the construction of a strong and integrated European community" (Ibid.). The Platform argued that this would be "best way to get [citizens'] support", concluding that it had already made the aims of active citizenship a reality, such as the "active involvement of citizens [and] dissemination of the information about the EU". Therefore, the Platform found this initiative to be a legitimising instrument of its activities at the European level. In this respect, it pointed out that "the EU support enables the Social Platform to play a crucial role in disseminating information about the EU and retrieving feedback from the citizens' groups in a coordinated way" (Ibid.).

Related to the abovementioned project of rendering itself knowable by presenting itself, the Commission launched the communication policy in 2006 with the objective of closing the gap between citizens and the EU. The communication policy emerged from the idea that this gap would be closed if citizens could only learn about the EU. In this respect, the Platform stated that it aimed not to communicate Europe, but the EU institutions: "For Social NGOs the priority is not to communicate 'Europe' in general but to focus on the European Union, as centres of power where important decisions are taken that affect all of us and for which decision-makers should be accountable" (Social Platform, 2006). Furthermore, the Platform rejected any duty to advertise Europe, rather asserting that communication with European citizens was primarily the responsibility of political bodies such as "the Commission, elected governments and political parties". According to the Platform, despite the fact that the media and NGOs could play a role in informing people about the EU, it was not because they had a "responsibility" to do so, but rather because it was in the interest of their members. Emphasising that European NGOs were not the mere

instruments of EU institutions, the Platform targeted the political sphere as having the main responsibility for this task. It pointed out that the communication strategy did not prioritise the role of political parties, although “most of the communication money was spent during elections” (Social Platform, 2006). In this respect, the Platform argued that “political parties had huge responsibility in articulating a clear European programme and raising the accountabilities of MEPs or national governments on what they had achieved or intended to achieve at the EU level” (Ibid.).

Having emphasised explaining Europe as the responsibility of the political, the Platform pointed out three flaws in the “communication policy”. First, the Platform claimed that the communication strategy should have concentrated on the transparency of decision-making, along with informing the people about the EU’s institutional structure and the benefits of the EU for them. According to the Platform, “knowing who takes the decision and how was only a first step”, the second step then is being “able to react” (Ibid.). The Platform further argued that individual citizens could not follow EU politics due to the complexity of EU websites, or the outright lack of information. In this regard, the Platform stressed that European NGOs could scrutinise the decision-making processes and main actors in the debate, including the member states and political groups in the EP.

Second, the Platform strongly criticised the Commission’s proposal for establishing online consultation tools for the individual citizen as a way of dealing with the democratic deficit. It highlighted that “giving too much attention to these tools only contributed to reinforce the ‘illusion of democracy’ and clearly did not help in bridging the gap between those who have lost faith in the democratic system”. This system, according to the Platform, did not secure an inclusive participation mechanism for all groups in society, as experienced in Debate Europe when it tried to mobilise an online public debate; 90 % of the participants were male, between the ages of 18-44, and mainly used two languages (English [56%] and French [23%]).

Third, the Platform criticised the rationale behind the Commission's strategies of "empowering citizens" to "communicate Europe", which entailed the Commission-driven projects of "connecting citizens with each other, and connecting the citizens with the public institutions". The Platform found this to be unacceptable since it rested on the idea of "forcing people to integrate to an existing mould". In line with its previous statements, it stressed that the "civil society dynamics were bottom-up processes that could not be simply 'taught' or 'forced' on people" (Ibid.). Rather, it emphasised that "NGOs were extremely important in facilitating the communication between the EU leaders and citizens by focusing on things that matter for people." To the Platform, this role of the NGOs was not grasped fully by the Commission. Therefore, the Platform argued that a true communication policy should develop formal procedures, which would enable the involvement of civil society representatives in decision-making. The Platform here repeats its previous recommendation: EU politicians should focus not on individuals, but NGOs.

One could argue that the Platform's bottom-up proposal entailed the tenets of direct democracy, in which people govern themselves. Nevertheless, the Platform's suggestion of involving people in the construction of Europe was not actually based on the literal participation of the "all" in decision-making. Instead, this proposal could only be achieved through some organisations that would enjoy the right to participate on behalf of society. As mentioned, at the current stage of European decision-making, the Platform's "bottom-up" approach—societal self-government—can only be practised through technologies of lobbying. In other words, as opposed to the direct democracy ideal of antiquity, the Platform's approach is based on the idea of a "representative civil society" which acts on behalf of society—even though the society is not aware of being represented. It should also be noted this proposal is in line with Dryzek's proposal of discursive democracy (2001), i.e. institutions which are selected to represent a discourse.

Having elucidated the ACP and the Commission's communication policy in terms of the "bringing the EU back to citizens" discourse, the Platform furthermore claimed

that NGOs play a crucial role in connecting citizens with EU governance. In this respect, it pointed out that NGOs disseminate the knowledge of Europe and explain the benefits of European governance, while criticising the Commission's exact objective as propaganda (an interviewee from the ENAR secretariat also claimed that *raison d'être* of EU NGOs is to relate European policies to people). The question becomes why this very act of disseminating knowledge of the EU through "civic" intermediaries would be more democratic, or more justifiable, than the EU institutions' own attempts. In sum, the Platform related both policies to the work of the European NGO networks, and their objective of gaining legal accreditation in EU decision-making processes. The ACP and Communication policies directly address citizens through several initiatives which have been mentioned. The use of NGOs as an intermediary is one of those policies. Although the Platform provides a critique of EU policies, this critique is formulated in way that serves the Platform in strengthening its institutional position in the EU setup. Another implication of this is that it suggests a functionalist interpretation of politics in which NGOs play an intermediary role.

European civil society and the distribution of wealth

The representatives of EU NGOs—the Platform in 2006, and the Civil Society Contact Group in 2008—developed two different interpretations of how European funding should be allocated within Europe. In these papers they expressed the relevance of civil society's participation in the decision-making behind the EU budget.⁹⁶ According to the Platform and other representatives of EU NGOs, solidarity should not only be depicted as a matter for the member states, but it should also entail the relations between European citizens. This entailed the argument that "redistribution should be considered as an inherent component of the project of European integration", which would "preserve an element of solidarity essential to ensure that the EU project goes beyond the mere construction of a European economic area" (Platform 2006). Asserting that "the wealth which was created

⁹⁶ The Social Platform presents this as a position paper on its webpage under the category of participatory democracy and governance.

within Europe must be shared and redistributed”, the Platform proposed that public policies should address poverty and social exclusion on the basis of the “needs” of the people, with 78 million people in EU member states living in poverty or at risk of poverty. In this respect, the Platform pointed out that European social funds play an important role in which CSOs could participate in the budget process, and hence in the allocation of resources, which the Platform calls a system of “participatory budgeting”.

Moreover, the Platform pointed out that the EU budget paid little attention to social challenges, such as “social and demographic change, growing inequalities, rising poverty, deterioration of working conditions in certain sectors, downgrading of social protection systems, and lack of care infrastructures” (Ibid., 2006). In this respect, the Platform urged that as opposed to growth and competitiveness, EU governance should prioritise the principles of a “social and sustainable Europe”, a commitment which was adopted by EU leaders in 2006 (European Council, Doc. 10917/06). If these were not applied, the Platform warned, people could be left marginalised, which could become “a recipe for resentment, conflict and exclusion” (Social Platform, 2006).

In 2008 the CSCG took a different position than the Platform regarding the EU budget. It argued that the EU had no right to intervene in the national politics of member states in the allocation of resources and redistributive measures. Therefore, the CSCG suggested, EU money should be spent on the basis of “a value and rights-based budget” (CSCG 2008). To the CSCG, the tenets of rights in Europe comprise the rule of law, environmentalism, respect for diversity and gender equality. Whereas the Social Platform advocated a more proactive role for the EU in redistributive regimes, the CSCG suggested a limited role for the EU in setting up the “framework” for “a high standard of living” for everyone. Related to the value and rights approach it favoured, the CSCG defined a high standard of living” as “a healthy environment, access to decent work and lifelong learning opportunities, participation in culture,

work-life balance, access to services of general interest, possibilities to take part in public debates, and legally binding social and political rights” (Ibid.).

In sum, a remarkable difference is observable between the discourses of the Platform and the CSCG. The latter claimed that the political rationalities, in this case the empowerment of individuals, should be determined by EU governing. In other words, the CSCG’s proposal ascribed more intense governing roles for EU governing. Addressing the EU as the appropriate institution for determining the parameters of a high standard of living the CSCG’s proposal rendered the very aspects of the constitution of the self (i.e. self-realisation, empowerment by political rationalities) as the object of EU governing. In sum, the different approaches of EU NGO representatives towards the EU budget reveal no consensus about the limits and technologies of EU governing.

The European Transparency Initiative and participation through online registration

We have mentioned how in November 2005 the European Commission launched the European Transparency Initiative (ETI). An online registry for interest groups was introduced in June 2008 as part of this initiative. The ETI addressed those groups, namely the companies, business associations, consultancies and civil society organisations, which wanted to influence EU decision-making processes. Although the ETI was one of the concrete examples through which EU NGOs could be incorporated into EU decision-making, the Platform preferred not to play a leading role in this issue, but to follow the guidance of the CSCG. The CSCG and ALTER-EU played primary roles in reflecting on the online consultation procedures. They prepared guidelines for the NGO registry process (ALTER-EU and Civil Society Contact Group, 2008).⁹⁷ These guidelines focused on procedural details, such as

⁹⁷ ALTER-EU and EU Civil Society Contact Group, *How to make a transparent registration in the European Commission Register of Interest Representatives*, 2008.

clarifying which costs of the organisations would be included as lobbying expenses, how these would be calculated, and how to indicate the specific lobbying issues.⁹⁸

In short, the ETI delineated the limits of EU interest politics. Whereas the Social Platform opted for a formalised, neo-corporatist decision-making procedure, the ETI showed that the Commission would not put this suggestion into practice. Rather, the Commission treated EU NGOs as mere interest groups and lobbyists. Another ETI conclusion is that the CSCG has become a prominent figure in the EU NGO community by taking a guiding role in the techniques of lobbying organisations. Since its emergence in 2002 in the context of the Future of Europe campaign, the Contact Group has concentrated particularly on the techniques of participatory governance.

The Platform, participatory democracy, and civil dialogue

Whereas the previous section has elaborated how the Platform reflected on the Commission's ECS discourse, this section investigates how the concepts of participation, participatory democracy and civil society are conceived of and defined by the Platform. It examines the Platform's publications, which focus in particular on participatory governance. It brings together observations from the interviews with the Platform's leaders and the "Civil Dialogue" conference organised by the Platform in 2008.

Since the late 1990s, the Social Platform defended the EU NGOs' incorporation into EU decision-making on the basis of two aspects: 1) a legal basis for the EU NGOs' involvement in the EU politics, and 2) the accreditation of NGOs which would be consulted on the development, implementation and evaluation of the actions and

⁹⁸ The guidelines pointed out some crucial shortcomings in the registry rules. For instance, the register did not require any clarification on the individual lobbyists. Furthermore, financial information on lobbying expenditures in the register was inconsistent and not sufficient for making comparisons (Ibid.). For instance, the registration system required that only activities should be registered as lobbying. Hence, while the lobbying companies could just show the dinners with the politicians and civil servants as a cost of lobbying, civil society organisations were required to register their entire budget. Furthermore, since there was no requirement to name the individuals engaged in the lobbying system, former decision-makers could be involved in the lobbying business by providing their clients insider knowledge and contacts.

policies of the EU.⁹⁹ It achieved its first goal—in a relative manner—by influencing EU lawmakers to enact an article about participatory democracy in the Lisbon Treaty, signed in 2007 and entered into force in 2009. Article 11 of the Lisbon treaty stipulates the elements of participatory democracy at the EU level as follows:

1. The Union Institutions shall, by appropriate means, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action.
2. The Union Institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.
3. The Commission shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.
4. No less than one million citizens coming from a significant number of Member States may invite the Commission to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Constitution. A European law shall determine the provisions for the specific procedures and conditions required for such a citizens' initiative.

Based on the draft version of this article in the non-ratified constitutional treaty, Beger (2004), from the Civil Society Contact Group, explained why this article could be considered at best a relative achievement. To him, it was primarily the introduction of an article about participatory democracy in the draft Constitution which he considered a milestone in the development of participatory democracy and civil dialogue. Nonetheless, as he pointed out, even though this article includes some radical elements, such as regarding the citizens' initiatives as an important tool for getting citizens involved, it could eventually turn out to be a mere consultation regime; "Some of the formulations in this article also give scope to becoming a blast of hot air with little to no consequence for civil dialogue as a concept of participation rather than a mere consultation" (ibid.). Having emphasised this danger, Beger argued that the article on participation could block any further options for participation, since it could provide a legal basis merely for internet consultation.

⁹⁹ This was first expressed by the Social Platform in 1999 (Lisbon Declaration, Developing Civil Dialogue in Europe to Strengthen Social Cohesion).

Indeed, Beger's worries became a reality with the Commission's launch of online registration for interest groups in 2008.

To continue with Beger's assessments, the technologies of participatory democracy introduced by the Commission (i.e. online consultations, Plan D for Democracy, and the Europe for Citizens programme) have proven to be symbolically inclusive, but exclusive in practice. The Commission's boundaries of legitimate European civil society privilege those organisations that comply with European integration and the rationalities of European government. For instance, the Commission's discourse has aimed to exclude protest, confrontation and conflict from the repertoire of participatory action, as shown in the previous chapter. It has been further shown that the Commission's discourse is based on a moral conceptualisation of civil society (i.e. good civil society vs. bad civil society), which externalises anti-systemic movements and radical voices. As the above section has shown, the organisations had to adopt the principles of "good governance" in order to be regarded as "good". However, EU NGOs have faced more important challenges in order to legitimise their incorporation into the EU decision-making processes—for which they do speak.

The central critique that EU institutions have advanced against EU NGOs (see the previous chapter for a detailed discussion) concerns whom the EU NGOs represent. The Social Platform endeavoured to tackle this issue, which threatens the legitimacy of its involvement in EU politics, in the early 2000s. Furthermore, it claimed to represent a) particular groups, i.e. NGOs, namely the umbrella NGO networks, or citizens, such as the disabled, b) the interests of those who are unable to represent their interests by themselves, such as victims of human rights abuses, and c) public interests, ideas, issues and values, such as the environment (Social Platform, 2001). Second, it asserted that the legitimacy of EU NGOs should be based on the criterion of transparency instead of representation: "The term representativeness, when applied to NGOs, seems ambiguous because their representativeness is primarily qualitative ... it is deep-rooted in the nature of the relationships established by NGOs on the ground" (Ibid.). In this respect, it states that the Commission should take some

measures for the transparency of the CSOs' "involvement in the decision-making process", with the NGOs establishing their own criteria for their internal governance, including transparency, accountability and representativeness (Ibid.).

The Platform's definition of participation

In 2008 the Platform issued a reference paper to define the notions of participatory democracy, civil society and civil dialogue for its members (Social Platform, 2008). Although this paper indicates that the production of such a reference document was agreed upon by the Platform's members, to the extent to which it represents the members' views is not certain. The paper was prepared by an ad hoc working group. There is no clarification of whether the members had reflected on this or whether it had ever been opened to debate among the members.

Civil society and civil society organisations: In the paper, whereas civil society constitutes the space between the state, market and individual, the notion of a civil society organisation "currently refers to the organisations that mediate between these three" (Ibid.). According to the paper these organisations comprise "political parties, sports clubs, music associations, consumer organisations, trade unions, business associations, charitable bodies and cultural groups."¹⁰⁰

The paper goes on to identify five "structural and operational features" of CSOs, which distinguish them from other informal networks or firms. First, CSOs are *structured as organisations*; second, they are *private*, so that they are not part of the state; third, they are *non-profit*; fourth, they are *self-governing*; and finally, their *membership is not compulsory*. These features of CSOs were also in large part mentioned by the Platform before, such as in its reflections on the *WPG* and *Communication Strategy*. In contrast with its earlier position, the reference paper neglects to mention that CSOs represent the interests of the general public, which it

¹⁰⁰ This definition was borrowed from the EESC's 1999 document. The Platform's internalisation of this definition demonstrates how a marginalised EU institution might formulate a hegemonic discourse.

explains in its discussion about alternative ways of defining civil society organisations. The reference paper compares several options for defining civil society organisations, such as NGOs, public interest organisations and citizen's associations. It finds no reason to refer to civil society organisations as public interest organisations, since "it [is] difficult to grasp what the public interest incorporates" (Ibid.). Even though, the reference paper continues, the Platform is open to use *citizen's associations*, it prefers the notion of NGO as a concept that "describes all organisations that are outside of the governmental field" (Ibid.). Therefore, the paper explains, the Social Platform has named itself the Platform of European Social NGOs. However, the president of the Platform does not identify CSOs as non-state actors, claiming that they work for the public interest along with the public administrative units (C. Reuter, personal communication, May 2009).

The reference paper stresses that the roles of European NGO networks are different than the traditional social NGOs which provide services at the grassroots level. It lists four interconnected roles for European NGOs. First, the European NGO networks *build solidarity across member states, and create social capital at European level*, "ensuring information flows from the EU down to the national/local level" (Ibid.). Second, they *create a European democratic public sphere* in four ways: 1) fostering mutual learning through their interaction, 2) creating spaces for public debate, 3) aggregating the voices of their members, and 4) facilitate capacity building for their members. The third distinguishing character of EU NGOs is that they *channel voices* in the society, while strengthening the influence of local and national NGOs. It states that the networks transfer the voice of those who are "often excluded from decision-making processes, unheard and forgotten, such as very poor people, victims of discrimination, homeless people, etc" (Ibid.). However, it mirrors this role of voicing the public concerns when it claims that one of the roles of the networks is to "make [the grassroots organisations] discuss European decision-making" (Ibid.). Fourth, networks of European NGOS *act as challengers/watchdogs* in that they "offer a critical and protesting voice at European level" and "[provide balance to] the voice of corporations in European decision-making" (Ibid.). As a

consequence of all this, the paper concludes that EU NGOs “help [reduce] the gap between politicians and citizens” (Ibid.).

In sum, the reference paper defines a double role for the EU NGOs: as agents of civil society (third and fourth features), and as translators of the rationalities of European government (first feature). On the one hand it symbolically creates a participatory inclusive discourse by defining EU NGOs as the voice of grassroots civil society. On the other hand, it stresses the role of EU NGOs as the EU’s interlocutors, which disseminate knowledge about the EU and normalise the idea that civil society recognise the EU as a governing entity. However, due to the entropy of discourses (a concept which Chapter 2 introduced), this corresponds to a situation where conflicting elements coexist as opposed to competing. To the extent that EU NGOs impact what and how things are discussed, thought and practised within civil society in terms of the political rationalities, their premise of generating an authentic reason and functioning as a critical gaze fails.

Moreover, the democratic public sphere characteristics of EU NGOs, presented by the EU NGOs themselves, do not necessarily have democratising effects. These characteristics could have constitutive effects on civil society by generating a form of knowledge, set of practices and a morality, the frames of which are drawn by the political power. Furthermore, the exchange of practices and training could disperse the ethos of neo-liberal governmentality, as discussed earlier in this section. This process could also have repercussions on the normalisation and internalisation of a certain “regime of truth”—in this case the one fostered by the EU. Chapter 2 has illustrated how the process of dialogic interaction can lead to mentality leap. This illustration suggests an asymmetrical explanation for interaction and the circulation of norms, i.e. the subjectifying role played by power relations. This does not necessarily have emancipating and civilising consequences, i.e. as Linklater (2005) and Habermas (1996) argue. However, a certain set of truth exerts itself as normal; a certain set of practices invades the practices of the other.

Participatory democracy: The reference paper under discussion advances five principles of a participatory democratic system: a democratic infrastructure (freedom of speech and right to assembly); the openness to entertain different views and trust people and authorities; equality and inclusiveness, which requires community empowerment, especially for the disengaged and voiceless; creativity, concreteness and flexibility in participatory actions (such as demonstrations, campaigning, volunteering, unpaid carers, educating children in a sport or art club, sending online letters, participating in an NGO, or being part of a local council's NGO); and a legal framework for the recognition of the rights and the duties of NGOs (Social Platform, 2008).

The reference paper continues on to claim that participatory democracy can promote social cohesion, solidarity, social justice and a better life for everyone by first, engaging all people in the constitution of the society, and second, facilitating quality services for people. Participatory democracy could be the remedy for the legitimacy crisis of EU governance since it “creates public space for discussion and therefore gives people more ownership of decisions and a more active citizenship”, thus making citizens more politically active in the associations, and incorporating the interests of the politically disengaged people (e.g. those who do not vote) into decision-making. In this way, the reference paper suggests that the concept of citizenship could extend beyond the conventional political sphere, to regard people as actors in all areas of life. In other words, it conceptualises citizenship in terms of technologies of agency, so that it proposes empowering the individual. Consequently, the reference paper's participatory democracy understanding shows parallels with the republican approach to participation, in that it clarifies the social and political integrative promise of participation (see Chapter 2). However, as a challenge to normative political theory, it conceives of participation as an apolitical phenomenon by arguing that participation transcends the claims of ideology and political divides:

Almost none of the serious problems people and communities face conform to the remits of political ideologies: By involving people to intervene, participatory democracy can produce

solutions that are effective and legitimate, and go beyond traditional political divides. In that sense, it strengthens the legitimacy of decision makers/services providers since their decisions will be based on the real views of people. Participatory democracy therefore aims to improve trust and accountability. (Ibid.)

The views suggested in the reference paper to a great extent parallel this *problem-solving* approach to politics, in which moral norms and values constitute the mode of conduct between actors in a given political institutional system. The principal value of this system is illustrated by the proponents of deliberative democracy as trust, in which people do not act as mere interest-seeking agents. This cosmopolitan, post-political imaginary world of politics was criticised by Mouffe (2005) for entailing an ideology-free conceptualisation of politics, if not necessarily the end of politics. The reference paper's emphasis, interestingly, overlaps with the problem-solving conceptualisation of politics, arguing that the political ideologies fell short of providing a solution to the "serious problems of the people". Therefore, to the reference paper, the participation of the NGOs could promise the legitimacy of the newly emerging community, where ideological politics and representational democracy have been exhausted. The reference paper further argues that NGOs could achieve this task by promoting a new understanding of politics, since they channel the "*Real* views of the people" (Ibid., emphasis mine). In a sense, this is parallel to the procedural understanding of democracy, in which will formation is constituted from within the daily interactions of civil society. However, the procedural democracy of Habermas would arguably agree with a definition of participation which is based on lobbying or simple internet consultation. Rather, Habermas' procedural democracy suggests that "will formation" is realised in the deliberations within the civil society, but it is the actors of a political system, such as the political parties and political authority, that receive this will and translate it into decisions and laws. In other words, in contrast to the decision-making system defended by the reference paper, Habermas does not bypass the parliament (Papadopolous 2002). Furthermore, in line with the governmentality approach, a Habermasian analysis would not consider the activities of the Platform to be a more advanced style of democracy, but a colonisation of the life-world of civil society.

Another problem arises in the reference paper's argument if it is taken to represent the lobbying activities of NGO networks as ideology-free. On the one hand, it appreciates a post-ideological position, claiming that none of the political ideologies provides solutions for societal problems. On the other hand, its suggestions for social problems do in fact stem from a certain political ideology. For instance, it supports a redistributive politics based on the principle of "needs"—a leftist approach to wealth redistribution. Furthermore, the Platform is ideologically partial *per se*, since one of its three main objectives is to advocate a social Europe. In sum, the reference paper's ambition to go beyond political divides and find solutions to the "real" problems of the people is itself an ideological gesture, as Žižek would call it, since the language of the ideology produces a discourse as if the "real problems" and the "ideological chimeras" could be taken separate from one another (Žižek, 1997).

The Platform and Civil Dialogue: The reference paper recognises civil dialogue as "a component and tool of participatory democracy", in which organised civil society and public decision-makers, as well as civil servants at local, national and European levels, are involved. The reference paper's principles of civil dialogue are accountability and responsiveness, the political will and openness to make a difference, transparency and clarity, equality and inclusiveness, formal arrangements, procedures and financial support for civil society, a proper role and recognition for NGOs, and the inclusion of civil society at all stages (agenda setting, policy definition, decision-making, implementation, evaluation, and reformulation). Table 9, which appears in the reference paper, presents a scale to measure the involvement of civil society organisations in politics. The "exclusion" and "indifference" levels are self-explanatory; however, the remaining levels in the scale require some comment. One-way dissemination denotes the situation in which only public authorities provide information. In consultation, on the other hand, public authorities provide information to NGOs and invite them to give feedback. While in dialogue, NGOs can set the agenda and the public authorities can implement the NGO's interests, participation implies that NGOs' proposals are incorporated into official

documents and programs. Finally, partnership denotes the extent to which the NGOs play a cooperative role in decision, design, production and administration.

Table 9: Scale of civil society organisation involvement (Social Platform, reference paper, 2008)

-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Exclusion	Indifference	One-way Dissemination	Consultation	Dialogue	Participation	Partnership

The Social Platform's attempts at translating political rationalities: The Conference on how to influence the EU decision-making processes (Brussels, December 9-10 2008)

As mentioned above, the Platform has concentrating on a certain theme each year since 2006. In 2008-2009, this was civil dialogue— the incorporation of NGOs into the EU decision-making. As a part of this, the Platform organised the conference, *How can we shape the Europe we want?*, in Brussels.¹⁰¹ The conference aimed to gather different actors related to European politics, including the members of the Platform and their national members, EU officials, and academics. However, NGO members from Eastern European and Balkan countries constituted the vast majority of participants.

The conference opened with a panel that comprised EU officials from the European Parliament and the European Commission, along with one scholar.¹⁰² The panel was followed by four workshops: 1) the future of the Open Method of Coordination for social inclusion, 2) the problem of the source of NGOs' funding, 3) the role of EU NGO networks in bridging the gap between European and national levels, and 4) strategies to influence decision-making processes across the EU. The panels,

¹⁰¹ The language of the conference was English and simultaneous translation was provided during presentations.

¹⁰² The academics' representative on the panel was Beate Kochler-Koch, a prominent scholar in multi-level governance. The relationship between the Platform and Kochler-Koch is not limited to Kochler-Koch's participation in this conference. Moreover, the Social Platform also has a link on its website to Kochler-Koch's EU-funded research project, CONNEX (<http://www.connex-network.org>), which studies European politics in terms of the governance approach. This proximity between the researcher and the Platform is worth elaborating in that it enables us to track the ideas influencing the Platform. Throughout the dissertation, Kochler-Koch's ideas have been contrasted with the deliberative approach in the discussion of whether the Platform acts as an agent of European governing, or as a public sphere of civil society. However, our survey reveals that the researcher is also vital to an understanding of the European art of government.

workshops and plenary sessions discussed the roles of EU NGO networks in linking national NGOs to European politics, identified the current problems in performing these roles and proposed some solutions.

Several participants, mostly national NGOs, argued that there was a problem in civil dialogue, claiming that the current approach was based on the mentality of civil society involvement in a pre-defined European agenda. Furthermore, while the current approach focused on policy changes in the EU policies, national NGOs wanted to exert pressure at the national level. Therefore, they resisted the rationality in which they direct their energy towards the EU institutions. Some of the national NGOs were, on the other hand, more willing to be incorporated into European-level politics. This latter group, however, listed several problems: creating an interest in what happens at the EU level in the national level, the lack of expertise within the NGO community about European issues, the lack of information about the EU political agenda, the complexity of European jargon, the language barrier as a general problem in communicating beyond territories, NGO funding problems, insufficient NGO capacity and resources, and cultural and economic differences between countries.¹⁰³

National NGOs, furthermore, indicated that their European networks had some flaws in their function of bridging the communication gap between the national and European levels. To them, EU NGO networks should take a leading role in facilitating and mediating their interactions with European institutions, training the national NGOs about the EU and its policies, and providing arguments for the national NGOs in order to foster policy change in domestic politics. The workshop participants further suggested several solutions to enhance interactions between the national and European levels, as well as influence EU institutions. First, to influence European policies, national NGOs would primarily provide information to their European networks. Second, to achieve this, national NGOs should be empowered,

¹⁰³ The report on this workshop was published on the Platform's website, which also provided some help.

such as through capacity building, training, exchanging best practices and peer-learning. The third solution, on the other hand, involved persuading EU political authorities that they could make use of the NGOs. In this respect, one of the ideas was to empower national NGOs to push their governments in order to implement European policies, such as adopting new modes of governance (i.e. the open method of coordination at the national level). Another suggestion for the EU political authorities was to use national NGOs as a “trampoline” in their relations with non-EU states. The representatives’ views reveal the extent to which the NGO community internalised the idea of becoming the agents and carriers of Europeanised political socialisation and political change.

In addition to the document’s analyses and the conducted interviews, the conference provided the opportunity of observing how the NGO actors—both the EU NGOs and the national NGOs—conceive of participation, the role of EU NGOs in EU politics, and the role of the NGOs in politics in general. The initial observation of the conference resulted in numerous reflections on the tenets of EU governing. First, the conference was open to the participation of all possible “stakeholders” (as the discourse on European Governance requires the collaboration of multiple actors). Second, the structure of the conference resembled EU institutions’ meetings (as a reminder, the Social Platform’s ex-president had also associated the Social Platform’s internal governance with the EU structure). For instance, after each workshop the results were presented in the plenary by a “rapporteur”.¹⁰⁴ Third, addressing the NGOs mainly from the perspective of new and prospective member states, the conference complied with the Commission’s ambition of empowering civil society in the respective states (see Chapter 4). One of the components of this ambition is to translate the political rationalities of EU governing, i.e. NGO

¹⁰⁴ Each workshop had appointed a “rapporteur” before the sessions started. The rapporteurs of the conference resembled the functions of the rapporteur in the EU institutional setup. The European Parliament, for example, defines the key functions of the rapporteur as follows: “The rapporteur ‘reports’ the findings of the European Parliamentary committee to the plenary. In that capacity their opinion carries a lot of weight. If you want to influence a proposal it is important to ensure that the rapporteur is aware of your concerns.” Accessed at <http://www.europeanlawmonitor.org/EU-Information/What-Is-Guide-to-Key-EU-Terms/EU-Parliament-What-Is-a-Rapporteur.html>, 6 October 2010.

involvement in politics and the delivery of services according to the principles of good governance. In this respect, for those countries, as mentioned, the Platform and CSCG organise network development and capacity-building trips. For instance, the Solidar, one of the members of the Social Platform, initiated a study about the capacity and legal status of civil society organisations with 50 NGOs from the Western Balkans in 2009. This study involved a survey which focused on whether the respective countries had any specific law regulating CSOS, and whether the NGOs had sufficient capacity with respect to leadership, staff support, the organisation of working plans, communication skills and citizen engagement (Solidar, 2009).¹⁰⁵

Restriction between a spirit of contention and reality of sponsored lobbying

The literature of social movements defines a transnational coalition of civil society as a movement advocacy coalition (Ruzza 2004) or a transnational advocacy coalition (Keck and Sikkink 1998, Cullen 2005). The central argument of this perspective is that collective social action organises transnationally in order to exert pressure on transnational governance mechanisms, in this case the politics of the EU. Contrary to what the social movement literature argues, the Platform does not frame its *raison d'être* as a mobilisation of contention either at the margins or in Brussels. Social movement literature also argues that it is the collective identity and power of each constituent that integrates the network of social action. In contrast to this argument, it is here discussed how the Platform can have constitutive impacts on its members by shaping their management and ideological stance—while it is itself constituted. Thus, the morality and ethics of these networks can be shaped due to the influence of the coordinating centre, i.e. the influence of the influenced. This can undermine bottom-up processes of identity-formation, instead fostering a new type of subjectivity which is formulated by the Commission and put into practice by the Platform.

¹⁰⁵ Solidar, Questionnaire: Capacity and legal status of CSOs in the Western Balkans, 2009.

A further question is how the Platform defines and perceives itself: an elite lobby organisation or a protest-oriented social movement. The Social Platform has not aimed to institutionalise protests, but influence policymakers through advocacy. Hence, it has kept a distance from practices of contention. It has protested EU decision-makers on one unique occasion, the suspension of the Commission's financial support for NGOs. The European Court of Justice annulled a Commission decision to fund 86 European projects on 12 May 1998 which were coordinated by European Social NGOs (Smismans 2003; Geyer 2001). Accordingly, the Commission temporarily suspended funding for several other projects for which there was no legal basis. The decisions of the ECJ and the Commission could have been a serious hindrance to EU NGOs, since their survival depended on the European funding. The Social Platform mobilised a campaign, the Red Card Campaign, to unify the NGO sector in protest of the suspension of their funding. The protest was successful and the funding resumed at the end of that year. This experience showed that survival of the European NGOs was not secure. Therefore, the Social Platform proposed a formal structure for the civil dialogue, claiming that this legal basis would provide security for their survival.

In the late 2000s, however, the Platform changed its stance from being a “peaceful actor”, and joined protests against the austerity measures implemented by several EU countries (Greece, Ireland, England) as a remedy to the economic crisis. These protests targeted cuts in social policy budgets and public sector salaries at the EU level. Pushing these economic policies in Brussels, for the first time the Platform participated in street protests in 2009. In particular, Social Platform President Conny Reuter gave statements against the austerity measures on the BBC. Otherwise, the Platform could before only appear in EU-oriented media, e.g. Euroactive and Stakeholder's Corner.

The Platform's own publications, on the other hand, show different self-images, i.e. images that shift between contentious activism and lobbying. The Platform's magazine, *ENGAGE*, its annual reports and Facebook page in this respect present

different self-portrayals. *ENGAGE* presents images of social movements, such as demonstrators carrying placards and marching. Furthermore, in the interview section with European NGO leaders, *ENGAGE* in each issue includes the question, “Where was your last battle?”. However, the Platform’s other visual materials present other Platform images and identities: pictures from conferences, seminars and training sessions (with some reports also including pictures of those who are presumed to need special care, i.e. children and the elderly). Therefore, we observe two different images of the Platform: one of the indoors conference participant, peaceful and deliberative, and the other outdoors, protesting, and ready to challenge (though symbolically). When we observe the working reports and annual reports, the Platform presents its achievements on the basis of the conferences, seminars, training sessions, and study visits it organised or participated in. In other words, the Platform does not present the street protests it organised as proof of its accomplishments. In sum, the presentation of what the Platform does and what it thinks it differs according to the target audience. Although the Platform defines itself as a European consultative organisation, it symbolically uses protest images; therefore, protest is the alter-ego of the Platform, keeping it connected with the social movement discourse and thus separating it from the mere lobby association.

6.5. The network metaphor and power relations

The network metaphor depicts the organisational and operational structure of the Social Platform and is divided into four sub-systemic levels. This analytical model suggests that each sub-system has the potential to impact the others, i.e. to constitute and be constituted. The network metaphor and its constituent sub-systems do not necessarily denote a spatial reality, but are devised for analytical purposes. The network metaphor enables us to analyse our object of inquiry by separating it into its constitutive parts. Our object of inquiry, the Platform, illustrates the kind of subject the power creates.

The sub-systemic levels that are applied here denote different kinds of interactions. The first sub-systemic level (L1) entails all sorts of interactions between the

European NGOs and EU institutions. The second one (L2), on the other hand, examines the discourse that emerges at the EU level and is dispersed within European NGOs. The third one (L3) includes relations between the members of European NGOs. Based on the organisational structure of the EU NGOs, L3 is further divided into three sub-levels: the interactions between members and the secretariat of the EU NGOs, namely the headquarters of EU NGOs in Brussels (N1), between the secretariat and the members (N2), and within the members (N3). Last but not least, the fourth sub-systemic level (L4) entails the intra-NGO community relations.

The following explains how a level of interaction is regarded as weak or intense, in order to investigate the Platform's actions in terms of four different perspectives (deliberation, governance, hegemony and governmentality). For instance, deliberative participatory democracy would require a very intense L1 and L3, and a non-existent or weak L2 (since political power can contribute to the public discussion on equal terms with other constituents in the discussion. This is different from hegemony and the government, in which political power manipulates or fabricates the discussion). Governance-oriented participatory democracy would also require an intense L1 and L3, as well as an intense L2. The strength of L2 and content of L1 and L3 constitute the main divisions between deliberative and governance-oriented participation. The deliberative approach presumes authentic reasoning at L1, as Benhabib and Habermas argue, and in fact, pre supposes strong deliberation, horizontal learning and communicative rationality at L3. For this reason, the deliberative approach also envisions a strong N1 and N3, but a weak N2; deliberative democracy suggests a *vertical* flow of discourse and interactions from the grassroots (weak publics) to the decision-making processes (strong publics), and considers the dominant role of the secretariat in the Platform's organisational structure to be an intervention into the life-world of civil society.

The governance approach demands an intense L1, since the expert knowledge of the Social Platform constitutes an important place in the participatory governance roles

of EU NGOs. The strong L3 is also a prerequisite of effective problem solving, since actors should engage in constant interaction and communication. However, this excludes contention and protest as risks to the system of governance. For efficient governance, L2 should also be strong. Since the political power and civil society share responsibilities in governance, the distinction between public and private is dissolved, and each actor in governance is defined as a shareholder. In this picture, political guidance is not problematic as long as it serves effective problem-solving. Based on the same style of reasoning, the governance approach does not problematise a possible hierarchical organisational structuring of EU NGOs.

When it comes to the hegemonic and governmentalising consequences of EU NGOs, both compel a weak or intense L1 and a strong L2 and L3. L2 should be very strong, since the Social Platform functions as the agent of a political project or carrier of political rationalities. The success of the former depends on a strong L3, because the hegemonic discourse and the political rationalities should be dispersed and disseminated through several technologies, such as training, capacity building, and even the concept of participation itself. As learned from the *White Paper on European Governance* and the Commission's Communication Policy, the EU aims to win the hearts and minds of the people. In relation to this goal, the Commission tries to mobilise the EU NGOs, relying on their capacity to mobilise society and translate EU jargon, first to the NGO community and then to society. Through the technologies of capacity building, EU NGOs further reinforce rationalities of government, and harmonise the NGOs' organisational structure, negotiation skills and problem solving methods. EU NGOs' activities, and the discourse they carry, also foster technologies of self-ethics, having direct influence on how the mind should work in order to solve problems, as well as which problems it should consider problems.

I argue that the discourses emerge as an outcome of the interactions between the different actors. Beyond this, I also argue that they play a role in self-constitution and state-society relations. The discourses discussed here are the ECS and the

participation, while the European Commission, European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee, Social Platform, Civil Society Contact Group, EU NGOs, and national NGOs constitute the actors of these discourses. What I argue is that the discourses have been generated and reproduced in the interactions between these actors.

In the previous chapter, the analysis of the Commission discourse on the civil society and participatory democracy (here considered integral to L2) was crucially important to reveal the contexts in which the respective concepts are used by EU institutions, particularly the Commission, and put into practice. This chapter has traced the impacts and imprints of the Commission’s discourse, and discussed whether the Platform criticizes this discourse or reproduces and reinforces it. It would accordingly be possible to assess NGOs act as agents of political and societal control, and carriers of political rationalities. The following table summarises the framework of our analysis.

Table 10: Analysis of the Social Platform: The modes, procedures, and constitutive elements of interaction in different levels

Levels of action	The modes, procedures, and constitutive elements of interaction
Between the Social Platform and EU institutions	Advancing the interests of EU NGOs that are members of the Platform, advocacy of common positions
Between EU institutions and the Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with the citizens discourse • European civil society discourse • EU’s interest policy • EU’s communication policy • EUs discourse on participatory democracy • EU’s role in the structural organisation of the EU NGOs
Intra-Platform relations	<p>The aspects of studying the Social Platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational structure, e.g. the strong role of the secretariat • The history and evolution of the Platform • The criteria of membership (drawing the boundaries of legitimate EU NGOs and ECS) • Participation in decision-making • The values of the Platform (promotion of participatory democracy) • The decision-making structure of the Platform • The source and the distribution of finances • The Platform’s strategies such as working on the basis of an annual theme, empowering the Secretariat, avoiding protest and contention, supporting the accreditation system in order to consolidate its power and exclude radical voices from the legitimate definition of civil society
Members’ interactions with the Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to participate in the Platform’s decision-making processes (general assembly, working groups) • The right to disseminate their work through the Platform, i.e. through the Platform’s website and newsletter • To enhance their credibility within the NGO community vis-a-vis EU institutions by being a member of the Platform

Table 10 continued

<p>The Platform's interaction with the members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rendering the EU knowable by disseminating information and promoting an understanding of EU policies through regular internal meetings, electronic communication and weekly online bulletin (<i>Weekly Update</i>). • Enhancing the visibility of their members by publishing their work on the website, in its online bulletin <i>Weekly Update</i>, quarterly publication <i>ENGAGE</i>, annual activity report, media announcements and brochures. • Providing expert knowledge for constituents through the exchange of ideas and practices among the constituents of Platform, training the communicative and administrative skills of its members, and benefiting from external expertise, i.e. in defining the central concepts, such as participatory democracy and civil society, and setting strategies for better lobbying • Stressing its role as intermediary for EU NGOs in attending regular meetings with European institutions • Reimbursing the travel and accommodation costs of its members • Enabling participation in two study visits to EU member and candidate countries
<p>Members' interactions within the Platform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forum for interaction and the exchange of knowledge and experience among social NGOs, as well as for the flow of discourse within an institutional setting
<p>Intra-NGO community communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Platform reproduces the art of European government in its interactions with the environment

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Focusing on the participation and civil society discourses which have been promoted by the European Commission, this dissertation has critically examined the idea of involvement of the supranational intermediaries of civil society, defined as European NGOs (EU NGOs), in EU governance. In the scholarly literature, this proposal has also been supported and considered to be a remedy for the EU democratic deficit. Having examined the Commission's *European civil society* (ECS) discourse and its implications on the Social Platform of European NGOs – one of the prominent umbrella organisations- this dissertation, however, has argued that the democratising promise of EU NGOs is threatened for a number of reasons.

First, the Platform was constituted deliberately by the Commission in order to act as an interlocutor of the Commission against the EU NGOs, particularly which work in social sector. Since its establishment, the Platform has been helping the Commission organise *European Social Policy Forums*¹⁰⁶, the practice of which was later called “civil dialogue”. Second, to the extent that the Platform has internalised the Commission's civil society and participation discourse, it has moved from the traditional tenets of civic action (i.e. voluntarism); and has become an enterprise-like organisation governed through a managerial mentality. Thirdly, Platform has been considered a channel of European citizenry through linking public concerns into the EU level, thus suggesting a solution for the democratic deficit of the EU, which is perceived to be caused by the “gap between the EU and its citizens”. Nonetheless, this dissertation argues that the Platform's (and some other NGOs' alike)

¹⁰⁶ This should not to be mixed with the *European Social Forum* (ESF), a voluntary network having a purpose of “opposing to neo-liberalism and world dominated with capital and any form of imperialism”. Yet, in order to discuss an alternative *modus operandi* for collective action, further research might compare the Platform (and the Commission supported NGOs alike) with the ESF. This discussion may include the promise of protest – the traditional method of contention- in raising the public awareness, fostering public deliberation and/or resistance to contemporary rationalities and practices, which are mostly regarded as the source of ever growing inequalities between different classes and regions. The potential of the Platform can be considered scant, if not epiphenomenal, with this regard.

involvement into the Commission's consultation regime is not a democratising act *per se*. In normative theories of democracy, such practise does not find any ground. In practice, the Platform (and other EU NGOs alike) can hardly represent European civil society as such, considering the Commission's opaque sponsorship, which is considered as the principal obstacle against the autonomy of civil society; its disconnection with the grassroots; and its resemblance like an exclusive club for the EU oriented NGOs – thus categorically excluding many voices of civil society, including anti-systemic groups.

The Platform may rather be conceived as an interlocutor of the Commission. Yet, its influence on the Commission's consultations is found in the earlier research trivial; this dissertation has concentrated on the Platform itself and the possible implications of its work on the NGO community. It is, then, argued that the Platform endeavours to tailor a harmonised organisational model for the social NGO community (both at EU and national level) along with an understanding of the notions of civil society and participation in such way complying with the tenets of “new managerialism” and New Public Management. The critique of this dissertation is that it sheds light on a contemporary project transmogrifying some civic activists into managers; the conception of civil society into a stakeholder of governance; and participation into bureaucratically controlled de-politicised action for mere efficient problem-solving.

This observation implies that the Platform's organisational structure, working methods, communication methods and even ways of thinking and doing things have been, to a certain extent, shaped by the deliberate instruments of the Commission (such as via the requirements for the Platform report its achievements, the pressure on proving its representativeness, and improving its accountability and transparency). The Platform's organisational structure and management techniques largely complies with the tenets of “new managerialism”, which refers to all organisational changes happened after 1980s with regard to the dominance of market mentality and economic rationalities in public administration – this has also been defined as New Public Management . This argument can be clarified as follows: the Platform follows

a results-based, management-oriented working method, and thus aims to achieve certain objectives (which are calculable and auditable) in a given period of time. These practices, in turn, might have likely repercussions on what is being voiced; since, such management frame prioritises *know how rather know what*. Practiced in this way, “participation” is conceptualised as an effective and efficient problem-solving activity, and is thus prone to de-politicisation by treating the objects of participation and the very notion of participation in itself as *things* to be achieved.

The Platform’s emergence may well fit to “good governance”: this discourse was created by World Bank and United Nations in the context of economic development and ascribes a particular role for the NGOs in accountable and legitimate “governance” as well as mobilising the grassroots (i.e. a catalyst of a democratic society). Yet, the critiques argue that this aimed at fostering public consent for the neo-liberal initiatives of structural adjustment programmes. Therefore, rationalities behind the constitution of the Platform are not, necessarily, reduced to the Commission's projects. Yet, the Commission, to some extent itself is exposed to this process, considering it has conducted an administration reform during 1999-2004, one that can be associated with NPM (Kassim 2008). The Commission, hence, is not necessarily seen as the intellectual centre that creates the techniques of Platform’s management, but an actor playing a role in carrying it into the European context.

Against this backdrop, the dissertation has, first, elaborated different normative approaches to participatory democracy in order to examine the normative promise of integrating NGOs into decision-making structures. Second, it has examined the ways in which the European civil society (ECS) discourse has evolved and transformed within the EU institutional milieu. Third, it has analysed the Social Platform, one of the more prominent actors in the EU NGO community, to observe how it has received and perceived the participation and civil society discourses.

This survey departs from the current debate, which examines how EU NGOs are conducive to democratisation of EU governance. Nonetheless, it has revealed: how

the Commission might *translate* the contemporary discourse on participation and “(good) governance” intrinsic to NPM; and *exert* the former with respect to a project of strengthening its institutional power as well as creating certain types of subjects who are willing and able to take part in its assignments, including to join to its consultation regime as a legitimating factor and helping in creating a sympathy for the EU.

I have interpreted this process from a Foucauldian conceptual framework particularly concentrating on his later works on the governmentality (art of government); and also applied the contribution of his followers, including advanced liberalism (Dean 1999) and neo-liberal governmentality (e.g. Barry 1996; Rose and Miller 1996, Lemke 2002). Central to this interpretation is the interrogation of power, knowledge, discipline and formation of subjects in relation to political programming. Foucault’s emphasis on governmentality provides an analytical tool for examining the relationality between the Commission’s project of empowering supranational intermediaries of European civil society, new modes of governance (i.e. Open Method of Coordination), the Commission’s administrative reform – which was completed during 1999-2004; and the management methods of the Platform. In this case relationality concerns common *episteme* (or set of principles and frameworks), *telos*, *techne* and *identities*. The Foucauldian approach provides a frame for the examination of the rationalities behind the context in which the discourse of the involvement of the civil society evolved; which technologies and strategies this discourse entailed; what this discourse has aimed to achieve; which strategies it has employed, and how the objects of this discourse have perceived and received this process. Our survey has examined the implications of political rationalities on the constitution of the self, organisations and state-society relations.

The Commission and the discourse on civil society

The Commission has been promoting the discourse on “civil society” and “participation/participatory democracy” since the 1990s. Within the scope of this discourse, the Commission has related the organised civic actors to the context of EU

integration and its institutional interests. For instance, in the late 1990s, the Commission related the civic actors to legitimising its regulatory role in social policy. In the early 2000s, the Commission linked the discourse on European civil society to administrative reform within EU institutions and the EU's legitimacy crises. With respect to the latter, in the late 2000s, the Commission focused on the ECS's role in bringing the EU back to its citizens, diagnosing the legitimacy crisis of EU governance in citizens' lack of knowledge on the EU.

The participation discourse has been particularly appealing to the Commission in the context of questioning a common European identity (or *demos*). The debate on the existence of a *demos* in Europe suggested two alternative views: a) there is no European *demos* due to the absence of a common language and history (Cederman 2001) and b) a European *demos* can be imagined (and invented), since rights and the law could provide a *thin* integrative base by detaching the ethno-cultural basis of identity from rights (Weiler 1999; Habermas 2003; Eriksen et al 2005). Participation discourse, in line with the latter view, is compatible with the project of constituting a rights-based society, a model which is fostered with the symbolic use of participation, i.e. the notion that "you can feel a sense of belonging because you take part in decision-making", along with the notion of "polity-building". Therefore, it can be argued that the Commission has created a discursive field through participation in order to intervene in new domains, including empowering NGOs and connecting with the European citizenry.

The Commission's civil society discourse has, however, been criticised for embodying a symbolic function, as if the society were incorporated into the EU decision-making processes. Walters and Haahr (2005:79) question the Commission's attempts along these lines: "The point is how many people really think that initiatives like internet forums, or even improved procedures or consultation in policy-making, are going to significantly enhance European democracy." Walter and Haahr (Ibid.) further suggest that the symbolic use of the discourse has preceded the very goal of realising political participation. Constructing the discourse without content creates a

peculiar situation in which the definition of participation remains obscure to the coordinator of one of the umbrella networks of civil society organisations, the Civil Society Contact Group, which is responsible for the “promotion of the participation” within civil society (Laetitia Sedou, 2009).

The neo-Marxist critics of the participation discourse and NGOs argue that political authorities make use of NGOs in developing countries to garner public support for neo-liberal policy reforms (Petras 1999, Leal 2007). Similarly, the EU has tried to draw benefit from the NGOs’ enhancing public support for EU governance. Participation discourse, in this respect, has been very appealing to the Commission in mobilising the NGOs under the scope of a normative symbolic framework and aiming for the *consent* of the governed. The participation discourse, however, has not merely played an instrumental role in putting the ambitions of the Commission into practice, i.e. creating an illusion that public concerns are channelled through the NGOs.

The Social Platform and Governmentality

I have argued that the participation discourse is the constitutive element of the “art of government” and political power. As mentioned, the Commission attempts to develop a discourse on participation in order to gain public support—just as the notion has been used in developing countries. However, the Commission also adopts the knowledge of managing this discourse, e.g. the logical framework and results-based management (which have been devised by the World Bank) as techniques of organisational structuring.

From Foucault, we learned how state-formation is related to self-formation. The implication of this argument is that the Commission’s civil society discourse has also had constitutive impacts: the emergence of the Social Platform and its activities are constituted, shaped and guided in several aspects. First, it can be argued that the most important factor undermining the independence and authenticity of the Platform is the requirement for the Commission funding. The Commission finances the

supranational intermediaries of European civil society. In order to access and sustain funding, the Platform has adopted certain procedural requirements, including an administrative structure and internal governance mechanism –though not by coercion. In addition to these, the Platform has been working in a professional way arguably due to the requirements of contractual obligation and the EU decision-making design. Public funding is considered as a threat to the EU NGOs’ autonomy and independence, in that their dependence on funding could undermine the *raison d’être* of the organisations. For instance, some of the organisations which represent the needs of specific population segments (i.e. the excluded and marginalised) could start concentrating on transversal issues—or on those issues which are drawn up by the funding bodies—in order to obtain funding (Fazi and Smith 2006). The Platform may conform well to this process. It endeavours to create a “common” voice from a coalition of different sectors and ideological positions, including religious and leftist groups. However, leftists groups and the representative network of women’s groups, the European Women’s Lobby, seems to dominate the administrative structure and the final decisions (see also Cullen 2005).

Second, the structure through which the Platform has been involved in EU politics may well be thought of in relation to the moral and ethical aspects of governmentality (Rose 1996). This statement implies that partnership arrangements with the political institutions are the “good” and appropriate way of mobilising civil society (as opposed to e.g. protests). The Platform furthermore defines itself as a peaceful and constructive organisation which works for the European common good. Although it strives to secure legal guarantees for its interactions, in the meantime, the Platform seems not to abandon protest from its repertoire of action entirely. For instance, on one unique occasion, in 2010, the Platform was involved in street protests against the financial austerity programs. Further, in its communication tools, particularly those which address its members, the Platform also uses visual illustrations of protest. While the Platform still defines itself as a Europeanised lobbying organisation, it can be argued that protest refers to the Platform’s alter-ego, keeping it connected with social movement discourse and thus distancing itself from

being a mere lobbying association. Nonetheless, in practice, the Platform works like a Europeanised lobbying organisation and an exclusive EU-oriented NGO club, while it endeavours to motivate local NGOs to seek legal guarantees to be recognised as formal partners of within the frame of participatory governance.

Third, the Platform can be considered a subject that works according to technologies of performance and managerialism. The ethos of neo-liberal governmental rationalities is regarded as goal-orientation and outcome achievement (Dean 1999); moreover, this ethos projects *performance machine*-like subjects (including the states, organisations and the individual). The Platform well fits into this paradigm: that is, it has to perform a set of goals, which are planned, carefully calculated, and inscribed into reports. Furthermore, the Platform's funding by the Commission is contingent on the accomplishment of certain pre-planned objectives. The Platform's overall activities, reports, and tools of communication are all related to its technologies of performance, and these goals are represented in a special way, i.e. through the techniques of professional PR. Moreover, the Platform's bureaucratic decision-making structures, professional working methods and techniques of communication stem from managerialism. Managerialism implies an understanding that anything can be managed with a certain set of rules independent from what is being managed (Burnham 1942; Parker 2002). We observe the managerial mentality of the Platform in terms of its negotiations, communication and organisational techniques. The Platform has adopted expert skills, new management structures, new financing mechanisms, and a results-based working strategy to be able to connect with public authorities. In order to negotiate with the public authorities and compete with other interest groups, the Platform was also required to learn negotiation techniques and communication skills.

Furthermore, to prove its legitimacy to EU institutions, for instance, EU NGOs are required to adopt a formal statute and a transparent internal governance structure. As an implication, it might be expected that EU NGO networks would adopt similar organisational structures like the Platform's: such as one coordinator, one

communication officer, and several policy officers. The Platform convenes “general assemblies”, in which all members gather twice a year, “steering committees”, which take the important decisions, “working groups” that produce the institutional outputs, and a “management committee” to review overall organisational performance. In addition, the Platform inscribes yearly “activity reports” to the Commission, and “disseminate” and “exploit” their achievements through newspapers, webpages, conferences, toolkits, and position papers. The activities of these organisations also to a great extent reflect the Commission’s activity-based management (i.e. in use since 1999) and institutional structure: for example, the Social Platform models the subsidiarity principle as a strategy for dividing responsibilities between its members and its secretariat (Alhadeff and Wilson 2002). The Platform’s capacity building initiatives, then, can be thought of as attempts to harmonise the organisational structure and the “knowledge” of how to the national NGO community, which the Platform can have access.

The negative consequences of managerialism have been outlined by different disciplines: critical management (Parker 2002), governmentalisation of civil society (Morrison 2000; and MacKinnon 2007) and the replacement of the volunteer spirit with a management mentality (Skocpol 2003). Concerning the latter, the coordinator of the Civil Society Contact Group (personal communication, May 2009) explains the tension between professionalism and the traditional ethos of civil society: “There is a main tension within the NGOs in the sense that we [the NGO community] are required to be professionalised, whereas on the other hand, we are required to be a civil society organisation—a citizen organisation. How do we balance these two sometimes contradictory situations?”

The critique of the dominance of managerialism and bureaucracy within civil society suggests that managerialism and bureaucracy might likely foster *exclusion*, *de-politicisation* and *colonisation of the life-world*. Fierce competition to obtain EU funding, to become a stakeholder, and to fit into the EU institutional environment may result in an institutional Darwinism, in that the fittest amongst the institutions

survive. Being fit, in this case, concerns the ability to perform the requirements of the governance system (i.e. running an organisation, inscribing reports, negotiating with other “stakeholders”). Thus, not surprisingly, the organisations which are willing to play the game according to the rules might remain within the institutional milieu.

To continue with the impacts of political rationalities on the Platform, the fourth impact has been demonstrated by, governmentality research, which detects the underlying mechanisms through which power relations are exerted, authority is built and political obedience is achieved. Concerning the relationship between the Platform and the Commission, power relations originate from funding. Platform is funded by the Commission on the basis of a contract. The contractual relationship between the Commission and the Platform can be considered one of the mechanisms through which the Platform is subjectified and made an object of governing. In line with its contractual agreement with the Commission, and due to the requirements of its funding, the Platform sets yearly objectives. Before each contract period starts, it prepares a work plan. This work plan sets out the Platform’s annual working plans and objectives. At the end of the year, it prepares annual reports in order to document its achievements.

Fifth, as governmentality research again highlights, political rationalities exert postmodern patterns of surveillance, such as evaluation and auditing. With respect to the Platform, it prepares a yearly working plan, and then reports its annual achievements to the Commission, which evaluates the Platform’s success. Central to this dissertation’s argument is that the very system of reporting and evaluation might be conceived of a mechanism of surveillance, which might likely disciplines the Platform’s activities. According to this interpretation, reporting is not merely documenting a set of outcomes. Furthermore, the structure of reporting may shape actions by creating a certain cognitive framework to relate to the social phenomenon, i.e. in inscribing the methods of reaching objectives and the representation of end results. For instance, the Platform uses flow charts, bullet points and short summaries in its reports and position papers. In itself, this is not an interesting finding;

nonetheless, these methods of inscription may be considered endogenous to the understanding of managerialism and a results-based working strategy.

The sixth aspect concerns how the implications of the Platform on the national NGOs. The previous analysis takes the Platform as its object of inquiry: it interrogates how the Platform is built as a form of subject, e.g. a prototype subject which is compatible with the tenets of the new modes of governance. The sixth aspect, however, suggests studying how the Platform transfers the knowledge of its self-constitution to its members and the NGO community. In other words, this implies, as an agency of government, the Platform is both *constituted* and *constituting*. It aims to shape its members and the local NGO community via technologies of capacity building—training, seminars, conferences, and tools of communication. The new forms of governance entails a project of integrating civil society as a stakeholder in the governance of Europe. The Platform may be seen as one of the nuclei and carrier of this project; though the investigation of the success of this can be a concern of further studies.

In line with this project, the Platform, then, arguably act as the subjects of government, taking a role in conducting the NGO community. For instance, the Platform tries to translate *the knowledge, tools of representation, techniques of governance, and identity* of the new modes of governance to national NGOs and other EU NGO networks. The conclusion to be drawn is through the objective of *strengthening the sector* (which is the one of three objectives of the Platform) and techniques of capacity building (e.g. benchmarking and sharing experiences), the Platform engages in an effort in fostering a specific type of civil society. In other words, the Platform tries to create Platform-like entities within civil society, as well as playing a role in normalisation of the legitimacy of EU in given policy areas. For example, the Platform arranges conferences about the OMC, effective lobbying strategies to the EU institutions and participation. It can be argued that these conferences implicitly (or explicitly) help justifying the EU rule by advancing “truth

claims” in that those issues reflect a reality, and as defined or conveyed by the Commission.

The Platform also attempts to relate to the national organisations and to transform the interests of the constituents within the network. In contrast to a bottom-up organisational structure, however, the Brussels office plays a dominant role. In other words, while the Brussels headquarter – also called as the secretariat- to a great degree act autonomously, is fosters Europeanisation and articulate knowledge, which fits the ethos of professionalism and managerialism. This networking relationship, then, can result in colonisation of the life-world of civil society, as the Platform carries the political rationalities to its members and the local NGOs. For instance, the Platform has been engaged in training the NGOs by translating the knowledge of how to run an organisation and how to communicate with the political authorities. This observation refutes the democratising promise of the Platform, which considers EU NGOs to be a transmission belt of the European citizenry (e.g. Nanz and Steffek 2007). With respect to this reading, the activities of the Platform correspond to a two-track model of colonisation: colonisation of the colonised.

In the first tier of this model, the Platform is colonised by the discourse of the Commission. The second tier concerns *colonisation through its own actions*. The Platform initially disperses the idea that civil society organisations should orient their actions towards the EU institutions, and that they should include a “European dimension” in their works. Put another way, the Platform imposes a *problematic* on the local NGOs: the Commission creates a discursive field in which the practice of its power is rationalised, and in which the EU is rendered knowable (such as through its “connecting with the citizens” discourse). The Platform, then, transfers this discourse to its members. A Gramscian interpretation would argue that the Platform carries the hegemonic discourse on EU governance, as well as the knowledge necessary for restructuring the capital accumulation. Furthermore, it would also suggest that incorporating the NGOs in the new governance mechanisms is an attempt to integrate them into the historical bloc, where they are defined as the

constituents of the new establishment. The Platform, then, in a Gramscian reading, helps maintain political integrity and stability vis-à-vis any popular discontent.

From a Foucaultian perspective, the Platform *guides the conduct of its members* through training in several areas, such as how to lobby EU institutions and national governments and how to organise an efficient NGO. The Platform organises conferences and seminars for these purposes. Bohman argues that academic conferences create a public sphere, since they prepare a forum for critical discussion (Bohman 2004). However, I argue that it is not possible to observe a critical atmosphere in this case. Rather, the Platform “circulates” the knowledge of EU governance (such as the Open Method of Coordination) in these conferences, impose a problematic on the NGOs (that of directing their interests towards EU institutions), and shape their behaviour (through training on NGO management and communication skills). In other words, the Platform shapes the conduct of conduct, normalising a certain form of governance. It gives guidance in problem solving and organising. One of the results of Platform’s attempts at training is the portrayal of lobbying as the technique NGOs should use in their relations with EU governance. In this respect, lobbying removes the ethos of protest and voluntarism from the civil society’s repertoire of action and constitutes the EU NGOs as the “partners” and “stakeholders” within policy-making processes.

The Platform’s contribution (and other social actors alike) is found trivial by the earlier research: it has not been possible to track the particular contributions, since the Commission has been providing general feedbacks. Besides, the Commission is not legally obliged to consider these inputs (this situation has not changed in the Lisbon treaty even though it has introduced the norm of participatory democracy); thus, the presence of the social actors has been within the confines of “rights to be heard”. Thus, the ideas of the Platform, which are assessed in this survey, might likely be circulating as *empty signifiers* in Brussels policy-making milieu. Yet, they may make of sense when they are considered in relation to the Commission’s concerns and studied as illustration of how a sponsored actor perceives this process.

On the other hand, some has approached to the Platform's work positively, as it allows the presence of some voices which would otherwise be absent (Cullen 2010). This view relates to the Platform's (and similar actors' alike) legitimating role (Kochler-Koch&Finke 2007); though this role has not been substantiated in the literature.

European Social policy and the Platform

The Platform's reactions to EU social policy reforms, on the one hand, recognise a new paradigm change due to a transformation entailed by economic restructuring; however, on the other, these reactions lead to several points of criticism. The Platform principally supports the Europeanisation of social policies, advocating the social inclusion discourse and the empowerment of the individual through techniques of lifelong learning and training. Suggested in this way, the Platform's suggestions can be seen pertinent with the tenets of third way, combining the social democratic spirit of state regulation with communitarian ideas of solidarity as well as policies of activation – which makes the human capacities amenable to political intervention and economic logic. One of the most pressing proposals of the Platform, in this respect, is the introduction of a minimum income within the EU. The Platform also supports policies of skill developing in order to adapt to changing economic conditions; this may well be regarded pertaining to the conduct of conduct via the political programme of forming a new subjectivity of an active citizenship who is empowered, but left with the responsibility of bearing the all risks. The Platform's position on the EU social policies has been one of the focuses of this work. However, this inquiry of the relationship between the Platform and European social policy *qua* social policy should move beyond the Platform's mere thoughts and also consider the context of its emergence. This concerns the relative enhancement of the EU competencies with respect to social policies at Maastricht Treaty (1992), acceptance of the employment as a common European problem with the Amsterdam (1997), the launch of European Employment Strategy (1997) and the introduction of the Lisbon strategy (2000). The Platform's establishment, in this context, has been explained with the Commission's aspirations of strengthening its institutional legitimacy via mobilising collective

action with an explicit (and implicit) connotation in that it represents the common European interests with respect to regulation of European social policy (e.g. Cram 2006). Yet, the Commission has tried to justify its sponsorship with its reliance on the external expertise for the task of proposal preparations, as recognised in EU treaties; it implies the Platform's position papers, which are elaborated above, would function to supply *epistemic* assistance.

EU NGOs and the EU's Democratic Deficit

As the above has shown, the Platform has been constituted by bureaucratic programming and its management structure and working strategies comply with the tenets of New Public Management (NPM) and "new managerialism", which are associated with neoliberal rationalities. It has been illustrated that the Social Platform's organisational structure, working methods, ways of communicating and ways of thinking have been shaped and guided by the Commission's participation discourse – though, the meta-rationality (i.e. NPM and new managerialism) of which was not necessarily created by the Commission. Furthermore, the structure and procedures through which the Platform has been incorporated into EU decision-making contain elements which threaten its democratising promise. The participation discourse and the consultation regime primarily foster its autonomisation, thus disconnecting from the grassroots. The Platform, in turn, acts like a supranational elite organisation; however, central to the deliberative school is the notion that public spheres link the public reason that has emerged from within civil society to opinion-forming publics. Moreover, the practice of Commission's participatory discourse contains several exclusionary elements. On the one hand, the consultation settings exert a pressure to the interested groups to be capable of following the complex requirements. Bouwen (2004) argues that this has not only shaped the social actors, but also the business groups. With respect to this, he also argues that the Commission's role is overlooked. On the other, the Commission's interest intermediation policy categorise NGOs as interest groups, i.e. like any other group (e.g. corporate and business groups) that endeavours to influence EU politics. In the meantime, even though the Platform defends a discourse on inclusiveness, it does not

hesitate to develop strategies to exclude possible actors that would threaten its privileged position in the EU setup, for instance supporting the idea of accreditation for some NGOs to interact with EU institutions.

The Platform and links with the grassroots

To hear it from the documents of the Platform, the NGO community is well-interconnected between different sectors as well as different levels (e.g. the national and European levels). On paper, this looks like a well-functioning state/society relationship, in which the different levels of the civil society communicate each other, so that any discourse that emerges within these deliberations are linked to the political public spheres. Nevertheless, the inquiry into the networking system of European NGOs demonstrates that this networking mechanism does not function perfectly. The rationale behind the network system rests on the idea of a linear interconnection that runs from the local NGOs to umbrella national networks, from umbrella national networks to European umbrella networks, and European umbrella networks to second-level umbrella networks. Nevertheless, national organisations have but a minor impact on the work of the Social Platform, while the right to participate in decision-making processes (management committees, steering committees, and working groups) is assigned to European-level NGO networks. In addition, the Platform defines itself as a European lobbying organisation whose objective is to provide advocacy to EU institutions.

Platform, exclusion and legitimate European civil society

The other aspect that undermines the democratising promises of the Platform is that the very idea of a European NGO network excludes some voices from the notion of European civil society projected in the Commission's civil society discourse. Even though the Platform claims to channel *the* voice of the European civil society, it restricts the privilege of interacting with political institutions to only those organisations which are recognised and accredited by the EU institutions. The Platform defends this arrangement on the grounds that the Commission should

implement an accreditation system in order to incorporate the representatives of the NGO sector into EU decision-making structures. It can be argued that it supports this idea to consolidate its position; however, this could also lead to a competition for power among civil society actors in order to be formally recognised by the EU institutions. Moreover, the Platform reinforces the Commission's conception of European civil society, which draws the legitimate boundaries of civil society according to those actors that are capable and enthusiastic about engaging in governance choreography (i.e. Europe talks to Europe). Having defined itself as a peaceful and constructive representative of civil society, it leaves out groups which challenge the ethos of European integration—anti-capitalists, anti-globalisation/alternative globalisation groups, anarchists, Eurosceptics etc—from the very definition of civil society. One can argue that political power would not be willing, surely, to establish dialogue with anti-systemic movements through formal structures. Neither would some social groups prefer lobbying and advocacy work as a strategy of defending their claims (Young 2001). Thus, the argument supported here is that the inclusion of “other” and “many” voices (and groups), including the most contentious, would not necessarily make the consultations more democratic. However, normative theories of democracy do not consider lobbying practices intrinsic to democratisation (though one exception is associative democracy [Hirst 1994, Cohen and Rogers 1995]). Rather, the implication of the Commission's discourse is that it fosters a *meaning* of civil society, which is restricted to actors that are docile and conform to the system. Our survey has shown how docile actors are managed and trained, thus being constituted by political rationalities.

EU governance, the Platform, and entitlement

One of the obstacles faced by the Platform in channelling the *imagined* European citizenry is the entitlement of statuses in transnational governance settings. In EU governance, this status is defined as “stakeholders”, yet this notion is “necessarily constrained and limited in terms of who can, is, or will be allowed to participate” (Swygedouw 2005:2000). Stakeholder status determines the participants in governance; however, “in most cases, entitlements are conferred upon participants by

those who already hold a certain power or status. Of course, the degree to which mobilisations of this kind are successful depends, *inter alia*, on the degree of force and/or power such groups or individuals can garner and on the willingness of the existing participants to agree to include them” (Ibid.). This statement accurately reflects the Platform. The Platform mainly recruits people who hold a degree in European studies or have experience in European-level NGO management. In this sense, the Platform can be defined as a European elitist organisation. The people it recruits are those who prove willing to participate in the new governance setup, including the consultations with the Commission, the AGORA meetings with the European Parliament, Liaison group of the European Economic and Social Committee. They are also willing to work for the deepening of European integration. The Platform, after all, is an organisation whose interest and energy is directed towards the EU institutions and the idea of Europe. Furthermore, it works to Europeanise the interests of national NGOs, by which I mean it directs its energy and activities towards European institutions and the tools of European governance (e.g. the Open Method of Coordination). Thus, the Platform fits well into a functionalist conception of a Europeanised and Europeanising institution (Streck and Schmitter 1991); its origins can be found in Monnet’s thoughts, which has been rejuvenated and put into language with “European Economic and Social Space” by Delors, put into practice by Santer, and developed by Prodi and Barosso Commissions.

This dissertation, therefore, differs from approaches which define EU governance as a zero-sum game in which the power of the state is distributed between supranational, transnational, regional, and local actors. Our study reveals that the Commission’s civil society discourse has constitutive and productive features, which are not adequately uncovered by other studies on European civil society, such as normative, social movements and governance approaches. In other words, the Commission’s understanding of “European governance” does not rest on an understanding of engaging different and multiple actors in effective and efficient problem-solving mechanisms in terms of “what they are” and “what they used to be”.

Rather, it aims partly deliberately and to a certain extent unintentionally creating new actors and shaping the behaviours of already existing ones in order to adapt to the requirements of new forms of governance. The Commission has a legacy of developing projects and mentalities which aim to shape the European social and political environment; yet, sometimes by pushing its legal limits. Partially, some of these projects proved to be successful in time, particularly those originated during Hallstein and Delors Commissions. The participation discourse in this respect can be considered as one of the projects through which the Commission endeavours to further the European integration by taking action on behalf of the EU, and arguably Europe at large. In turns, it aims at legitimising its actions, while acquiring the consent of the citizens. The Social Platform, then, has been subjectified by the forms of knowledge, morality and technologies which are conveyed by the Commission. The Platform, then, carries the knowledge, morality and technologies to local NGOs in order to disperse a certain type organizational structure and civic activism. The participation discourse, on the one hand opens a discursive field for the Commission's actions; on the other, it plays a symbolic function as if the interests of the citizens are integrated into EU decision-making processes, thus mitigating the EU's legitimacy crises. The discourse further fosters promoting ethos of managerialism and performance-machine like subjects within the organized actors of civil society. Nonetheless, it should also be stated that this should be thought of as an open ended process: that is, the analysis which has been carried out here gives a temporal picture. The nature of the relationship between the Platform and the European Commission as well as they themselves might likely to transform. For instance, the Commission's relationship with the social actors have been started within the framework of consultations and then evolved into participation. It is a possibility that the Social Platform and similar social actors alike might become legally recognised actors in the very near future. The future configurations about the EU polity might either favour or marginalise the Platform. Yet, it is even a possibility the Commission and even the EU might collapse. With regards to the temporality of the process, our survey can be seen as an attempt of describing how the social actors transform into the managers and civil society institutions into

corporate-like governed associations. Although this has currently has an implication on some sections of the civic sector, this might likely spread over a larger space. This process can lead to what Burnham conceptualized in 1942 as managerial revolution, which implies the rule of society by managers (or group of experts), as the new ruling class. Burnham developed this concept by observing the technocratic rule in Soviet Union and the Nazi regime in Germany. Different than the totalitarian implications of the concept, managerialism in the contemporary circumstances can lead to transformation of democracies into corporate-like governance, wherein all of the organized activity, including political settings and organized civil society, is administered like firms and according to principles of neo-liberalism. Nonetheless, it is also possibility that some actors of the civil society keep distance from this process which results in decolonisation of civil society.

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Social Platform Work Reports between 2000-2010.

Social Platform Annual Reports between 2000-2010.

The list of Interviewees (interview were conducted between April 2009 and May 2009)

Conny Reuter, The President, Social Platform and director, Solidar

Anne Hoel, Communication Officer, Social Platform

Pascale Charhon, Director , European Network Against Racism

Georgy Siklosy, Communication Officer, European Network Against Racism

Laetitia Sedou, Coordinator, Civil Society Contact group

Anonymous, Policy Officer, European Network Against Racism

Curriculum Vitae
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Educational Background:

2005-2006	M.A	Master of European Affairs: Sweden	Lunds University,
2003-	Ph.D	Political Science: University Ankara, Türkiye	Middle East Technical
2001-2003	M.A	International Relations: Izmir, Türkiye	Ege University
1997-2001	B.A	Political Science Istanbul, Türkiye	Marmara University

Academic Works:

Master Thesis (Aegean University): Agricultural Products Tax and its Implementation in Izmir (1943-1946).

Master Thesis (Lund University): European Social Model: A New Social Security Paradigm

Publications

Governing Europe through civil society: A Critical Appraisal on the EU funded NGOs, forthcoming Palgrave, *forthcoming 2011*

Research reports

The role of social and political actors in articulation of a European public sphere, EUROSPHERE, 2011.

Periodic reports

EUROSPHERE project periodic activity reports 2009, 2010, 2011.

Working Papers

Legitimising the Postnational European Polity Re-visiting the Contract Theory and Governmentality, *Eurosphere Online Working Paper Series*, No.11, 2008.

Democratizing EU Governance through Sponsored European Publics: Is it working, can it work?, *Eurosphere Online Working Paper Series*, pending. (this paper was submitted firstly to MatchPoints Conference (on Deliberative Democracy), Aarhus 12-14 May, 2011.

Attended Conferences

Governing through managerial civil society, ECPR Reykjavik Conference, August 2011.

Deliberative Democracy Workshop, Aarhus 12-14 May 2011.

Governing Europe through civil society, Norwegian National-science conference, Normative Political Theory workshop, 5-7 January 2011.

Are European NGOs carriers of public use of reason or nuclei of new modes of governance?, Eurosphere Mid Term Conference, Brussels, 11-14 November 2010.

Are Trans- European Networks of NGOs democratizing or governmentalizing?, EUROSPHERE international conference, Osnabrueck, 13-14 Nov. 2009

Preliminary results from the EUROSPHERE research about the Trans-European Networks of NGOs, EUROSPHERE Summer course, Tallinn, 27-31 July 2009

“Emergence of Public Sphere(s) in European Union: A Critical Inquiry for the European Governance” The Seventh METU Conference on International Relations Hegemony or Empire? Prospects for Contemporary World Order, June 18-20 2008, Ankara.

“A Glance at the Army-Politics Relations after 1980s”: presented paper in the conference organized by Turkish Political Science Association (a member of IPSA) in Istanbul, 23 October 2004

“Ottoman legacy in rural relations and resurrection of *Aşar* in Republican Era”: presented paper in the conference organized by Turkish Political Science Association in Istanbul, 11 October 2003

Civil Society: a utopia: Participant in the workshop about EU and Turkey relations in Istanbul, April 2001

Other publications

A Neo-Populist Challenging to Neo-Liberalism: Hugo Chavez, in *Radikal İki* (a Turkish weekly) , 19 January 2001.

Grants

Norwegian Government Scholarship in 2008-2009
Swedish Institute scholarship in 2005-2006
CEU scholarship for the Master Studies in Political Science in 2005-2006 declined
CES Middle Technical University Scholarship for PhD candidates November 2007
CES Middle East Technical University Scholarship for PhD research November 2010-January 2011

Work Experience

Research Fellow in Eurosphere Research Project, February 2010: The work entails conducting a research on the role of civil society in articulation of a European public sphere; co-leading a research work package; updating the content of the project's web site; acting as the editorial secretariat of online working paper series; authoring the periodic activity reports of the project; maintaining the daily communication within the project partners.

The Coordinator Assistant in EUROSPHERE Project (University of Bergen), September 2008- February 2010:

Research assistant in Middle East Technical University, Centre of European Studies, for six months in 2007

Research Assistant in a Turkish think tank institute, Global Strategy, for eight months duration in 2005, focusing on Middle East Peace Process and more specifically on American invasion in Iraq

Research Experience:

Eurosphere Project, University of Bergen, 2008- continuing.

External evaluation of “*Girls’ education campaign*” which was supported by UNICEF and National Education Ministry of Turkey in 07-30 December 2006.

A survey project coordinated and led by Turkish Pharmacists Association. I conducted questionnaires to the pharmacists and local people in September 2007, in Southern provinces of Turkey, including Hatay and Antalya for 20 days.

I was a guest researcher in Ljubljana, two and a half months in order to pursue a research as a part of my dissertation between December 2007 and January 2008.

Teaching Experience

MA Course on European Integration, University of Bergen, Comparative Politics, 2010 (2 hours).

MA Course on European Integration, 4 hours, University of Bergen, Comparative Politics, 2011

Participated Projects:

Europshere Project, 2008-continuing

Quo Vadis, 2009, 2010. a network project, participated in three workshops.

Language skills:

English: Fluent

Norwegian: Advanced

German: Intermediate (*Grundstufe* in Goethe Institute).

Swedish: nubörjare certifikat –for beginners- in Folksuniversitet in Sweden.

Area of Interest:

Political Theory/philosophy, Comparative Politics and Turkish Politics (General Examination -or qualification examination- from the respective fields. Besides, I am interested in International Political Economy, International Relations Theory, Integration of European Union, Welfare State and Social Policy.

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TURKISH SUMMARY

1990'dan beri Avrupa Birliđi'nin (AB) meşruiyeti AB çalışmalarının ve de AB kurumlarının başta gelen sorunları arasında yer aldı. Bu bağlamda bazı önerilerde bulunuldu: bunlar arasında AB Parlamentosu'nu güçlendirmek (Horeth 1999), bir AB anayasası hazırlamak (Habermas 2001a), AB kurumlarını kamusal iletişim yoluyla denetleyecek bir Avrupa kamusal alanının varlığı ihtimalini araştırmak – ve oluşturmak- (2001a; Eriksen 2005; Schlesinger 2006) ve sivil toplum örgütlerinin AB yönetişimi içine dahil etmek bu öneriler arasında yer almaktaydı. Bu tez, bu öneriler arasından sivil toplum örgütlerinin AB yönetişimi ve de karar alma süreçlerine dahil edilmesini kritik olarak incelemektedir. Bunun için son dönemde ortaya çıkan AB STK'larını ve bunların ortaya çıkmasına yol açan süreci analiz etmektedir. Bu sürecin etkileri Sosyal Platform üzerinde incelenmektedir.

Diđer bir ifade ile literatürdeki genel yaklaşım STKların yönetim süreçlerine eklenmesini AB yönetişiminin demokratikleştirilmesinin merkezine yerleştirirken, bu tez bu yaklaşımın aksine, AB Komisyonu'nun AB STK'larının ortaya çıkış sürecinde üstlenildiđi rolü ve bu rolün arkasında bulunan mantığı incelemektedir. Komisyon'un 1990 sonrasında sivil toplum söylemine duyduđu ilgi incelendiđinde Komisyon destekli sivil toplum örgütlerinin AB yönetişimindeki rolü daha iyi anlaşılabilir. AB Komisyonu 1990'dan beri "sivil toplum", "katılım" ve de "katılımcı demokrasi" gibi söylemler geliştirmiş ve bu kavramlar yoluyla örgütlenmiş sivil toplum aktörlerini, STKları, AB genişleme süreci ve de kendi kurumsal çıkarları ile ilişkilendirmeye çalışmıştır. 2000'lerin başından itibaren ise Komisyon Avrupa sivil toplumu söylemini AB'nin idari reformuna ve de AB'nin meşruyet krizine bağlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, Komisyon son yıllarda ise AB'nin vatandaşları ile arasında bulunduğu varsayılan iletişim sorununu çözmeye AB STK'larına da araçsal bir rol yüklemiştir.

Bu tezde iddia edilen, “söylemin” Komisyon’un kendi kurumsal çıkarlarını gerçekleştirmek için AB STK’larını ve de “katılımcı demokrasi” kavramları *sadece* araçsal bir bakış içerisinde kullanmadığıdır. Komisyon Avrupa sivil toplumunun AB düzeyindeki temsilcilerine desteklemektedir. Bu tez, Platform’un kurumsal yapısı ve Komisyon’un sivil toplum söylemine tepkisini incelediğimizde Komisyon’un sivil toplum söyleminin demokratikleştirme paradigması dışında değerlendirilebilecek bazı sonuçlar doğurduğu iddia etmektedir. Platform’un Komisyon’a STK’ları eğitime ve kapasite geliştirme (capacity building) rolleri göz önüne alındığında ise Komisyon’un söyleminin (ve de Platform üzerinde gözlemlenen etkilerinin) Platform vasıtası ile daha geniş bir alan yayılma projesini de içerdiği iddia edilmektedir. Bunun sonuçlarını ise, ilk olarak, Komisyon’un sivil toplum ve katılım tanımı sivil hayatın ethosu olan gönüllülük ilkesini işletmecilik mantığı ile değiştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. İkinci sonuç, Komisyon’un siyasi katılım kavramı etkili ve verimli problem çözmeye indirgenmiş depolitize bir kavramdır. Üçüncü sonuç, Komisyon’un bu çabaları sivil toplum içerisinde Avrupa’nın yönetiminde yer almaya hevesli ve bu işi yerine getirmek için gerekli teknik bilgilerle donatılmış yeni öznelerin oluşturma projesi olarak değerlendirilebilir. Araştırma sonucunda Sosyal Platform’un “sözleşme yükümlüklerini” yerine getirebilme adına sonuç odaklı çalışma ve de ölçülebilir (ve de denetlebilir) sonuçlar üretmeye odaklandığını tespit edilmiştir. Sosyal Platform bunu diğer AB STKlarına yerel örgütlere taşımaktadır. Platform AB karar alma mekanizmalarında da marjinal bir yere sahiptir. Bu yüzden Platform’un etkin rolü örgütlü sivil toplumun biçimlendirilmek olarak tanımlanabilir.

Tez bu süreci Foucault tarafından geliştirilen kavramsal çerçeve içerisinde ele almakta. Bu çalışmanın merkezinde yer alan yaklaşım gereği güç, bilgi, disiplin ve öznelerin oluşum süreçlerini siyasi programları ile ilişkisellik bağlamında analiz edilmekte. Foucault özbenliğin (self) kurulmasını devletin ortaya oluşması süreci ile ilişkilendirerek “yönetim mentalitesi” (governmentality), yönetme sanatı (art of government) kavramını geliştirdi. Foucault’nun “yönetim mentalitesi” kavramı Komisyon’un AB STK’larını fonlama, yeni yönetim metodlarının oluşumunu yaratma ve yeni öznelerin ortaya çıkmasındaki kurucu etkisini incelemeye ve bunun

bir mentalite çerçevesinde gerçekleştiğini anlamamıza olanak sağlamaktadır. Foucault'dan esinlenen bu yaklaşım aynı zamanda sivil toplumun AB yonetime dahil edildiği şartları açıklamaya, Komisyonun bu kapsamda hangi araçları (technologies) ve stratejileri kullandığını ortaya çıkarmaya, bu söylemin neyi başarmayı hedeflediğini ve de bu söylemin nesnelere bu süreci nasıl algıladığı ve kabul ettiğini araştırmaya olanak sağlamaktadır. Bu tez öncelikle Komisyon'un sivil toplum ve katılımcılık üzerindeki ilgisini incelemekte, ikinci olarak da bu projenin etkilerini AB STKlarının en önemlilerinden biri olan Sosyal Platform üzerinde incelemektedir.

Avrupa STK'ları ve Sosyal Platform

STKlar AB düzeyinde beş farklı biçimde örgütlenmiştir: bunlar, 1) ulusal STKların Brüksel'deki temsilcileri (İtalyan çevreci örgüt Lambiante); 2) uluslararası örgütlerin Brüksel'deki temsilcileri, Greenpeace, Uluslararası Af ve Oxfam vb.; 3) AB tarafından fonlanan ve 1990lar'da ortaya çıkan Avrupa STK ağları ve platformları, Irkçılığa Karşı Avrupa Ağı ve Avrupa Kadınlar Ağı vb.; 4) AB STK ağlarını bir araya getiren semsiye örgütler (Sosyal Platform, İnsan Hakları Geliştirme Ağı, kalkınma STKlarının ağı CONCORD, tüketici gruplarının platformu BEUC ve kültürel grupları bir araya getiren EFAH); ve 5) AB düzeyinde "katılımcı demokrasiyi" geliştirmek için kurulan ve AB STK topluluğunun ikinci derece şemsiye ağlarını bir araya getiren Sivil Toplum İrtibat Grubu (CSCG). AB STKları kavramsal olarak ulusal STKların Brüksel'deki temsilciliklerini (ilk model) ve de uluslararası STKların Brüksel'deki temsilciliklerini (ikinci model) kapsamaz. AB STKlarını özellikle AB karar alma süreçlerine etki etmek için ortaya çıkmıştır.

Bu tezin analizinin nesnesi, Sosyal Platform, sosyal politika alanında 40 AB STK federasyon ve ağını bir araya getiren bir oluşumdur; Sosyal Platform ayrıca Sivil Toplum İrtibat Grubuna da üyedir. Platformun üyeleri yerel, bölgesel, ulusal ve de AB düzeyde örgütlenmiş binlerce gönüllü sivil toplum oluşumlarını temsil ettiğini iddia etmektedir. Bu gruplar sosyal adalet, barınma, üreme hakları ve ırkçılığa karşı mücadele gibi konular üzerinde çalışan kadın, yaşlı, genç, çocuklar ve aileleri

içermektedir. Platformun 1994’de ortaya çıkması, Komisyon’un kurumsal çıkarları gereği sosyal politika alanında meşru müdahale alanını genişletme çabaları ile açıklanabilir. Kuruluş tarihinden itibaren Platform Komisyon ile bağlantı durumdadır ve Komisyon ile senede iki defa toplantı yapma ve de Komisyon’a sosyal politika alanında tavsiyelerde bulunma ayrıcalığına sahiptir. Lisbon Anlaşması’nin 11. maddesi bu ilişkileri katılımcı demokrasi olarak tanımlamakta ve temel demokratik bir prensip olduğunu öngörmektedir.

Avrupa sivil toplumu ve Avrupa STKları

AB STK’ları üç ana yaklaşım tarafından çalışıldı: normatif okul (Heritier 1998; Armstrong 2002; Magnette 2001, 2003; Eriksen 2001; Curtin 1999; Smismans 2006; Fossum ve Trenz 2006), sosyal hareketler yaklaşımı (Della Porta ve Ciani 1999; Imig ve Tarrow 2001; Cullen 2005) ve yönetim yaklaşımı (Kochler-Koch ve Finke 2007; Finke 2009; Zimmel ve Freise 2006).

Avrupa sivil toplumu ve normatif yaklaşım

AB STKlarını normatif açıdan çalışanlar müzakereci demokrasinin prensiplerinden yola çıkıp Avrupa’da yeni bir sistem oluştuğunu iddia etmekte ve bunu dönüşlü (reflexive) kurumsal yapı (Eriksen et al 2005) olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ulusun gücünün önemli bir bölümü uluslararası örgütlere geçmesi nedeniyle bu yeni yapılanmada ulus devletler irade oluşumunu bu yeni karar alma ve kanun çıkarma mercilerine yansıtamamakta ve de dolayısıyla demokrasi krizi ile baş başa kalmaktadır. Uluslararası karar alma mercileri demokratik siyasi kontrol mekanizmalarının kapsamı dışında yer almakta ve her geçen artan güçleri buralarda alınan kararların meşruiyetini sorgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda normatif yaklaşım, Avrupa sivil toplumu ve Avrupa kamusal alanı kavramlarını, kamusal aklı ve de kamusal mükazekereleri siyasal kamusal alanlara taşıyan önemli unsurlar olarak görür. Bu yaklaşıma göre, ayrıca, AB STKları karar alma mercilerini “eleştirel gözlem” altında tutarak yönetim süreçlerini daha şeffaf ve de hesap sorulabilir hale getirebilmektedir.

Normatif yaklaşımın iddia ettiği bir siyasi sistemi demokratik kılan sivil toplum içerisinde çıkan söylemlerin STKlar aracılığı ile karar alma ve kanun yapma süreçlerine taşınmasıdır. Avrupa sivil toplum çalışmalarındaki normatif eğilim bu yüzden AB STK'larını oluşmakta olan Avrupa sivil toplumunu çekirdeği, taşıyıcısı, ve de ulusal sınırlar ötesinde AB düzeyinde siyasal katılımı olanaklı kılan unsurlar olarak görmektedir. Bu görüşe göre, AB STKları vatandaşlar ve de AB yönetimi arasında bağ kurmaktadır. Örnek olarak, AB anayasasının hazırlanması sürecinde kullanılan müzakere metodu, AB STKlarını bu görüşmelerin içine dahil etmesi hasebiyle başarılı bir tecrübe olarak kabul edilmektedir (De Schutter 2002). Böylece, normatif yaklaşım AB STKlarına kamusal müzakereleri AB karar alma mercilerine iletme görevi verir (Curtin 1999; Smismans 2006; Magnette 2001, 2003; De Schutter 2002). Bu da AB STKlarının kamusal akıl yönetim yapılarına ulaştırması ile sivil toplumun kamusal alanı olarak işlev görmesi demektir (Magnette 2003; Curtin 1999). Kantçi kavramlarla ifade etmek gerekirse, bu AB STKlarına, AB siyasetinden etkilenen herkesi temsilen kamusal dinamiklerle oluşmuş özgün kamusal akıl üretme görevini yerine getirmek demektir. Diğer bir ifade ile, AB STKları Avrupa sivil toplumunun (sadece STKlar ile sınırlı değil) aracı olarak işlev görmekte ve fikir oluşturan kamu (Habermas 1996a) ve anonim toplumsal söylemi (Benhabib 1999) yansıtmaktadır. Bunların dışında, normatif yaklaşımda farklı bir kavramsallaştırma, Avrupa sivil toplumunu sosyal unsur (social constituency) olarak tanımlayan Fossum ve Trenz (2006) tarafından geliştirilmiştir.

Sosyal hareketler yaklaşımı ve Avrupa STKları

Sosyal hareketler ile ilgili literatür AB STKlarının ulusötesi mücadele ve bu örgütlerin kolektif Avrupa kimliği oluşturmada rolü üzerinde durdular (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Della Porta 2005, and Cullen 2005). Normatif yaklaşıma paralel olarak bu sosyal hareketler de toplumsal sorunların karar alma mercilerine aktarılması üzerinde durur. Imig ve Tarrow (2001), AB STKlarının çıkar temsilinde “muhteşem iş” çıkardığını düşünmekle birlikte, bu örgütlerin Avrupa’da sivil toplumu mobilize edemeyeceği çünkü yerel örgütlerle bağlantılarının olmadığı (ya da çok zayıf)

olduğunu iddia eder. Cullen 'in (2005) araştırması da Imig ve Tarrow'un AB STKlarının lobby faaliyetlerindeki başarısı hakkındaki görüşlerini desteklemektedir, fakat farklı olarak Cullen Sosyal Platformu AB bütünleşmesinin neo-liberal liberalleşmesine direnen bir örgüt olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Yönetisimi yaklasimi ve Avrupa Sivil Toplumu

Yönetişim yaklaşımı, Avrupa sivil toplumunu açıklamak için AB STKlarının etkin ve verimli yönetiminde oynadığı role (Kochler-Koch and Rittberger 2006; Jactenfuchs 2001; Kooiman 1993) AB karar alma mekanizmalarına etkilerine odaklanmakta. Bu alandaki çeşitli çalışmalar üçüncü-sektör çalışmaları (Zimmel ve Freise 2006), çıkar grubu çalışmaları (Greenwood 2007; Bouwen 2004), korporatist yaklaşım (Balme ve Chabanet 2008) ve lobi çalışmalarını (Pedler 2007) içerir. Yönetişimci yaklaşım aktörlerin meşruiyetini onların toplumun yönetiminde oynadığı rolle açıklamaktadır. Ne var ki, demokrasi ile ilintili kavramlar yönetim yaklaşımının ilgi alanına girmez, çünkü yönetim yaklaşımı aktörlerin temsiliyet ve hesap verebilirlik durumunu sorun yapmaz. Dolayısı ile yönetim yaklaşımı AB STKlarının yerel örgütlerle ile bağlantısını sorgulamaz. Bu görüşün AB STKlarının otonomlaşması, yani temsil ettiği gruplardan bağımsız hareket etmesini bir sorun olarak görmez. Yönetişim böylece, kamusal çıkarlar ve de yönetim mekanizması içinde yer alan aktörler arasında bağlantı kurmak gibi bir derdi yoktur. Aktörlerin verimli ve etkin problem çözmeye odaklı bakış açısıyla, demokrasiyi paydaşlık (stakeholder) ve ortaklık (partnership) düzeyinde algılar (Schmitter 2003). Bu görüşün ondan gelen isimlerinden Kochler-Koch'a göre (2009), bu yaklaşımın henüz tutarlı bir demokrasi teorisi bulunmamakta, bununla ilgili çalışmalar henüz gelişim aşamasındadır.

Normatif yaklaşım ile kıyasladığında, yönetim yaklaşımı sivil toplumu (ve örgütlerini) egemen güçten bağımsız bir biçimde konumlanan bir olgu olarak tahayyül etmez. STKlara kamu yönetimi işlevleri yükleyerek yönetim, kamusal/özel ve devlet/sivil toplum arasında bir birine zıtmış gibi görünen, Kartezyen ikili-zıtlık anlayışı temeline dayanan sınırları ortadan kaldırır. Ne var ki,

yönetişim bu yolla sivil toplumun kavramlaştırılmasının temel noktası olan “kritik rasyonalitenin” oluşumu özelliğini hiçe sayar. Sivil toplumu oluşturan aktörlerin rollerini sadece etkin problem çözmeye indirgeyen yönetim yaklaşımı sivil toplumu toplumsal kontrolün kurulduğu ve bu yapının bileşenlerinin değiştirilmesinin mümkün olmadığı bir alan olarak görür. Şöyle ki, herhangi biçimde sivil toplum içerisinde kritik rasyonalitenin, karşı hegemonik hareketlerin ya da siyasal akıl tarafından öngörülen gerekçelerin inkarına olanak sağlamaz. Mesela, Habermas için sivil toplum pisaya ve bürokrasi aklı karşısında duran “iletişimsel akıl” hakim olduğu alandır. Gramsci için ise sivil toplum karşı hegemonyanın kurulma alanıdır. Foucault da toplumsal kontrolün çerçevesini hazırlayan siyasal aklın sivil toplum içerisinde çıkabileceğini öngörür. İfade edildiği gibi, bu tez Foucault üzerinden bir kritik geliştirmekte; bu kritik yoluyla tez, siyasal programlamanın yönetim aktörlerini kamusal idari yapılara dahil etmeden önce (ve süreç içerisinde) biçimlendirdiğini iddia etmektedir. Diğer bir ifade ile, sivil aktörler yönetim mekanizmalarına “oldukları gibi” eklenmemektedir; aksine, bu aktörler siyasal programlar yoluyla biçimlendirilmekte, manipüle edilmekte ve yönlendirilmektedir. Tez bu argümanı Platform üzerinde çalışmaktadır. Platform Komisyon tarafından kendisi ve de sosyal aktörler arasında bağlantı kurması amacı ile kurulmuştur. Platform da Komisyondan aldığı söylemi STKlar’a taşımaktadır.

Önceki çalışmalardan farklılık

Siyasi gücün kurucu etkisi üzerinde durarak bu tez daha önce AB STKları üzerine yapılan çalışmalardan ayrılır. AB STKları'nın AB'nin idaresine ne düzeyde katkı yaptığını inceleyen yönetim literatüründen yalnızca farklılık göstermez, ayrıca bu görüşe karşı eleştirel bir tutum takınır (bu görüş için bak, Zimmer and Freise 2006; Mazey and Richardson 2002; Woll 2007; Greenwood 2007a; Bouwen 2004; Balme and Chabanet 2008; Pedler 2007). Sosyal hareketler literatürünün de, temel argümanı, AB STKları'nı ulusötesi bir direnç odağı olmadığını, göstererek ayrılır (Della Porta and Ciani 1999; Imig and Tarrow 2001; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Cullen 2005). Bu tez aynı zamanda AB STKları'nın kamusal akıl karar alma süreçlerine taşıdığı gibi ahlaksal bir önermeyi sorgusuz kabul eden normatif yaklaşım hakkında

da eleştirel bir tutum takınmaktadır (e.g. Eriksen et al 2005; Fossum and Trenz 2006; Armstrong 2002; Magonette 2001, 2003).

Özetle, bu tez yönetim hareketleri ile birlikte, hem normatif hem de sosyal hareketler yaklaşımının iddialarını problemlili bulmaktadır. Bu görüşler AB S'Kları'nın kamusal çıkarları temsil ettiğini kabul eden önermeden yola çıkar; ancak, her iki görüş de AB STKları'nın bu işi siyasi güce bağımlı bir biçimde ortak olarak nasıl hayata geçireceğini sorgulamamıştır. AB politikalarının neo-liberal mantık çerçevesinde şekillenmesine lobi etme metodu ile nasıl direneceğine bahsi geçen çalışmalar içerisinden bir açıklama bulunmaz. Bununla ilgili, sivil aktörlerin, hangi şartlarda, nasıl ve neden lobi eden aktörler haline dönüştüğünü açıklama gereksinimi de bu çalışmalarda bir sorunsal ortaya çıkmaz. Benim iddia ettiğim, STKlar'ın lobi faaliyetleri (buna kurumsal yapı, organizasyon yönetim metotları, raporlama teknikleri ve de iletişim araçları dahil) neo-liberal bir mantık çerçevesinde şekillenmektedir. Bu pratikleri biçimselliğinin içeriği ile beraber düşündüğümüzde, pratiğin içerik üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya çıkarmak mümkündür. Başka bir ifade ile, biçimsel ve prosedürel mekanizmalar lobi çalışmalarının niceliksel yönü üzerinde etkilidir. Güç, bilgi, özen ve disiplin gibi Foucault'nun çalışmalarında öne çıkan kavramlar üzerinden AB STKlarını çalışarak, benim amacım ise kritik bir analiz geliştirmek ve aslında bu kuruluşların iddia edildiği gibi lobicilik alanında “mutheşem bir iş” yapmadığını göstermektir.

Uyguladığım “yönetme mentalitesi” yaklaşımı yönetim yaklaşımı ile karıştırılmakla birlikte ikisinin arasında önemli farklılıklar bulunur. Yönetme mentalitesi yönetim yaklaşımının temel argümanı olan devlet aygıtlarının dışındaki araçlarla yönetme fikrini paylaşır; ancak yönetme mantığı bunu farklı ve eleştirel bir açıdan açıklar. Yönetişim, devlet egemenliğinin devlet dışında farklı aktörler tarafından paylaşılmasıyla hantal bürokratik yapıların çökertildiği daha demokratik bir siyaset sistemi ortaya çıktığını iddia eder. Yönetme mentalitesine ise göre yönetim, siyasi gücün egemenliğe ortak olan aktörler arasında eşit paylaşıldığı bir politik düzen anlamına gelmez. Yönetme mentalitesi bu yaklaşımın aksine, siyasi

gücün devlet dışındaki aktörlerin yönetime katılmadan önce nasıl kurulduğunu ve kurgulandığı üzerinde durur. Yönetme mentalitesi etik ve ahlaki siyaset felsefesinde elen alıldığı gibi siyasi programlarının bileşenleri olarak inceler. Böylece, bu programın bilgisine, ahlaki boyutuna ve toplumsal sorunları idare etmek için kullanılan akılsallık tarzına (style of reasoning) odaklanır. Diğer bir ifade ile yönetme-mentalitesinin temel konusu kamusal idare politikalarına betimsel bir açıklama getirmek değildir; asıl hedefi bu politikaların çerçevesini oluşturan değerler sistemi (ethos) ve yerleşmiş davranış kalıplarını (mores) incelemektir. Bu yaklaşım doğrultusunda, amacım siyaset tarafından geliştirilen projelerin nasıl belli başlı yöntemlere (ve yöntem bilimlerine) ve de pratiklere evrildiğini ortaya çıkarmak, ve de bu projelere maruz kalan aktörlerin bu yöntemleri ve pratikleri nasıl karşıladıklarını ve algıladıklarını analiz etmektir.

Yönetme mentalitesi, AB yönetişimi ve AB STKları

Foucault'un yönetme mentalitesi ile ilgisi güç, disiplin, bilgi ve özne üzerindeki önceki çalışmalarına dayalıdır. Foucault yönetme mentalitesini (ve ya yönetme sanatını) gücün diğer bir biçimi olarak tanımlar ve bunu özün etiği ile ilintili olarak inceler. Bu kavram ile Foucault ayrıca devlet ve özün oluşum sürecindeki ilişkiselliği inceler. Bu şekilde ele alındığında yönetme-mentalitesi siyasi kurgulama ve toplumu bilgi ile idare etme arasındaki bağlantıların izini sürer.

Yönetme mentalitesi davranışları (conduct) ve davranışların idaresini (the conduct of conduct) kapsar; buna özün, diğerlerinin ve de devletin de yönetimi de dahildir (Foucault 1991). Dean'ın de (1999:10) belirttiği gibi Foucault'un yönetme mentalitesini açıklamak için kullandığı *conduct* fiil olarak kullanıldığında “kontrol etmeyi, idare etmeyi, yönlendirmeyi kapsar, ve bunun nasıl yapılacağı ile ilgili bir çeşit hesaplamayı ima eder”. İsim olarak ise “davranışlarımızı, hareketlerimizi ve hal ve gidişimizi içine alan belli başlı davranış kalıplarını kapsar”. Yönetme mentalitesi böylece “herseyin ve de herkesin yönetilmesi” ile ilgilidir.

Bu analitik çerçevede, yönetme-mentalitesi siyasal akılsallıkları (political rationalities) siyasal analiz nesnesi olarak belirler, ve siyasal akılsallıkları, siyasal gücün toplumu yönetme adına icat ettiği araçlarla birlikte analiz eder. Bu mentalite ve yönetme pratiklerinin bunlara maruz kalanlar üzerindeki etkileri inceler (Barry et al 1996:2). Böylece yönetme sanatı bilgiyi (akıllısalığı ve sistematize edilmiş belirli kurallar bütünü), prensipleri ve görselleştirmeleri (sunuş biçimlerini) toplumu yönetilebilir kılabilecek söylemsel bir alana içsel unsurlar olarak kabul eder (Barry et al 1996; Rose and Miller 1992; Rose 1996; Dean 1999). Bu argümanın temel noktası siyasal gücün akılsallık ve pratikler arasındaki bağlantı ile kurulduğu ve uygulandığıdır (Lemke 2007; Lemke 2002; Rose and Miller 1992, Rose 1996; Barry et al 1996; Dean 1999).

Rose (1996:42) bu bağlamda siyasal akılsallıklar ile ilgili üç özellik sıralar. İlkine göre, siyasal akılsallıklar yönetim ile ilgili uygun idealler ve prensiplerin seçilmesi ile ilgili bir ahlak biçimidir. İkincisine göre, akılsallığın nesnelere (ulus, nüfus, ekonomi, toplum, ve topluluk vb.) ve öznelere (vatandaşlar) ile farklı kavramlar üreten epistemolojik bir karaktere sahiptirler. Üçüncü olarak, siyasal akılsallıklar “gerçekliği düşünülebilir ve uygulanabilir kılmak, ve geliştirme adına müdahaleye uygun – ya da uygun olmayan- alanlar kurmak” için belirli bir nedenselleme geliştirir (Rose 1996: 42).

Siyasal akılsallıklar düşünsel (ideational) yapılar değildir: günlük hayatta uygulanır, davranışları yönlendirir, hırslarımızı, niyetlerimizi ve arzularımızı motive eder. Böylece yönetme mentalitesi araştırması mentalitelerin pratiklerle nasıl uygulandığı ve ne düzeyde siyasal teknolojilere dönüştüğünü araştırır. Siyasal teknolojiler ile bahsettiğimiz siyasal akılsallıkları uygulanabilir kılan aygıtlar, prosedürler, mekanizmalar, sözcükler ve araçlardır (technologies) (Dean 1999:31). Başka bir ifade ile güç kendisini bu pratikler yoluyla belirgin kılar (Merlingen 2003).

Bu okumaya göre, yönetim demokrasi anlayışımızda bir gelişmeden ziyade güç ilişkilerinin yeniden şekillenmesidir. Bu yüzden, sivil toplum örgütlerini

desteklemenin demokrasiyi güçlendireceği ve sivil toplum ile siyaset arasında bağlantı kuracak kamusal alanları meydana getireceği bir iddiadır: STKlar bu görevi üstlenebilir de bu görevi yerine getirirken başarısız da olabilir – burada başarı kıstası bu iddiayı ortaya atanların kriterine göredir. Yönetme mentalitesi, farklı olarak, siyasi gücün kurucu etkisini vurgular, ve gücün yönetim sürecinde yer alabilecek kapasitede belli başlı özneler yaratmasını araştırır. Aktörlerin kurulması, meydana getirme, biçimlendirme, manipüle etme ve davranışın yönlendirilmesini kapsayan aksiyon üzerine bir aksiyondur. Böylece, yönetme mentalitesi, AB'nin, ve özellikle Komisyon'un, belirli bir proje, mantık ve bilgi ışığında yönetim sürecinde yer alacak aktörler yaratmasını anlamamızı olanaklı kılar. Bu argumana göre, AB tarafından fonlanan STKlar yeni yönetme mentalitesinin hem öznesi hem de nesnesi olarak görülür; bu da sivil toplumun sivil toplum tarafından yönetilmesi demektir. Yönetme-mentalitesi, ya da yönetme sanatı, siyasi programlamayla yönetim mekanizmalarında yer alma kapasitesinde ve arzusunda yeni özneler (ve öznellikler) kurulduğunu göstermeyi olanaklı kılar.

Yönetim mentalitesinin ampirik araştırmaya uygulanması

Bu tez yönetim mentalitesini Sosyal Platform'un analizine şöyle uygular: 1) Platform'un yönetimin mentalitelerini nasıl kabul ettiğini ve algıladığının izini sürmek için ürettiği dokümanların analizi gerekir. Buna Platform'un amaçlarının ve prensiplerinin sunuş metotları (grafikler, takip çizelgeleri vb.) dahildir. 2) Tez Platform'un Komisyon tarafından üretilen katılım söylemini nasıl algıladığı ve kabul ettiğini inceler; ayrıca, Platform'un 2000li yıllarda ürettiği politikalardan, yeni metotlarının uygulanması, AB anayasasının hazırlanması, AB'nin genişleme süreci ve de AB ile vatandaşlar arasındaki uçurumun kapatılması politikarla ilişkisini inceler. 3) Tez Platform'un yönetim mentalitesine içsel bilgiyi nasıl aksiyona dönüştürdüğünü göstermek için Platform'un çalışma metotlarını, iletişim araçlarını irdeler. Bu analiz ile varılmak istenen pratiğin bilgiye içsel bir olgu olduğunu göstermektir. Bilgi burada her hangi bir şeyin nasıl yapılacağına teknik bilgisidir, organizasyonun idare edilmesi, müzakere kabiliyeti geliştirilmesi ve de AB yönetim sisteminde yer alan diğer paydaşlarla iletişim kurmak gibi. Pratik ve aksiyon, öte

yandan, bilginin hayata geçirilmesi ile ilintili olduğundan, Platform'un çalışma stratejilerini ve hedeflerini nasıl sunduğu araştırmak gerekmektedir. Benim tartıştığım Platform'un çalışma metotları ile basit olarak sivil toplum profesyonelleşmesini göstermek değildir; bu trend aynı zamanda sivil hareketin şirket yönetimine özdeş düşünsellik ve pratikleri içeren bir kurumsallaşma sürecine girdiğidir. Bunu işletmecilik (managerialism) olarak tanımlamak mümkün. İşletmecilik herhangi bir kuruluşu idare etmenin metinsel bilgisidir; burada üniversitelerin işletme fakültelerinde okutulan sistematik bilgiyle bağlantı kurabiliriz (bu tartışma için bak Parker 2002 and Burnham 1942). Göstermeye çalıştığım işletmeciliğin sivil toplum içinde performans odaklı aksiyonu desteklediğidir. Bu süreç, raporlama ve denetleme metotları yoluyla, aynı zamanda AB STKlar'ı üzerinde bir gözetleme mekanizması kurar. Buna göre AB STKlar'ı sistem içerisinde yer almaya devam edebilmek için ve fonlanmanın sürdürülebilmesi için sonuç merkezli çalışma metotları uygulamaktadır, bu yolla finansal destek merkezleri AB STKlarının çalışmalarını denetleyip başarılarını değerlendirebilmektedir.

Tezin sonuçları

Tezin ana iddiası yeni bir yönetim mentalitesi çerçevesinde değerlendirilebilecek AB yönetişim sistemi ve bu sistem içerisinde yer alabilme yeteneğine ve isteğine sahip özneler (ve öznellikler) yarattığıdır. Buna göre, Sosyal Platform'un ortaya çıkması ve daha sonrasında yürüttüğü faaliyetler yönetme mentalitesi gibi çeşitli unsurlar ile ilintilidir. İlk olarak, Platformu yönetişim mekanizmalarının içine çekme çabasının arkasındaki siyasi akılsallıklar yönetme mentalitesinin moral ve etik yönüyle ilintilidir (Rose 1996); buna göre siyaset kurumları tarafından fonlanan STKlar'ın karar alma süreçlerine dahil edilme süreci, protestonun aksine, iyi ve uygun siyaset yapma metodu olarak kabul edilir. Bu moral biçimin uzantıları AB yönetişimi Beyaz Kağıdı (Com 2001), Avrupa İstidham Stratejisi (1997) ve aktif vatandaşlık gibi siyasi programlar ve kamu politikalarında da görülebilir. Bir sonraki adım, bu moral biçimin, AB STKlar'ı ile Doğu Avrupa ve AB'nin komşu ülkelerine taşınmasıdır

İkincisi, yönetme mentalitesine içsel olan akılsallık güç/özne ve güç/iktidar ilişkileri ile ilişkilidir. Sivil toplum, STK, aktif vatandaşlık ve katılımcı vatandaş gibi kavramlar bu söylemin epistemolojik boyutunu oluştururken, akıllaştırma metodu ise Avrupa vatandaşlarının bilincini Avrupa'nın yönetilir bir nesnesi olarak kabul ediyor. Bunu nedeni Komisyonun AB'ninin meşruiyet krizini vatandaşların AB'nin faydalarından habersizliği olarak açıklamasıdır. Komisyon'un politikaları, AB vatandaşlığı olarak da tanımlanabilecek, AB ile Avrupa toplumları arasındaki bağı hayali bir bütünsellik (Fossum ve Trenz 2006) yaratma çalışması olarak görülebilir. Komisyon daha sonra bu hayali kolektif kimliği kendi varlığından haberdar etme ve kendisini bilenebilir kılma çabasına girişir. Diğer bir ifade ile siyasi programlama burada iki noktada kurucu rol oynar bir yandan, toplum yönetiminin akılsallık üslubu, bilgi ve moralitesini belirler, öte yandan, yeni özne biçimleri kurar ve bunu da onların hareketleri, etiği ve bilinci üzerinde etkisi olabilecek metodlarla gerçekleştirmeye çalışır. Avrupa'yi yönetme sanatı, bu yolla yaratılan öznellik durumunun (subjectivity) sadece kişileri değil STKlar gibi kolektif yapıları da kapsadığını öngörür.

Üçüncü olarak, yönetme mentalitesi bize Komisyon ve AB STKlar'ı arasındaki sözleşmeye dayalı ilişkilerin denetleme (audit) ve raporlama gibi postmodern gözetleme metotları yarattığını gösterir. Bu tezde ortaya koyulan temel iddia, AB'nin kurucu etkisi, performans odaklı bir sosyo-politik sistemin ortaya çıkma süreci ve sivil toplum içerisinde yeni yönetim yapılarında yer almaya hevesli işletmeci kurumsal yapıların oluşumu ile simbiyotik bir ilişki içerisindedir. Buradan dördüncü sonuca geçecek olursak, Platform, kuruluşunun özü olan bilgiyi ve araçları üyelerine ve diğer STKlar'a transfer ederek performans odaklı işletmeci bir anlayışının sivil topluma nüfuz etmesinde etkin bir rol oynar. Platform siyasal akılsallıkları üyelerine ve yerel STKlar'a dağıtmaktadır. Bu da Platform'u yönetimle ilgili süreçlerin bir aktörü kılar Platform hem kurulmuştur hem de kurmaktadır. Bunu kapasite geliştirme, eğitim, seminerler, konferanslar ve iletişim araçları ile yapmaktadır. Bu noktayı biraz daha aydınlatmak gerekirse, yeni yönetim biçimleri sivil toplumu AB'nin yönetişimine paydaş olarak dahil eder. Bu, AB yönetişiminin Avrupa'yı

yönetebilir kılma projesidir. Avrupa sivil toplumu bu sürecin içinde bir unsur olarak kabul edilir. Bu proje ile bağlantılı olarak, AB STKlar'ı toplum yönetiminin bir öznesi olarak hareket eder. Örnek olarak, Platform yeni yönetim biçimlerinin *bilgisini, sunuluş araçlarını, yönetim tekniklerini* ulusal STKlar'a ve diğer AB STKlar'ına taşır. Sektörü güçlendirme ve kapasite geliştirme objektifleri, kıyaslama ve paylaşım prensipler ile Platform belirli bir çeşit sivil toplum biçiminin yaygınlaşmasında bir aracı olarak faaliyet gösterir. Diğer bir ifade ile, Platform, sivil toplum içinde kendi benzeri unsurlar yaratmaya çalışır. Platform bu projenin bir nüvesi ve taşıyıcısıdır.

Metodoloji

Tezin temelini oluşturan yönetme-mentalitesi yaklaşımı tezin analizinde kullanacağımız ampirik materyalin seçimini ve de bunların incelenmesini de belirler; sorgulamanın sınırlarını çizer ve ulaştığımız bilgileri nasıl okumamız gerektiğini gösterir. Şöyle ki, çalışmamız Komisyon'un Avrupa sivil toplum söylemini Sosyal Platform'un katılımcılık, yeni yönetim usulleri ve gücün yeniden şekillenmesine verdiği tepki üzerinden okumaya çalışır. Ampirik materyal Sosyal Platform'un Komisyon'a hazırladığı yıllık raporları; katılımcı demokrasi, yönetim ve sosyal politika alanındaki pozisyonları; AB STKlar'ı çalışanlarıyla yapılan mülakatları (Sosyal Platform, Avrupa İrkçılık Karşısı Ağ ve Sivil Toplum İrtibat Grubu); Sosyal Platform'un sivil diyalog üzerine 2008 yılının Aralık ayında düzenlediği iki günlük konferansın analizini kapsar. Avrupa'yi yönetme sanatının akılsallıkları Platform'un kurumsal yapısı ve Platform'un AB kurumları, diğer paydaşlar ve kendi üyeleri ile iletişim metodlarının araştırılması üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Bunlara ek olarak, çalışmamız sadece Platform'un savunulan söylemlerin içeriğini değil aynı zamanda bunların sunulum ve görselleme metodlarının da incelemesini içerir.

Bu analiz öncelikli olarak ilgili AB kurumları (Avrupa Komisyonu ve Avrupa Ekonomik ve Sosyal Komitesi) ve AB STKlar'ı (Sosyal Platform ve Sivil Toplum İrtibat Grubu) tarafından hazırlanan dokümanları (broşur, internet sayfaları ve diğer yazılı metinler) içine alır. Komisyonun sivil toplum ve katılımcı demokrasi

söylemini, Komisyon tarafından üretilen “vatandaşlar ile bağlantı kurma/AB’yi vatandaşlarla buluşturma” inisiyatifleri – bu inisyatife İletişim Politikası, Plan D, Vatandaşlar için Avrupa Politikası dahildir- ve AB STKları’nın AB karar alma süreçlerine eklenme çalışmaları üzerinde analiz eder. AB STKları’nın Komisyon’un söylemi içerisindeki yerini, Sosyal Platform’un yayınları, kurumsal yapısı ve AB kurumları ve kendi üyeleri ile iletişiminin araçlarının (teknolojilerine) incelenmesi ile tartışır. Buradaki amaç, siyasi akılsallıkların izini sürmek için Komisyon’un Avrupa sivil toplum söyleminin Sosyal Platform üzerindeki yansımaları anlamaktır. Bu analiz siyasi akılsallıkları Sosyal Platform’un savunduğu idealler ile birlikte kurumsal yapısı ve organizasyon pratikleri gibi biçimsel unsurları birarada inceleyerek ortaya çıkarır. Siyasi akılsallıklar ne saf ideolijidir (Rose and Miller 1992) ne de sosyal kontrol mekanizmasının gereklilikleridir. Boyun eğdirmek ve hükmetmek ötesinde özün ve toplumsal ilişkilerin kurulmasında üretken bir rol oynarlar (Dean 1999; Rose 1996). Bu yüzden, siyasi akılsallıklar AB STKları’nın kurumsallaşma ve birbiri ile iletişiminin teknikleri ve bilgisi ile ilintilidir.

AB STKları’nın sekreteryası ile gerçekleştirilen mülakatlar tezin ikinci temel metodunu oluşturur. 2009 yılında, ikisi Sosyal Platform, üçü Avrupa Irkçılığa Karşı Ağ ve biri de Sivil Toplum İrtibat Grubu’ndan olmak üzere toplam altı mülakat gerçekleştirdim. Bunlara ek olarak, Aralık 2008’de , Sosyal Platform tarafından düzenlenen Sivil Diyalog ile ilgili, Sivil Diyalog: Avrupa’yi istediğimiz gibi nasıl şekillendiririz” başlıklı iki gün süren bir konferansa katıldım. Platform 2006’dan beri çalışma stratejisinin bir parçası olarak her yıl tek bir olay üzerine yoğunlaşıyor; tezin araştırma konusu ile ilgili olarak, 2008 yılındaki bu konferans “insanlar ile insanlar için, ulus ve AB düzeyde etkin diyalogu şekillendirmek” konusuna odaklandı. AB kurumlarından, akademisyenlerden ve AB STKları’nı biraraya getiren bu konferans AB karar alma süreçlerinin nasıl etkilenebileceğini ve AB STK ağları arasındaki bağın nasıl geliştirilebileceğini tartıştı. Bu konferans STK topluluğun sivil toplum, katılım ve Avrupa’nın yönetimi kavramlarını nasıl algıladığını gösterdi.

Kavramlar tanımlamak

Avrupa sivil toplumu farklı disiplinler tarafından çalışıldı ve her biri organize sivil hareketleri buldukları akademik gelenek içinden tanımlayarak bu kapsamda AB STKlarına analiz ettiler. Siyaset bilimi akademisyenleri bu organizasyonların kamusal akli karar alma mercilerine iletme işlevi üzerinde (Magnette 2001, 2003; Armstrong 2002, Eriksen 2001) ve AB yönetişiminde aldıkları rol üzerinde (Finke 2007; Finke and Kohler-Koch 2007) yoğunlaşarak AB STKlarına sivil toplum örgütü olarak tanımladılar. Kamu politikaları araştırmacıları (Greenwood 2003, 2007a) “çikar grubu”, sosyolojik yaklaşım ise bu grupların kolektif hareket ve mobilizasyon potansiyeline eğilerek “fikir savunuculuğu koalisyonları hareketleri” (Ruzza and Salla 2007) ya da “uluslararası koalisyonlar” (Cullen 2005, Imig and Tarrow 2001; Della Porta and Ciani 2009) kavramlarını kullandılar. Ben bu tezde AB STKlarını, devletin karşısında ve devletin dışından kalan alan (non-governmental) olarak tanımlamak yerine, “idareye dahil ([extra-govenmental]yönetimin bir unsuru)” olarak görüyorum; çünkü bu kurumlar toplum yönetiminde, ve yönetme sanatının gündelik hayata naklinde önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bununla birlikte altını çizmemiz gereken bir noktada “Avrupayı yönetme sanatının” be “Avrupa’nın yönetiminin”, “yönetişim” kavramları ile karıştırılmamasıdır; bu kavramlar ontolojik ve epistemolojik açıdan önemli farklılıklar içerir. Yönetişim toplumsal sorumlulukların devlet ve devlet dışında yer alan çeşitli aktörler tarafından paylaşılarak yönetilmesini açıklarken, yönetme (ve yönetme mentalitesi) ise siyasetin felsefesinin temel konularında biri olan etik üzerinden, doğanın, toplumun ve onun nasıl yönetildiği konularını kendine problem olarak edinir.

Tezin taslağı

İlk bölüm, STKların normatif potansiyeli, STKlar’ın akademik araştırmaların ve siyasetçilerin ilgi odağı olma nedenlerini tartışır. Normatif demokrasinin farklı modellerinde, liberalizm, komünitaryanizm, cumhuriyetçilik ve müzakereci demokrasi, STKlar’ın taşıdıkları rol ve işlevler ele alınır. Bu bağlamda, ilk bölüm STKları üç temel siyasi öncül, sosyal-politik entegrasyon, aidiyet ve irade oluşumu ile ilişkilendirir. Bu tartışma ışığında bu tezin araştırma konusu olan AB STKlar’ının

siyasi katılım yoluyla Avrupa’da birbirine yabancı duran kimliklerin bütünleşmesinin yolunu açacak “biz duygusu” ve dayanışmayı sağlama potansiyeli tartışılır. Komuniteryan yaklaşımda bütünleşme sadece ortak değerler, tarih, dil, din, etnisite ve kültür yoluyla sağlanabilecekken, mükazakerici yaklaşım etnik ve sivil aidiyetin birbirinden ayırt edilebilirliğiyle siyasi mekanizma ve haklar yoluyla bir siyasi sistemde bütünleşmenin sağlanabileceğini iddia eder. STKlar bu sistemde kamuoyu oluşturmada aktif bir rol oynayarak kamusal alanda farklı görüşlerin savunulması ve dolayısıyla karar alma süreçlerine bu kararlardan etkilenen herkesin (ve her görüşün) katkısını yansıtarak kamuoyu oluşturma görevi üstlendiğidir. Bu bölümün temel argümanı, normatif yaklaşımda AB STKlarına kamusal aklı siyasi mekanizmalara lobıcılık ile taşıyabilmesinin demokratikleştirmenin bir unsuru olarak kabul görmesine rağmen, normatif demokrasi modellerinin hiçbiri STKlar’ı siyasete çıkar grubu gibi eklememeyi tavsiye etmez. Siyasal katılımçılık kavramına en yakın duran müzakereci görüşe göre de STKlar toplumsal sorunları araştırmak ve bunu kamuoyu ve siyasetin gündemine getirerek “iletişimsel baskı” oluşturur (Habermas 1996b); bu gruplar gündeme getirdikleri sorunları çözmek zorunda değildirler. Örnek olarak, nükleer santrale karşı bir grubun amacı nükleer santrallerin kurulmamasıdır ve bu amaç uğruna mücadele veren grupların bir paydaş olarak etkin ve verimli yönetim için siyasetin kurumsallaşmış bir aktörü olmak gibi bir hedefi yoktur. Bunu katılımcı demokrasi olarak tanımlamak da demokrasi teorisi ile bağdasmamaktadır. Bu bağdastırmayı yapan tek görüş, “kurumsal demokrasidir” (associative democracy): bu görüş ise korporatist eğilimleri ile demokrasiye temsilci demokrasinin ötesinde işlevsel bir yaklaşım getirir. AB düzeyinde temsili demokrasinin gerçekleşmesinin önündeki yapısal engeller düşünüldüğünde, AB kurumları tarafından katılımcı demokrasiye işlevsel temsiliyet açısından yaklaşıp, AB STKlar’ı da bu açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. Özetle, AB STKlar’ını demokrasi ile ilişkilendiren düşünsel arka planı liberalizm, komiteryanizm, cumhuriyetçilik ve müzakereci demokrasi yerine kurumsal demokrasi içerisinde aramak daha gerçekçidir.

İlk bölümde yapılan tartışmanın eşliğinde, ikinci bölüm AB STKlar’ına yüklenen normatif sorumluluğu, müzakereci demokrasinin bir vekili olarak toplumun sesini

karar alıcılara ulaştırarak Avrupa kamusal alanın bir taşıyıcısı olma durumu teorik bir açıdan tartışılır. Bu tartışma ulus devlet ötesinde bir kamusal alan oluşumunu olanağının (bak Fraser 2007; Bohman 2004 and Dryzek 1999). ve normatif demokrasinin temel fikirlerinin global yönetişime uygulansbilirliğinin tartışmasıyla başlar. Bu çerçevede organize sivil aktörlerin karar alma süreçlerine eklemlenmesinin demokratik potansiyeli tartışılır (Schmitter 2000, De Schutter 2003). İlk bölümdeki tartışmanın, demokrasinin normatif modellerinin STKlar ile ilgili tutumları, ışığında bu bölümün iddia ettiği, ulusaşırı demokrasi tartışmalarında kurumsal demokrasinin tezleri ile yönetişimkilerin – etkin ve verimli demokrasi-örtüştüğüdür. Buna göre devlet (ve AB) aktif bir biçimde STK oluşumunu desteklemelidir (Schmitter 2000; Cohen and Rogers 1998); dolayisi ile ulusaşırı yönetim mekanizmaları egemenliklerini gözetleyecek kamusal alanların oluşumunu bekleyerek zaman kaybetmemeli, bu işi kendi başına yerine getirmelidir (Bohman 2004).

Üçüncü bölüm Avrupa bütünleşmesine Foucault kavramları ile yaklaşarak katılımçılık söylemini eleştirir. İkinci bölümde STKlar ve demokrasi arasında kurulan ve hiç tartışmadan kabul gören simbiyotik ilişki bu bölümde yapıbozumculuk ile eleştirilir. STK söylemini siyasi gücün pekişmesine ve öznelerin kurulmasına bağlar. Yönetme-mentalitesi yaklaşımını AB çalışmalarına ve AB STKları'na uygular: buna göre yönetme-mentalitesi, gücün başka bir biçimi olarak siyasi gücün özneler yaratma etkisi ve bunları sosyal kontrolün hem nesnesi hem de öznesi olarak tasarlamasıdır. Bu tartışma bizi AB politikalarının kurucu etkisini tartışmaya açmamıza ve AB STKları'na bu çerçeveden bakmamız olanak sağlar. İlk ve ikinci bölümde STKlar ile ilgili normatif tutumları değerlendirdikten sonra bu bölüm, AB STKları'nı demokrasi paradigmasının dışında, sosyal kontrol mekanizmalarına içsel bir olgu olarak tartışmaya açar. AB'nin kurucu özelliğini vurgulayarak STKların demokratikleştiren özelliği olarak kabul edilen otonom yapısını ve devlet aklı dışında bağımsız hareket edebilmesini tartışmaya açar. Bu tartışma dördüncü ve beşinci bölümlerde ampirik bulgular üzerinden üzerinden geliştirir.

Dördüncü bölüm Komisyon'un AB STKları'nın oluşum sürecindeki rolünü ve onların değerlerini, amaçlarını ve kurumsal yapısını ne derecede etkilediğini inceler. Komisyon toplumsal gruplara ve de sivil topluma olan ilgisi 1990li yılların ilk yıllarına dayanır. Komisyon bu tarihten itibaren toplumsal örgütleri günün koşullarına göre çeşitli AB politikaları ilişkilendirerek, a) çıkar gruplarının düzenlenmesinde, b) AB yönetişiminin yeniden yapılandırılmasında, ve c) AB'nin demokrasi meşruiyeti krizi ile tartışmalarda gündeme getirmiştir. Komisyon'un Avrupa sivil toplumu söylemi marifeti ile meşruiyet yaratma çalışmaları vatandaşları ile bağlantı kurma ve AB STKları'na danışma politikaları ile ilgilidir. Bu bölümde ele alınan Komisyon politikaları, Plan D (Com 2005), İletişim Politikası (Com 2006) ve Vatandaşlar için Avrupa'dır (Com 2007). Komisyon'nun bu politikalarını ve bu politikalarda katılımcılık söylemine ve AB STKları'na yüklediği rolleri incelediğimizde, sivil toplumun siyasi güç tarafından nasıl ve hangi şartlar altında biçimlendirildiğini görüyoruz. Sonuç olarak, Komisyon STK ve çıkar grubu kavramları arasında bir fark göz etmemekte ve bu grupların AB politikalarına katılım süreçlerini lobcilik faaliyeti olarak eş değer eylemler olarak görmektedir. Bir yandan Komisyon STKlar'ın meşruiyet kazandırma ve AB kimliği geliştirme gibi normatif nimetlerinden yararlanmayı düşünürken, öte yandan bu STKlar ile ekonomi grupları ve kazanç odaklı müşavirlik grupları arasında bir farklılık gözetmemektedir. AB STKlarının içinde yer aldığı katılımcı demokrasi ile kastedilen sistem AB'nin lobcilik ve danışma politikalarına elektronik veri tabanlarına görüş bildirme ve yer yer çeşitli AB politikaları hakkında açıklamalar yayınlamak ile sınırlıdır. Özetle, bu bölüm, tezin temel argümanı ilan AB'nin kurucu özelliğini, AB politikaları üzerine eleştirel bir analiz yaparak geliştirir.

Son bölüm bu politikaların bir ürünü olarak ortaya çıktığını iddia ettiğim Sosyal Platform'un bu süreç içerisinde nerede yer aldığını, Sosyal Platform'un kurulmuş, ve sonrasında bu siyasi proje tarafından yönlendirilen, manipüle edilen, hatta amaç, arzu ve isteklerinin bu proje doğrultusunda şekillendiği bir özne haline dönüşmesini tartışır. Beşinci bölüm, Sosyal Platform'un Komisyon tarafından geliştirilen Avrupa

sivil toplumu soylemini deęerlendirir ve bu kavramları nasıl tanımladığı irdeler. Bu bağlamda Komisyon'un 1990 sonrasında geliřtirdiđi yeni yönetişim tekniklerine, Avrupa anayasası hazırlama çalışmalarına, genişlemeye, AB'nin vatandaşları ile bağlantı kurma hedefi ve sosyal politikalar içerisindeki tutumunu inceleyerek, Sosyal Platform'un bahsi geçen bu politikalar sürecinde AB kurumlarına yardımcı bir güç olarak çalıştığını gösterir. Bu analizin bir sonucu da Sosyal Platform'un yeni-işlevselliciliğin iddia ettiği gibi amaç ve hedefleri ulusal siyaset mekanizmaları aşarak AB'yi çözüm için en uygun mekanizma olarak gören yeni bir elit grubun sivil toplum içerisinde çıkan temsilcileri olarak görülebileceğidir. Yönetme mentalitesi açısından Sosyal Platform'un daha güçlü bir AB istemi ve bu yönde sivil toplumu yönlendirmesi, AB fonlaması sonucu ortaya çıkan yeni öznelerin yönetim içerisinde yer almaya hevesli olduğu tutumunu ortaya koyar. Bu süreç içerisinde Platform ne alternatif bir katılım projesi çıkarabilmiş, ne de yönetim modeli olarak AB kurumları tarafından ortaya koyan projeler dışında bir model geliştirebilmiştir. Platform içerisinde özellikle Sosyal politikalar alanında cılız eleştirel sesler çıkmış, fakat en sonunda Komisyon'nun ürettiđi neoliberal söylem, girişimcilik, aktif vatandaş, ömür boyu eğitim ve esnek-güvenlik (flexicurity) gibi kavramlar onaylanmıştır. Platform bu söyleme paralel olarak kurumsal bir yapı geliştirmekte ve bunu kendi üyelerine aktarmaktadır. Platform'un raporları, örgütsel yapısı ve çalışma metodları Platform'un neo-liberal siyasal mentalite ile ilintili olan sonuç-odaklı bir örgüt olarak çalışmasını ve de kendi üyeleri ile yerel STKlar'ı da bu çerçevede çalışan örgütleri döndürme faaliyetlerini ortaya koyar, Platform bunu kapasite geliştirme ve eğitim faaliyetleri ile başarmaya çalışmaktadır. Ortaya çıkan bir sonuç da Platform'un çalışma metodunun Dünya Bankası tarafından geliştirilen ve çeşitli kalkınmayı destek örgütleri tarafından kullanılan mantıksal çerçeveye uygun olmasıdır (logical framework). Özetle, uluslararası alanda katılımcı demokrasinin bir unsuru olarak ortaya çıkan ve bu bağlamda fonlanan AB STKları'ndan biri olan Sosyal Platform'un düşünme ve mantık geliştirmesini de sağlayan hareket alanının bir proje tarafından nasıl programlandığını görmek mümkündür. Bu sivil toplumun otonom hareket etme tezini çürütecek bir göstergedir. Bu sürecin de katılımcı demokrasi ve siyasal katılım üzerinde etkileri vardır; sonuç odaklı yaklaşım siyasal

katılımı bir performans olarak tanımlamaya çalışır. Böylece, katılım kavramı, ölçülebilir ve planlamaya uygun hale getirilir.